FULL SPEED AHEAD

By Henry B. Beston

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"A destroyer is by no means a paradise of comfort"

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Tales from the Log of a Correspondent with Our Navy

BY

HENRY B. BESTON

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To

MAJOR GEORGE MAURICE SHEAHAN

HARVARD UNIT R.A.M.C.

A Forerunner of the Great Crusade.

PREFACE

These tales are memories of several months spent as a special correspondent attached to the forces of the American Navy on foreign service. Many of the little stories are personal experiences, though some are "written up" from the records and others set down after interviews. In writing them, I have not sought the laurels of an official historian, but been content to chronicle the interesting incidents of the daily life as well as the achievements and heroisms of the friends who keep the highways of the sea.

To my hosts of the United States Navy one and all, I am under deep obligation for the courtesy and hospitality everywhere extended to me on my visit. But surely the greatest of my obligations is that owed to Secretary Daniels for the personal permission which made possible my journey, and for the good will with which he saw me on my way. And no acknowledgment, no matter how

studied or courtly its phrasing, can express what I owe to Admiral Sims for the friendliness of my reception, for his care that I be shown all the Navy's activities, and for his constant and kindly effort to advance my work in every possible way. To Admiral Hugh Rodman of the battleship squadron, his sometime guest here renders thanks for the opportunity given him to spend some ten days aboard the American flagship and for the welcome which makes his stay aboard so pleasant a memory.

To the following officers, also, am I much indebted: Captain, now Admiral Hughes, Captain J. R. Poinsett Pringle, Chief of Staff at the Irish Base, Captain Thomas Hart, Chief of Staff directing submarine operations, Commander Babcock and Commander Daniels, both of Admiral Sims' staff, Commander Bryant and Commander Carpender, both of Captain Pringle's staff, Commander Henry W. Cooke and Commander Wilson Brown, both of the destroyer flotilla, Lieutenant Horace H. Jalbert of the U. S. S. Bushnell, Lieutenant Commander Morton L. Deyo, Chaplain J. L. Neff, Lieutenant F. H. King,

Lieutenant Lanman, Lieutenant Herrick, and Lieutenant Lewis Hancock, Lieutenant George Rood and Lieutenant Bumpus of our submarines.

I would not end without a word of thanks to the enlisted men for their unfailing good will and ever courteous behaviour.

To Mr. Ellery Sedgwick of the *Atlantic Monthly*, under whose colours I had the honour to make my journalistic cruise, I am indebted for more friendly help, counsel and encouragement than I shall ever be able to repay. And I shall not easily forget the kindly offices and unfailing hospitality of Captain Luke C. Doyle of Washington, D. C., and Mr. Sidney A. Mitchell of the London Committee of the United States Food Administration.

Lucky is the correspondent sent to the Navy!

H. B. B.

TOPSFIELD AND QUINCY, 1919

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I

AN HEROIC JOURNEY

A LONDON day of soft and smoky skies darkened every now and then by capricious and intrusive little showers was drawing to a close in a twilight of gold and grey. Our table stood in a bay of plate glass windows over-looking the embankment close by Cleopatra's needle; we watched the little, double-decked tram cars gliding by, the opposing, interthreading streams of pedestrians, and a fleet of coal barges coming up the river solemn as a cloud. Behind us lay, splendid and somewhat theatric, the mottled marble, stiff, white napery, and bright silver of a fashionable dining hall. Only a few guests were at hand. At our little table sat the captain of a submarine who was then in London for a few days on richly merited leave, a distinguished young officer of the "mother

ship" accompanying our under water craft, and myself. It is impossible to be long with submarine folk without realizing that they are a people apart, differing from the rest of the Naval personnel even as their vessels differ. A man must have something individual to his character to volunteer for the service, and every officer is a volunteer. An extraordinary power of quick decision, a certain keen, resolute look, a certain carriage; submarine folk are such men as all of us pray to have by our side in any great trial or crisis of our life.

Guests began to come by twos and threes, girls in pretty shimmering dresses, young army officers with wound stripes and clumsy limps; a faint murmur of conversation rose, faint and continuous as the murmur of a distant stream.

Because I requested him, the captain told me of the crossing of the submarines. It was the epic of an heroic journey.

"After each boat had been examined in detail, we began to fill them with supplies for the voyage. The crew spent days manœuvring cases of condensed milk, cans of butter, meat, and chocolate down the hatchways,

food which the boat swallowed up as if she had been a kind of steel stomach. Until we had it all neatly and tightly stowed away, the Z looked like a corner grocery store. Then early one December morning we pulled out of the harbour. It wasn't very cold, merely raw and damp, and it was misty dark. I remember looking at the winter stars riding high just over the meridian. The port behind us was still and dead, but a handful of navy folk had come to one of the wharves to see us off. Yes, there was something of a stir, you know the kind of stir that's made when boats go to sea, shouted orders, the splash of dropped cables, vagrant noises. It didn't take a great time to get under way; we were ready, waiting for the word to go. The flotilla, mother-ship, tugs and all, was out to sea long before the dawn. You would have liked the picture, the immense stretch of the greyish, winter-stricken sea, the little covey of submarines running awash, the grey mother-ship going ahead casually as an excursion steamer into the featureless dawn. The weather was wonderful for two days, a touch of Indian summer on December's ocean, then on the

night of the third day we ran into a blow, the worst I ever saw in my life. A storm. . . . Oh boy!"

He paused for an instant to flick the ashes from his cigarette with a neat, deliberate gesture. One could see memories living in the fine, resolute eyes. The broken noises of the restaurant which had seemingly died away while he spoke crept back again to one's ears. A waiter dropped a clanging fork.

"A storm. Never remember anything like it. A perfect terror. Everybody realized that any attempt to keep together would be hopeless. And night was coming on. One by one the submarines disappeared into that fury of wind and driving water; the mother-ship, because she was the largest vessel in the flotilla, being the last we saw. We snatched her last signal out of the teeth of the gale, and then she was gone, swallowed up in the storm. So we were alone.

We got through the night somehow or other. The next morning the ocean was a dirty brown-grey, and knots and wisps of cloud were tearing by close over the water. Every once in a while a great, hollow-bellied wave

would come rolling out of the hullaballoo and break thundering over us. On all the boats the lookout on the bridge had to be lashed in place, and every once in a while a couple of tons of water would come tumbling past him. Nobody at the job stayed dry for more than three minutes; a bathing suit would have been more to the point than oilers. Shaken, you ask? No, not very bad, a few assorted bruises and a wrenched thumb, though poor Jonesie on the Z3 had a wave knock him up against the rail and smash in a couple of ribs. But no being sick for him, he kept to his feet and carried on in spite of the pain, in spite of being in a boat which registered a roll of seventy degrees. I used to watch the old hooker rolling under me. You've never been on a submarine when she's rolling—talk about rolling—oh boy! We all say seventy degrees because that's as far as our instruments register. There were times when I almost thought she was on her way to make a complete revolution. You can imagine what it was like inside. To begin with, the oily air was none too sweet, because every time we opened a hatch we shipped

enough water to make the old hooker look like a start at a swimming tank, and then she was lurching so continuously and violently that to move six feet was an expedition. But the men were wonderful, wonderful! Each man at his allotted task, and—what's that English word, . . . carrying on. Our little cook couldn't do a thing with the stove, might as well have tried to cook on a miniature earthquake, but he saw that all of us had something to eat, doing his bit, game as could be."

He paused again. The embankment was fading in the dark. A waiter appeared, and drew down the thick, light-proof curtains.

"Yes, the men were wonderful—wonderful. And there wasn't very much sickness. Let's see, how far had I got—since it was impossible to make any headway we lay to for forty-eight hours. The deck began to go the second morning, some of the plates being ripped right off. And blow—well as I told you in the beginning, I never saw anything like it. The disk of the sea was just one great, ragged mass of foam all being hurled through space by a wind screaming by with the voice

and force of a million express trains. Perhaps you are wondering why we didn't submerge. Simply couldn't use up our electricity. It takes oil running on the surface to create the electric power, and we had a long, long journey ahead. Then ice began to form on the superstructure, and we had to get out a crew to chop it off. It was something of a job; there wasn't much to hang on to, and the waves were still breaking over us. But we freed her of the danger, and she went on.

We used to wonder where the other boys were in the midst of all the racket. One was drifting towards the New England coast, her compass smashed to flinders; others had run for Bermuda, others were still at sea.

Then we had three days of good easterly wind. By jingo, but the good weather was great, were we glad to have it—oh boy! We had just got things ship-shape again when we had another blow but this second one was by no means as bad as the first. And after that we had another spell of decent weather. The crew used to start the phonograph and keep it going all day long.

The weather was so good that I decided to keep right on to the harbour which was to be our base over here. I had enough oil, plenty of water, the only possible danger was a shortage of provisions. So I put us all on a ration, arranging to have the last grand meal on Christmas day. Can you imagine Christmas on a little, storm-bumped submarine some hundred miles off the coast? A day or two more and we ran calmly into . . . Shall we say deleted harbour?

Hungry, dirty, oh so dirty, we hadn't had any sort of bath or wash for about three weeks; we all were green looking from having been cooped up so long, and our unshaven, grease-streaked faces would have upset a dinosaur. The authorities were wonderfully kind and looked after us and our men in the very best style. I thought we could never stop eating and a real sleep, . . . oh boy!

"Did you fly the flag as you came in?" I asked.

"You bet we did!" answered the captain, his keen, handsome face lighting at the memory. "You see," he continued in a practical

spirit, "they would probably have pumped us full of holes if we hadn't."

And that is the way that the American submarines crossed the Atlantic to do their share for the Great Cause.

II

INTO THE DARK

I GOT to the Port of the Submarines just as an uncertain and rainy afternoon had finally decided to turn into a wild and disagreeable night. Short, drenching showers of rain fell one after the other like the strokes of a lash, a wind came up out of the sea, and one could hear the thunder of surf on the headlands. The mother ship lay moored in a wild, desolate and indescribably romantic bay; she floated in a sheltered pool a very oasis of modernity, a marvellous creature of another world and another time. There was just light enough for me to see that her lines were those of a giant yacht. Then a curtain of rain beat hissing down upon the sea, and the ship and the vague darkening landscape disappeared, disappeared as if it might have melted away in the shower. Presently the bulk of the vessel appeared again: gliding and tossing at once we drew alongside, and from

that moment on, I was the guest of the vessel, recipient of a hospitality and courtesy for which I here make grateful acknowledgment to my friends and hosts.

The mother ship of the submarines was a combination of flag ship, supply station, repair shop and hotel. The officers of the submarines had rooms aboard her which they occupied when off patrol, and the crews off duty slung their hammocks 'tween decks. The boat was pretty well crowded, having more submarines to look after than she had been built to care for, but thanks to the skill of her officers, everything was going as smoothly as could be. The vessel had, so to speak, a submarine atmosphere. Everybody aboard lived, worked and would have died for the submarine. They believed in the submarine, believed in it with an enthusiasm which rested on pillars of practical fact. The Chief of Staff was the youngest captain in our Navy, a man of hard energy and keen insight, one to whom our submarine service owes a very genuine debt. His officers were specialists. The surgeon of the vessel had been for years engaged in studying the

hygiene of submarines, and was constantly working to free the atmosphere of the vessels from deleterious gases and to improve the living conditions of the crews. I remember listening one night to a history of the submarine told by one of the officers of the staff, and for the first time in my life I came to appreciate at its full value the heroism of the men who risked their lives in the first cranky, clumsy, uncertain little vessels, and the imagination and the faith of the men who believed in the type. Ten years ago, a descent in a sub was an adventure to be prefaced by tears and making of wills; to-day submarines are chasing submarines hundreds of miles at sea, are crossing the ocean, and have grown from a tube of steel not much larger than a life boat to underwater cruisers which carry six-inch guns. Said an officer to me:

"The future of the submarine? Why, sir, the submarine is the only war vessel that's going to have a future!"

On the night of my arrival, once dinner was over, I went on deck and looked down through the rain at the submarines moored

A flock of submarines and the "mother" ship in harbor

alongside. They lay close by, one beside the other, in a pool of radiance cast by a number of electric lights hanging over each open hatchway. Beyond this pool lay the rain and the dark; within it, their sides awash in the clear green water of the bay, their grey bridges and rust-stained superstructures shining in the rain, lay the strange, bulging, crocodilian shapes of steel. There was something unearthly, something not of this world or time in the picture; I might have been looking at invaders of the sleeping earth. The wind swept past in great booming salvoes; rain fell in sloping, liquid rods through the brilliancy of electric lamps burning with a steadiness that had something in it of strange, incomprehensible and out of place in the motion and hullabaloo of the storm. And then, too, a hand appeared on the topmost rung of the nearer ladder, and a bulky sailor, a very human sailor in very human dungarees, poked his head out of the aperture, surveyed the inhospitable night, and disappeared.

"He's on Branch's boat. They're going out to-night," said the officer who was guiding me about.

"To-night? How on earth will he ever find his way to the open sea?"

"Knows the bay like a book. However, if the weather gets any worse, I doubt if the captain will let him go. George will be wild if they don't let him out. Somebody has just reported wreckage off the coast, so there must be a Hun round."

"But are not our subs sometimes mistaken for Germans?"

"Oh, yes," was the calm answer.

I thought of that ominous phrase I had noted in the British records "failed to report," and I remembered the stolid British captain who had said to me, speaking of submarines, "Sometimes nobody knows just what happened. Out there in the deep water, whatever happens, happens in a hurry." My guide and I went below to the officers' corridor. Now and then, through the quiet, a mandolin or guitar could be heard far off twanging some sentimental island ditty, and beneath these sweeter sounds lay a monotonous mechanical humming.

"What's that sound?" I asked.

"That's the Filipino mess boys having a little festino in their quarters. The humming? Oh, that's the mother-ship's dynamos charging the batteries of Branch's boat. Saves running on the surface."

My guide knocked at a door. Within his tidy, little room, the captain who was to go out on patrol was packing the personal belongings he needed on the trip.

"Hello, Jally!" he cried cheerily when he saw us. "Come on in. I am only doing a little packing up. What's it like outside?"

"Raining same as ever, but I don't think it's blowing up any harder."

"Hooray!" cried the young captain with heart-felt sincerity. "Then I'll get out tonight. You know the captain told me that if it got any worse he'd hold me till to-morrow morning. I told him I'd rather go out tonight. Perfect cinch once you get to the mouth of the bay, all you have to do is submerge and take it easy. What do you think of the news? Smithie thinks he saw a Hun yesterday. . . . Got anything good to read? Somebody's pinched that magazine I was reading. Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, that

ought to be enough handkerchiefs. . . . Hello, there goes the juice."

The humming of the dynamo was dying away slowly, fading with an effect of lengthening distance. The guitar orchestra, as if to celebrate its deliverance, burst into a triumphant rendering of Sousa's "Stars and Stripes."

My guide and I waited till after midnight to watch the going of Branch's Z5. Branch and his second, wearing black oilskins down whose gleaming surface ran beaded drops of rain, stood on the bridge; a number of sailors were busy doing various things along the deck. The electric lights shone in all their calm unearthly brilliance. Then slowly, very slowly, the Z5 began to gather headway, the clear water seemed to flow past her green sides, and she rode out of the pool of light into the darkness waiting close at hand.

"Good-bye! Good luck!" we cried.

A vagrant shower came roaring down into the shining pool.

"Good-bye!" cried voices through the night.

Three minutes later all trace of the Z5 had disappeared in the dark.

III

FRIEND OR FOE?

CAPTAIN BILL of the *Z3* was out on patrol. His vessel was running submerged. The air within, they had but recently dived, was new and sweet, and that raw cold which eats into submerged submarines had not begun to take the joy out of life. It was the third day out; the time, five o'clock in the afternoon. The outer world, however, did not penetrate into the submarine. Night or day, on the surface or submerged, only one time, a kind of motionless electric high noon existed within those concave walls of gleaming cream white enamel. Those of the crew not on watch were taking it easy. Like unto their officers, submarine sailors are an unusual lot. They are *real* sailors, or machinist sailors, boys for whose quality the Navy has a flattering, picturesque and quite unprintable adjective. A submarine

man, mind you, works harder than perhaps any other man of his grade in the Navy, because the vessel in which he lives is nothing but a tremendously intricate machine. In one of the compartments the phonograph, the eternal, ubiquitous phonograph of the Navy, was bawling its raucous rags and mechano-nasal songs, and in the pauses between records one could just hear the low hum of the distant dynamos. A little group in blue dungarees held a conversation in a corner; a petty officer, blue cap tilted back on his head, was at work on a letter; the cook, whose genial art was customarily under an interdict while the vessel was running submerged, was reading an ancient paper from his own home town.

Captain Bill sat in a retired nook, if a submarine can possibly be said to have a retired nook, with a chart spread open on his knees. The night before he had picked up a wireless message saying that a German had been seen at sundown in a certain spot on the edge of his patrol. So Captain Bill had planned to run submerged to the spot in question, and then pop up suddenly in the hope of potting

the Hun. Some fifteen minutes before sun down, therefore, the Z3 arrived at the place where the Fritz had been observed.

"I wish I knew just where the bird was," said an intent voice. "I'd drop a can right on his neck."

These sentiments were not those of anybody aboard the Z3. An American destroyer had also come to the spot looking for the German, and the gentle thought recorded above was that of her captain. It was just sun down, a level train of splendour burned on the ruffled waters to the west; a light, cheerful breeze was blowing. The destroyer, ready for anything, was hurrying along at a smart clip.

"This is the place all right, all right," said the navigator of the destroyer. "Come to think of it, that chap's been reported from here twice."

Keen eyes swept the shining uneasy plain.

Meanwhile, some seventy feet below, the Z3 manœuvred, killing time. The phonograph had been hushed, and every man was ready at his post. The prospect of a go with

the enemy had brought with it a keen thrill of anticipation. Now a submarine crew is a well trained machine. There are no shouted orders. If a submarine captain wants to send his boat under quickly, he simply touches the button of a Klaxon, the horn gives a demoniac yell throughout the ship, and each man does what he ought to do at once. Such a performance is called a "crash dive."

"I'd like to see him come up so near that we could ram him," said the captain, gazing almost directly into the sun. "Find out what she's making."

The engineer lieutenant stooped to a voice-tube that almost swallowed up his face, and yelled a question to the engine room. An answer came, quite unheard by the others.

"Twenty-four, sir," said the engineer lieutenant.

"Get her up to twenty-six," said the captain.

The engineer cried again through the voice tube. The wake of the vessel roared like a mill race, the white foam tumbling rosily in the setting sun.

Seventy feet below, Captain Bill was arranging the last little details with the second in command.

"In about five minutes we'll come up and take a look-see (stick up the periscope) and if we see the bird, and we're in a good position to send him a fish (torpedo) we'll let him have one. If there is something there, and we're not in a good position, we'll manœuvre till we get into one, and then let him have it. If there isn't anything to be seen, we'll go under again and take another look-see in half an hour. Reilly has his instructions." Reilly was chief of the torpedo room.

"Something round here must have got it in the neck recently," said the destroyer captain, breaking a silence which had hung over the bridge. "Did not you think that wreckage a couple of miles back looked pretty fresh? Wonder if the boy we're after had anything to do with it. Keep an eye on that sun streak."

An order was given in the Z3. It was followed instantly by a kind of commotion, sailors opened valves, compressed air ran

down pipes, the ratchets of the wheel clattered noisily. On the moon-faced depth gauge with its shining brazen rim, the recording arrow fled swiftly, counter clockwise, from seventy to twenty to fifteen feet. . . . Captain Bill stood crouching at the periscope, and when it broke the surface, a greenish light poured down it and focussed in his eyes. He gazed keenly for a few seconds, and then reached for the horizontal wheel which turns the periscope round the horizon. He turned . . . gazed, jumped back, and pushed the button for a crash dive.

"She was almost on top of me," he explained afterwards. "Coming like H—l. I had to choose between being rammed or depth bombed."

There was another swift commotion, another opening and closing of valves, and the arrow on the depth gauge leaped forward. Captain Bill was sending her down as far as he could as fast as he dared. Fifty feet, seventy feet, . . . ninety feet. Hoping to throw the destroyer off, the Z3 doubled on her track. A hundred feet.

Crash! Depth charge number one.

According to Captain Bill, who is good at similes, it was as if a giant, wading along through the sea, had given the boat a vast and violent kick, and then leaning down had shaken it as a terrier shakes a rat. The Z3 rocked, lay on her side, and fell through the depths. A number of lights went out. Men picked themselves out of corners, one with the blood streaming down his face from a bad gash over his eye. Many of them told later of "seeing stars" when the vibration of the depth charge travelled through the hull and their own bodies; some averred that "white light" seemed to shoot out of the Z3's walls. Each man stood at his post waiting for the next charge.

Crash! A second depth charge. To every one's relief, it was less violent than the first. A few more lights went out. Meanwhile the Z3 continued to sink and was rapidly nearing the danger point. Having escaped the first two depth charges, Captain Bill hastened to bring the boat up to a higher level. Then to make things cheerful, it was discovered that the Z3 showed absolutely nó inclination to obey her controls.

"At first," said Captain Bill, "I thought that the first depth bomb must have jammed all the external machinery, then I decided that our measures to rise had not yet overcome the impetus of our forced descent. Meanwhile the old hooker was heading for the bottom of the Irish Sea, though I'd blown out every bit of water in her tanks. Had to, fifty feet more, and she would have crushed in like an egg shell under the wheel of a touring car. But she kept on going down. The distance of the third, fourth and fifth depth bombs, however, put cheer in our hearts. Then, presently, she began to rise. The old girl came up like an elevator in a New York business block. I knew that the minute I came to the surface those destroyer brutes would try to fill me full of holes, so I had a man with a flag ready to jump on deck the minute we emerged. He was pretty damn spry about it, too. I took another look-see through the periscope, and saw that the destroyer lay about two miles away, and as I looked she came for me *again*. Meanwhile, my signal man was hauling himself out of the hatchway as if his legs were in boiling water."

"We've got her!" cried somebody aboard the destroyer in a deep American voice full of the exultation of battle. The lean rifles swung, lowered. . . . "Point one, lower." They were about to hear "Fire!" when the Stars and Stripes and sundry other signals burst from the deck of the misused Z3.

"Well what do you think of that?" said the gunner. "If it ain't one of our own gang. Say, we must have given it to 'em hard."

"We'll go over and see who it is," said the captain of the destroyer. "The signals are O. K., but it may be a dodge of the Huns. Ask 'em who they are."

In obedience to the order, a sailor on the destroyer's bridge wigwagged the message.

"Z3," answered one of the dungaree-clad figures on the submarine's deck. Captain Bill came up himself, as the destroyer drew alongside, to see his would-be assassin. There was no resentment in his heart. The adventure was only part of the day's work. The destroyer neared; her bow overlooked them. The two captains looked at each other. The diaglogue was laconic.

"Hello, Bill," said the destroyer captain.

"All right?"

"Sure," answered Captain Bill, to one who had been his friend and class mate.

"Ta, ta, then," said he of the destroyer, and the lean vessel swept away in the twilight.

Captain Bill decided to stay on the surface for a while. Then he went below to look over things. The cook, standing over some unlovely slop which marked the end of a half dozen eggs broken by the concussion, was giving his opinion of the undue hastiness of destroyers. The cook was a child of Brooklyn, and could talk. The opinion was not flattering.

"Give it to 'em, cooko," said one of the crew, patting the orator affectionately on the shoulder. "We're with you."

And Captain Bill laughed.

IV

RUNNING SUBMERGED

IT WAS breakfast time, and the officers of the submarines then in port had gathered round one end of the long dining table in the wardroom of the mother ship. Two or three who had breakfasted early had taken places on a bench along the nearer wall and were examining a disintegrating heap of English and American magazines, whilst pushed back from the table and smoking an ancient briar, the senior of the group read the wireless news which had just arrived that morning. The news was not of great importance. The lecture done with, the tinkle of cutlery and silver, which had been politely hushed, broke forth again.

"What are you doing this morning, Bill?" said one of the young captains to another who had appeared in old clothes.

"Going out at about half past nine with the X10. (The X10 was a British sub-

marine.) Just joing to take a couple of shots at each other. What are you up to?"

"Oh, I've got to give a bearing the once over, and then I've got to write a bunch of letters."

"Wouldn't you like to come with us?" said the first speaker, pausing over a steaming dish of breakfast porridge. "Be mighty glad to take you."

"Indeed I would," I replied with joy in my heart. "All my life long I have wanted to take a trip in a submarine."

"That's fine! We'll get you some dungarees. Can't fool round a submarine in good clothes." The whole table began to take a friendly interest, and a dispute arose as to whose clothes would best fit me. I am a large person. "Give him my extra set, they're on the side of my locker." "Don't you want a cap or something?" "Hey, that's too small, wait and I'll get Tom's coat." "Try these on." They are a wonderful lot, the submarine officers.

I felt frightfully submarinish in my outfit. We must have made a picturesque group. The captain led off, wearing a tattered,

battered, old uniform of Annapolis days, I followed wearing an old Navy cap jammed on the side of my head and a suit of newly laundered dungarees; the second officer brought up the rear; his outfit consisted of dungaree trousers, a kind of aviator's waistcoat, and an old cloth cap.

The submarines were moored close by the side of the mother ship, a double doorway in the wall of the machine shop on the lower deck opening directly upon them. A narrow runway connected the nearest vessel with the sill of this aperture, and mere planks led from one superstructure to another. The day, first real day after weeks of rain, was soft and clear, great low masses of vapour, neither mist nor cloud, but something of both, swept down the long bay on the wings of the wind from the clean, sweet-smelling sea; the sun shone like ancient silver. Little fretful waves of water clear as the water of a spring coursed down the alley ways between the submarines; gulls, piping and barking, whirled like snow flakes overhead. I crossed to one grey alligatorish superstructure, looked down a narrow circular hatch at whose floor I could

see the captain waiting for my coming, grasped the steel rings of a narrow ladder, and descended into the submarine. The first impression was of being surrounded by tremendous, almost incredible complexity. A bewildering and intricate mass of delicate mechanical contrivances, valves, stop cocks, wheels, chains, shining pipes, ratchets, faucets, oil-cups, rods, gauges. Second impression, bright cleanliness, shining brass, gleams of steely radiance, stainless walls of white enamel paint. Third impression, size; there was much more room than I had expected. Of course everything is to be seen by floods of steady electric light, since practically no daylight filters down through an open hatchway.

"This," said the captain, "is the control room. Notice the two depth gauges, two in case one gets out of order. That thick tube with a brass thread coiled about it is a periscope, and it's a peach! It's of the 'housing' kind and winds up and down along that screw. The thread prevents any leak of water. In here," we went through a lateral compartment with a steel door, thick

as that of a small safe, "is a space where we eat, sleep and live; our cook stove is that gadget in the corner. We don't do much cooking when we're running submerged; in here," we passed another stout partition, "is our Diesel engine, and our dynamos. Up forward is another living space which technically belongs to the officers, and the torpedo room." He took me along. "Now you've seen it all. A fat steel cigar, divided into various compartments and cram jammed full of shining machinery. Of course, there's no privacy, whatsoever. (Readers will have to guess what is occasionally used for the phonograph table.) Our space is so limited that designers will spend a year arguing where to put an object no bigger than a soap box. We get on very well however. Every crew gets used to its boat; the men get used to each other. They like the life; you couldn't drag them back to surface vessels. An ideal submarine crew works like a perfect machine. When we go out you'll see that we give our orders by Klaxon. There's too much noise for the voice. Suppose I had popped up on the surface right under the very nose of one of those

destroyer brutes. She might start to ram me; in which case I might not have time to make recognition signals and would have to take my choice between getting rammed or depth bombed. I decide to submerge, push a button, the Klaxon gives a yell, and every man does automatically what he has been trained to do. A floods the tanks, B stands by the dynamos, C watches the depth gauges and so on. That's what we call a crash dive."

"Over at the destroyer base," I said, "they told me that the Germans were having trouble because of lack of trained crews."

"You can just bet they are," said the captain. "Must have lost several boats that way. Can't monkey with these boats; if somebody pulls a fool stunt—Good Night!" He opened a gold watch and closed it again with a click. "Nine o'clock, just time to shove off. Come up on the bridge until we get out in the bay."

I climbed the narrow ladder again and crept along the superstructure to the bridge which rose for all the world like a little grey steel pulpit. One has to be reasonably sure-footed. It was curious to emerge from the electric

lighted marvel to the sunlight of the bay, to the view of the wild mountains descending to the clear sea. The captain gave his orders. Faint, vague noises rose out of the hatchway; sailors standing at various points along the superstructure cast off the mooring ropes and took in bumpers shaped like monstrous sausages of cord which had protected one bulging hull from another; the submarine went ahead solemnly as a planet. Friendly faces leaned over the rail of the mother ship high above.

Once out into the bay, I asked the second in command just what we were up to. The second in command was a well knit youngster with the coolest, most resolute blue eyes it has ever been my fortune to see.

"We're going to take shots at a British submarine and then she's going to have a try at us. We don't really fire torpedoes—but manœuvre for a position. Three shots apiece. There she is now, running on the surface. Just as soon as we get out to deep water we'll submerge and go for her. Great practice."

A British submarine, somewhat larger than

our American boat, was running down the bay, pushing curious little waves of water ahead of her. Several men stood on her deck.

"Nice boat, isn't she? Her captain's a great scout. About two months ago a patrol boat shot off his periscope *after* he made it reasonably clear he wasn't a Hun. You ought to hear him tell about it. Especially his opinion of patrol boat captains. Great command of language. Bully fellow, born submarine man."

"I meant to ask you if you weren't sometimes mistaken for a German," I said.

"Yes, it happens," he answered coolly. "You haven't seen Smithie yet, have you? Guess he was away when you came. A bunch of destroyers almost murdered him last month. He's come the nearest to kissing himself good-bye of any of us. Going to dive now, time to get under."

Once more down the steel ladder. I was getting used to it. The handful of sailors who had been on deck waited for us to pass. Within, the strong, somewhat peppery smell of hot oil from the Diesel engines floated,

and there was to be heard a hard, powerful knocking-spitting sound from the same source. The hatch cover was secured, a listener might have heard a steely thump and a grind as it closed. Men stood calmly by the depth gauges and the valves. Not being a "crash dive," the feat of getting under was accomplished quietly, accomplished with no more fracas than accompanies the running of a motor car up to a door. One instant we were on the surface, the next instant we were under, and the lean black arrow on the broad moon-faced depth gauge was beginning to creep from ten to fifteen, from fifteen to twenty, from twenty to twenty-five. . . . The clatter of the Diesel engine had ceased; in its place rose a low hum. And of course there was no alteration of light, nothing but that steady electric glow on those cold, clean bulging walls.

"What's the programme, now?"

"We are going down the bay a bit, put up our periscope, pick up the Britisher, and fire an imaginary tin fish at him. After each shot, we come to the surface for an instant to let him know we've had our turn."

"What depth are we now?"

"Only fifty-five feet."

"What depth can you go?"

"The Navy Regulations forbid our descending more than two hundred feet. Subs are always hiking around about fifty or seventy-five feet under, just deep enough to be well under the keel of anything going by."

"Where are we now?"

"Pretty close to the mouth of the bay. I'm going to shove up the periscope in a few minutes."

The captain gave an order, the arrow on the dial retreated towards the left.

"Keep her there." He applied his eye to the periscope. A strange, watery green light poured out of the lens, and focussing in his eye, lit the ball with wild demoniac glare. A consultation ensued between the captain and his junior.

"Do you see her?"

"Yes, she is in a line with that little white barn on the island. . . . She's heading down the bay now. . . . So many points this way (this last direction to the helmsman) . . . there she is . . . she's making about twelve

. . . she's turning, coming back . . . steady . . . five, . . . six . . . Fire!"

There was a rush, a clatter, and a stir and the boat rose evenly to the surface.

"Here, take a look at her," said the captain, pushing me towards the periscope. I fitted the eyepieces (they might have been those of field glasses embedded in the tube) to my eyes, and beheld again the outer world. The kind of a world one might see in a crystal, a mirror world, a glass world, but a remarkably clear little world. And as I peered, a drop of water cast up by some wave touched the outer lens of the tube, and a trickle big as a deluge slid down the visionary bay.

Twice again we "attacked" the Britisher. Her turn came. Our boat rose to the surface, and I was once more invited to accompany the captain to the bridge. The British boat lay far away across the inlet. We cruised about watching her.

"There she goes." The Britisher sank like a stone in a pond. We continued our course. The two officers peered over the water with young, searching, resolute eyes. Then they took to their binoculars.

"There she is," cried the captain, "in a line with the oak tree." I searched for a few minutes in vain. Suddenly I saw her, that is to say, I saw with a great deal of difficulty a small dark rod moving through the water. It came closer; I saw the hatpin shaped trail behind it.

Presently with a great swirl and rolling of foam the Britisher pushed herself out of the water. I could see my young captain judging the performance in his eye. Then we played victim two more times and went home. On the way we discussed the submarine patrol. Now there is no more thrilling game in the world than the game of periscope *vs.* periscope.

"What do you do?" I asked. "Just what you saw us do to-day. We pack up grub and supplies, beat it out on the high seas and wait for a Fritz to come along. We give him a taste of his own medicine; given him one more enemy to dodge. Suppose a Hun baffles the destroyers, makes off to a lonely spot, and comes to the surface for a breath of air. There isn't a soul in sight, not a stir of smoke on the horizon. Just as Captain Otto, or Von Something is gloating

over the last hospital ship he sunk, and thinking what a lovely afternoon it is, a tin fish comes for him like a bullet out of a gun, there comes a thundering pound, a vibration that sends little waves through the water, a great foul swirl, fragments of cork, and it's all over with the Watch on the Rhine. Sometimes Fritz's torpedo meets ours on the way. Then once in a while a destroyer or a patriotic but misguided tramp makes things interesting for a bit. But it's the most wonderful service of all. I wouldn't give it up for anything. We're all going out day after to-morrow. Can't you cable London for permission to go? You'll like it. Don't believe anything you hear about the air getting bad. The principal nuisance when you've been under a long while is the cold; the boat gets as raw and damp as an unoccupied house in winter. Jingo, quarter past one! We'll be late for dinner."

Some time after this article had appeared, the captain of an American submarine gave me a copy of the following verses written by a submarine sailor. Poems of this sort, typewritten by some accommodating yeoman, are always being handed round in the Navy; I

have seen dozens of them. Would that I knew the author of this picturesque and flavorous ditty, for I would gladly give him the credit he deserves.

A SUBMARINE

Born in the shops of the devil,
Designed by the brains of a fiend;
Filled with acid and crude oil,
And christened "A Submarine."

The posts send in their ditties
Of battleships spick and clean;
But never a word in their columns
Do you see of a submarine.

So I'll endeavour to depict our story
In a very laconic way;
So please have patience to listen
Until I have finished my say.

We eat where'er we can find it,
And sleep hanging up on hooks;
Conditions under which we're existing
Are never published in books.

Life on these boats is obnoxious
And this is using mild terms;
We are never bothered by sickness,
There isn't any room for germs.

We are never troubled with varmints,
There are things even a cockroach can't stand;

And any self-respecting rodent
Quick as possible beats it for land.

And that little one dollar per diem
We receive to submerge out of sight,
Is often earned more than double
By charging batteries all night.

And that extra compensation
We receive on boats like these,
We never really get at all.
It's spent on soap and dungarees.

Machinists get soaked in fuel oil,
Electricians in H_2SO_4,
Gunner's mates with 600 W,
And torpedo slush galore.

When we come into the Navy Yard
We are looked upon with disgrace;
And they make out some new regulation
To fit our particular case.

Now all you battleship sailors,
When you are feeling disgruntled and mean,
Just pack your bag and hammock
And go to a submarine.

V

THE RETURN OF THE CAPTAINS

THE breakfast hour was drawing to its end, and the very last straggler sat alone at the ward room table. Presently an officer of the mother ship, passing through, called to the lingering group of submarine officers.

"The X4 is coming up the bay, and the X12 has been reported from signal station."

The news was received with a little hum of friendly interest. "Wonder what Ned will have to say for himself this time." "Must have struck pretty good weather." "Bet you John has been looking for another chance at that Hun of his." The talk drifted away into other channels. A little time passed. Then suddenly a door opened, and one after the other entered the three officers of the first home coming submarine. They were clad in various ancient uniforms which might have been worn by an apprentice lad in a

garage, old grey flannel shirts, and stout grease stained shoes; several days had passed since their faces had felt a razor, and all were a little pale from their cruise. But the liveliest of keen eyes burned in each resolute young face, eyes smiling and glad. A friendly hullaballoo broke forth. Chairs scraped, one fell with a crash.

"Hello, boys!"

"Hi, John!"

"For the love of Pete, Joe, shave off those whiskers of yours; they make you look like Trotsky."

"See any Germans?"

"What's the news?"

"What's doing?"

"Hi, Manuelo" (this to a Philipino mess boy who stood looking on with impassive curiosity), "save three more breakfasts."

"Anything go for you?"

"Well, if here isn't our old Bump!"

The crowd gathered round Captain John who had established contact (this is military term quite our of place in a work on the Navy) with the eagerly sought, horribly elusive German.

"Go on, John, give us an earful. What time did you say it was?"

"About 5 A.M.," answered the captain. He stood leaning against a door and the fine head, the pallor, the touch of fatigue, all made a very striking and appealing picture. "Say about eight minutes after five. I'd just come up to take a look-see, and saw him just about two miles away on the surface, and moving right along. So I went under to get into a good position, came up again and let him have one. Well, the bird saw it just as it was almost on him, swung her round, and dived like a ton of lead."

The audience listened in silent sympathy. One could see the disappointment on the captain's face.

"Where was he?"

"About so and so."

"That's the jinx that got after the convoy sure as you live."

The speaker had had his own adventures with the Germans. A month or so he shoved his periscope and spotted a Fritz on the surface in full noonday. The watchful Fritz, however, had been lucky enough to see the

enemy almost at once and had dived. The American followed suit. The eyeless submarine manœuvred about some eighty feet under, the German evidently "making his get-a-way," the American hoping to be lucky enough to pick up Fritz's trail, and get a shot at him when the enemy rose again to the top. And while the two blind ships manœuvred there in the dark of the abyss, the keel of the fleeing German had actually, by a curious chance, scraped along the top of the American vessel and carried away the wireless aerials!

All were silent for a few seconds, thinking over the affair. It was not difficult to read the thought in every mind, the thought of *getting at the enemy.* The idea of our Navy is "Get after 'em, Keep after 'em, Stay after 'em, Don't give 'em an instant of security or rest." And none have this fighting spirit deeper in their hearts than our gallant men of the submarine patrol.

"That's all," said Captain John. "I'm going to have a wash up." He lifted a grease stained hand to his cheek, and rubbed his unshaven beard, and grinned.

"Any letters?"

"Whole bag of stuff. Smithie put it on your desk."

Captain John wandered off. Presently, the door opened again, and three more veterans of the patrol cruised in, also in ancient uniforms. There were more cheers; more friendly cries. It was unanimously decided that the "Trotsky" of the first lot had better take a back seat, since the second in command of the newcomers was "a perfect ringer for Rasputin."

"See anything?"

"Nothing much. There's a bit of wreckage just off shore. Saw a British patrol boat early Tuesday morning. I was on the surface, lying between her and the sunrise; she was hidden by a low lying swirl of fog; she saw us first. When we saw her, I made signals, and over she came. Guess what the old bird wanted . . . *wanted to know if I'd seen a torpedo he'd fired at me!* An old scout with white whiskers, one of those retired captains, I suppose, who has gone back on the job. He admitted that he had received the Admiralty notes about us, but thought we acted

suspicious. . . . Did you ever hear of such nerve!"

When the war was young, I had a year of it on land. Now, I have seen the war at sea. To my mind, if there was one service of this war which more than any other required those qualities of endurance, skill and courage whose blend the fighting men so wisely call "*guts*," it surely was our submarine patrol. So here's to the L boats, their officers and crews, and to the *Bushnell* and her brood of Bantry Bay!

VI

OUR SAILORS

IN THE lingo of the Navy, the enlisted men are known as "gobs." This word is not to be understood as in any sense conveying a derogatory meaning. The men use it themselves;—"the *gobs* on the 210." "What does a real *gob* want with a wrist watch?" It is an unlovely syllable, but it has character.

In the days before the war, our navy was, to use an officer's phrase, more of "a big training school" than anything else. There were, of course, a certain number of young men who intended to become sailors by profession, even as some entered the regular army with the intention of remaining in it, but the vast majority of sailors were "one enlistment men" who signed on for four years and then returned to civilian life. The personnel included boys just graduated from or weary of high school, young men from the

western farms eager for a glimpse of the world, and city lads either uncertain as to just what trade or profession they should follow or thirsting for a man's cup of adventure before settling down to the prosaic task that gives the daily bread.

To-day, the enlisted personnel of the Navy is a cross section of the Nation's youth. There are many college men, particularly among the engineers. There are young men who have abandoned professions to enter the Navy to do their bit. For instance, the yeoman who ran the little office on board Destroyer 66 was a young lawyer who had attained real distinction. On board the same destroyer was a lad who had been for a year or two a reporter on one of the New York papers, and a chubby earnest lad whose father is a distinguished leader of the Massachusetts bar. Of my four best friends, "Pop" had worked in some shop or other, "Giles" was a student from an agricultural college somewhere in western New York, "Idaho" was a high school boy fresh from a great ranch, and "Robie" was the son of a physician in a small southern city. The Napoleonic

veterans of the new navy are the professional "gobs" of old; sailors with second enlistment stripes go down the deck the very *vieux de la veille.*

The sailor suffers from the fact that many people have fixed in their minds an imaginary sailor whom they have created from light literature and the stage. Just as the soldier must always be a dashing fellow, so must the sailor be a rollicking soul, fond of the bottle and with a wife in every port. Is not the "comic sailor" a recognized literary figure? Yet whoever heard of the "comic soldier"? This silly phantom blinds us to the genuine charm of character with which the sea endows her adventurous children; we turn into a frolic a career that is really one of endurance, heroism, and downright hard work. Not that I am trying to make Jack a sobersides or a saint. He is full of fun and spirit. But the world ought to cease imagining him either as a mannerless "rough-houser" or a low comedian. Our sailors have no special partiality for the bottle; indeed, I feel quite certain that a majority of every crew "keep away from booze" entirely. As for having

a wife in every port, the Chaplain says that a sailor is the most faithful husband in the world.

As a lot, sailors are unusually good-hearted. This last Christmas the men of our American battleships now included in the Grand Fleet requested permission to invite aboard the orphan children of a great neighbouring city, and give them an "American good time." So the kiddies were brought aboard; Jack rigged up a Christmas tree, and distributed presents and sweets in a royal style. Said a witness of the scene to me, "I never saw children so happy."

One of the passions which sway "the gobs" is to have a set of "tailor-made" liberty blues. By "liberty blues" you are to understand the sailor's best uniform, the picturesque outfit he wears ashore. Surely the uniform of our American sailor is quite the handsomest of all. On such a flimsy excuse, however, as that "the government stuff don't fit you round the neck" or "hasn't any *style*," Jack is forever rushing to some Louie Katzenstein in Norfolk, Va., or Sam Schwartz of Charlestown, Mass., to get a "real" suit made. Endless are the attempts to make these "a little bit *different*," attempts, alas, which invariably

end in reprimand and disaster. The *dernier cri* of sportiness is to have a right hand pocket lined with starboard green and a left hand pocket lined with port red. A second ambition is to own a heavy seal ring, "fourteen karat, Navy crest. Name and date of enlistment engraved free." Sailors pay anywhere from twenty to seventy dollars for these treasures. To-day, the style is to have a patriotic motto engraved within the band. I remember several inscribed "Democracy or Death." The desire of having a "real" watch comes next in hand, and if you ask a sailor the time he is very liable to haul out a watch worth anywhere from a hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars.

Our sailors are the very finest fellows in the world to live with. I sailed with the Navy many thousand miles; I visited all the great bases, and *I did not see one single case of drunkenness or disorderly behaviour.* The work done by our sailors was a hard and gruelling labour, the seas which they patrolled were haunted by every danger, yet everywhere they were eager and keen, their energy unabated, their spirits unshaken.

VII

THE BASE

THE town which served as the base of the American destroyers has but one great street; it is called The Esplanade, and lies along the harbour edge and open to the sea. I saw it first in the wild darkness of a night in early March. Rain, the drenching, Irish rain, had been falling all the day, but toward evening the downpour had ceased, and a blustery south-east wind had thinned the clouds, and brought the harbour water to clashing and complaining in the dark. It was such a night as a man might peer at from a window, and be grateful for the roof which sheltered him, yet up and down the gloomy highway, past the darkened houses and street lamps shaded to mere lifeless lumps of light, there moved a large and orderly crowd. For the most part, this crowd consisted of American sailors from the destroyers in port, lean, wholesome-looking

fellows these, with a certain active and eager manner very reassuring to find on this side of our cruelly tried and jaded world. Peering into a little lace shop decked with fragile knickknacks and crammed with bolts of table linen, I saw two great bronzed fellows in pea jackets and pancake hats buying something whose niceties of stitch and texture a little red-cheeked Irish lass explained with pedagogic seriousness; whilst at the other end of the counter a young officer with grey hair fished in his pockets for the purchase money of some yards of lace which the proprietress was slowly winding around a bit of blue cardboard. Back and forth, now swallowed up in the gloom of a dark stretch, now become visible in the light of a shop door, streamed the crowd of sailors, soldiers, officers, country folk and townspeople. I heard Devon drawling its oes and oa's; America speaking with Yankee crispness, and Ireland mingling in the babel with a mild and genial brogue.

By morning the wind had died down; the sun was shining merrily, and great mountain masses of rolling white cloud were sailing

across the sky as soft and blue as that which lies above Fiesole. Going forth, I found the little town established on an edge of land between the water and the foot of a hill; a long hill whose sides were in places so precipitous that only masses of dark green shrubbery appeared between the line of dwellings along the top and the buildings of the Esplanade. The hill, however, has not had things all its way. Two streets, rising at an angle which would try the endurance of an Alpine ram actually go in a straight line from the water's edge to the high ground, taking with them, in their ascent, tier after tier of mean and grimy dwellings. All other streets, however, are less heroic, and climb the side of the hill in long, sloping lateral lines. A new Gothic cathedral, built just below the crest of the hill, but far overtopping it, dominates and crowns the town; perhaps crushes would be the better verb, for the monstrous bone-grey mass towers above the terraced roofs of the port with an ascendancy as much moral as physical. Yet for all its vastness and commanding situation, it is singularly lifeless, and only the trickery of a moonlight night

can invest its mediocre, Albert-Memorial architecture with any trace of beauty.

The day begins slowly there, partly because this south Irish climate is such stuff as dreams are made of, partly because good, old irreconcilables are suspicious of the daylight saving law as a British measure. There is little to be seen till near on ten o'clock. Then the day begins; a number of shrewd old fish wives, with faces wrinkled like wintered apples and hair still black as a raven's wing, set up their stalls in an open space by a line of deserted piers, and peasants from near by villages come to town driving little donkey carts laden with the wares; now one hears the real rural brogue, the shrewd give and take of jest and bargain, and a prodigious yapping and snarling from a prodigious multitude of curs. Never have I seen more collarless dogs. The streets are full of the hungry, furtive creatures; there is a fight every two or three minutes between some civic champion and one of the invading rural mongrels; many is the Homeric fray that has been settled by a good kick with a sea boot. Little by little the harbour, seeing that the land is at last

awake, comes ashore to buy its fresh eggs, green vegetables, sweet milk and golden Tipperary butter. The Filipino and negro stewards from the American ships arrive with their baskets and cans; they are very popular with Queenstown folk who cherish the delusion that our trimly dressed, genially grinning negroes are the American Indians of boyhood's romance. From the cathedral's solitary spire, a chime jangles out the quarters, amusing all who pause to listen with its involuntary rendering of the first bar of "Strike up the band; here comes a sailor." And ever and anon, a breeze blows in from the harbour bringing with it a faint smell from the funnels of the oil-burning destroyers, a smell which suggests that a giant oil lamp somewhere in the distance has need of turning down. After the lull of noon, the men to whom liberty has been given begin to arrive in boatloads forty and fifty strong. The patrollers, distinguished from their fellows by leggins, belts, white hats, and police billie, descend first, form in line, and march off to their ungrateful task of keeping order where there is no disorder; then, scrambling up

the water side stairs like youngsters out of school, follow the liberty men. If there is any newcomer to the fleet among them, it is an even chance that he will be rushed over the hill to the *Lusitania* cemetery, a gruesome pilgrimage to which both British and American tars are horridly partial. Some are sure to stroll off to their club, some elect to wander about the Esplanade, others disappear in the highways and byways of the town. For Bill and Joe have made friends. There have been some fifty marriages at this base. I imagine a good deal of match-making goes on in those grimy streets, for the Irish marriage is, like the Continental one, no matter of silly sentiment, but a serious domestic transaction. All afternoon long, the sailors come and go. The supper hour takes them to their club; night divides them between the movies and the nightly promenade in the gloom.

The glories of this base as a mercantile port, if there ever were any—and the Queenstown folk labour mightily to give you the impression that it was the only serious rival to London—are now over with the glories of Nineveh and

Tyre. A few Cunard lithographs of leviathans now for the most part at the bottom of the sea, a few dusty show cases full of souvenirs, pigs and pipes of black, bog oak, "Beleek" china, a fragile, and vanilla candy kind of ware, and lace 'kerchiefs "made by the nuns" alone remain to recall the tourist traffic that once centred here. To-day, one is apt to find among the souvenirs an incongruous box of our most "breathy" (forgive my new-born adjective) variety of American chewing gum. If you would imagine our base as it was in the great days, better forget the port entirely and try to think of a great British and American naval base crammed with shipping flying the national ensigns, of waters thrashed by the propellers of oil tankers, destroyers, cruisers, armed sloops, mine layers, and submarines even. A busy dockyard clangs away from morning till night; a ferry boat with a whistle like the frightened scream of a giant's child runs back and forth from the docks to the Admiralty pier, little parti-coloured motor dories run swiftly from one destroyer to another.

From the hill top, this harbour appears

as a pleasant cove lying among green hills. On the map, it has something the outline of a blacksmith's anvil. Taking the narrow entrance channel to be the column on which the anvil rests, there extends to the right, a long tapering bay, stretching down to a village leading over hill, over dale to tumble-down Cloyne, where saintly Berkeley long meditated on the non-existence of matter; there lies to the right a squarer, blunter bay through which a river has worn a channel. This channel lies close to the shore, and serves as the anchorage.

Over the tops of the headlands, rain-coloured and tilted up to a bank of grey eastern cloud, lay the vast ambush, the merciless gauntlet of the beleaguered sea.

VIII

THE DESTROYER AND HER PROBLEM

ABOUT a quarter of a mile apart, one after the other along the ribbon of deep water just off the shore, lie a number of Admiralty buoys about the size and shape of a small factory boiler. At these buoys, sometimes attached in little groups of two, three, and even four to the same ring bolt, lie the American destroyers. From the shore one sees the long lean hull of the nearest vessel and a clump of funnels all tilted backwards at the same angle. The air above these waspish nests, though unstained with smoke, often broods vibrant with heat. All the destroyers are camouflaged, the favourite colours being black, West Point grey and flat white. This camouflage produces neither by colour nor line the repulsive and silly effect which is for the moment so popular. Going aboard a destroyer for the first time, a lay observer is struck by their extraordinary

leanness, a natural enough impression when one recalls that the vessels measure some three hundred feet in length and only thirty-four in width. Many times have I watched from our hill these long, low, rapier shapes steal swiftly out to sea, and been struck with the terror, the genuine dread that lies in the word *destroyer*. For it is a terrible word, a word heavy with destruction and vengeance, a word that is akin to many an Old Testament phrase.

Our great destroyer fleet may be divided into two squadrons, the first of larger boats called "thousand tonners," the second of smaller vessels known as "flivvers." Another division parts the thousand tonners into those which have a flush deck from bow to stern, and those which have a forward deck on a higher level than the main deck. All these types burn oil, the oil burner being nothing more than a kind of sprayer whose mist of fuel a forced draft whirls into a roar of flame; all can develop a speed of at least twenty-nine knots. The armament varies with the individual vessel, the usual outfit consisting of four four-inch guns, two sets of torpedo

tubes, two mounted machine guns, and a store of depth charges.

These charges deserve a eulogy of their own. They have done more towards winning the war than all the giant howitzers whose calibre has stupefied the world. In appearance and mechanism they are the simplest of affairs. The Navy always refers to them as cans: "I dropped a can right on his head"; "it was the last can that did the business." Imagine an ash can of medium size painted black and transformed into a ponderous thick walled cylinder of steel crammed with some three hundred pounds of T.N.T. and you have a perfect image of one. Now imagine at one end of this cylinder a detonator protected by an arrangement which can be set to resist the pressure of water at various levels. A sub appears, and sinks swiftly. If it is just below the surface, the destroyer drops a bomb set to explode at a depth of seventy feet. The bomb then sinks by its own weight to that level at which the outward force of the protective mechanism is overbalanced by the inward pressure of the water; the end yields, the detonator crushes, the

bomb explodes, and your submarine is flung horribly out of the depths almost clear of the water, and while he is up, the destroyer's guns fill the hull full of holes. Or suppose the submarine to have gone down two hundred feet. Then you drop a bomb geared to that depth upon him, and blow in his sides like a cracked egg. The sound of these engines travels through the water some twenty or twenty-five miles, and there have been ships who have caught the vibration of a distant depth bomb through their hulls and thought themselves torpedoed. I once saw a depth bomb roll off a British sloop into a half filled dry dock; the men scrambled away like mad, but returned in a few minutes to fish out a "can," that had sixty more feet to go before it could burst. It lay on the bottom harmless as a stone. The charges rest at the stern of a vessel, lying one above the other on two sloping runways, and can be released either from the stern or by hydraulic pressure applied at the bridge. The credit for this exceedingly successful scheme belongs to a distinguished American naval officer.

The destroyer has but one deck which is

arranged in the following manner. I take one of the "thousand tonners" as an illustration. From an incredibly lean, high bow, a first deck falls back a considerable distance to a four-inch gun; behind the gun lies another open space closed by a two-storied structure whose upper section is the bridge and whose lower section a chart room. At the rear of this structure the hull of the boat is cut away, and one descends by a ladder from the deck which is on the level of the chart room floor, to the main deck level some eight feet below. Beyond this cut but one deck lies, the mere steel covering of the hull. Guns and torpedo tubes are mounted on it, the funnels rise flush from the plates; a life line lies strung along its length, and strips of cocoa matting try to give something of a footing.

The officers' quarters are to be found under the forward deck. The sleeping rooms are situated on both sides of a narrow passageway which begins at the bow and leads to the open living room and dining room space known as the ward room. In the hull, in the space beneath the wardroom lie the quarters of the crew, amidships lie the boilers and the

engine room, and beyond them, a second space for the crew and the petty officers. A destroyer is by no means a paradise of comfort, though when the vessel lies in a quiet port, she can be as attractive and livable as a yacht. But Heaven help the poor sailor aboard a destroyer at sea! The craft rolls, dips, shudders, plunges like a horse straight up at the stars, sinks rapidly and horribly, and even has spells of see-sawing violently from side to side. Its worst motion is an unearthly twist,—a swift appalling rise at a dreadful angle, a toss across space to the other side of a wave, a fearful descent sideways and down and a ghastly shudder. "You need an iron stomach" to be on a destroyer is a navy saying. Some, indeed, can never get used to them, and have to be transferred to other vessels.

The destroyer is the capital weapon against the submarine. She can out-race a sub, can fight him with guns, torpedoes, or depth charges; she can send him bubbling to the bottom by ramming him amidships. She can confuse him by throwing a pall of smoke over his target; she can beat off his attacks

American destroyer on patrol

either above or below the surface. He fires a torpedo at her, she dodges, runs down the trail of the torpedo, drops a depth bomb, and brings her prey to the surface, an actual incident this. Her problem is of a dual nature, being both defensive and offensive. To-day, her orders are to escort a convoy through the danger zone to a position in latitude x and longitude y; to-morrow, her orders are to patrol a certain area of the beleaguered sea or a given length of coast.

Based upon a foreign port, working in strange waters, the destroyer flotilla added to the fine history of the American Navy a splendid record of endurance, heroism and daring achievement.

IX

TORPEDOED

IF YOU would understand the ocean we sailed in war-time, do not forget that it was essentially an *ambush*, that the foe was waiting for us in hiding. Nothing real or imagined brooded over the ocean to warn a vessel of the presence of danger, for the waters engulfed and forgot the tragedies of this war as they have engulfed and forgotten all disasters since the beginning of time. The great unquiet shield of the sea stretched afar to pale horizons, the sun shone as he might shine on a pretty village at high noon, the gulls followed alert and clamorous. Yet a thundering instant was capable of transforming this apparent calm into the most formidable insecurity. In four minutes you would have nothing left of your ship and its company but a few boats, some bodies, and a miscellaneous litter of wreckage strewn about the scene of

the disaster. Of the assassin there was not a sign.

All agreed that the torpedo arrived at a fearful speed. "Like a long white bullet through the water," said one survivor. "Honest to God, I never saw anything come so fast," said another.

"Where did it strike?" I asked the first speaker, a fine intelligent English seaman who had been rescued by a destroyer and brought to an American base.

"In a line with the funnel, sir. A great column of steam and water went up together, and the pieces of the two port boats fell all around the bridge. I think it was a bit of one of the boats that struck me here." He held up a bandaged hand.

"What happened then?"

"All the lights went out. It was just dusk, you see, so we had to abandon the boat in the darkness. A broken steam pipe was roaring so that you couldn't hear a word any one was saying. She sank very fast."

"Did you see any sign of the submarine?"

"The captain's steward thought he saw something come up just about three hundred

yards away as we were going down. But in my judgment, it was too dark to see anything distinctly, and my notion is that he saw a bit of wreckage, perhaps a hatch."

The next man to whom I talked was a chunky little stoker who might have stepped out of the pages of one of Jacobs' stories. I shall not aim to reproduce his dialect—it was of the "wot abaht it" order.

"We were heading into Falmouth with a cargo of steel and barbed wire. I had a lot of special supplies which I bought myself in New York, some sugar, two very nice 'ams and one of those round Dutch cheeses. I was always thinking to myself how glad my old woman would be to see all those vittles. Just as we got off the Scillies, one of those bloody swine hit us with a torpedo between the boiler room and the thwart ship bunker, forward of the engine room, and about sixteen feet below the water line. Understand? I was in the boiler room. Down came the bunker doors, off went the tank tops in the engine room, two of the boilers threw out a mess of burning coal, and the water came pouring in like a flood. Let me tell you that

cold sea water soon got bloody hot, the room was filled with steam, couldn't see anything. I expected the boilers to blow up any minute. I yelled out for my mates. Suddenly I heard one of 'em say: 'Where's the ladder?' and there was pore Jem with his face and chest burned cruel by the flying coal, and he had two ribs broke too, though we didn't know it at the time. Says 'e, 'Where's Ed?' and just then Ed came wading through the scalding water, pawing for the ladder. So up we all went, never expecting to reach the top. Then when we got into a boat, we 'eard that the wireless had been carried away, and that we'd have to wait for somebody to pick us up. So we waited for two days and a Yankee destroyer found us. Yes, both my mates are getting better, though sister 'ere tells me that pore Ed may lose his eye."

Sometimes the torpedo was seen and avoided by a quick turn of the wheel. There were other occasions when the torpedo seems to follow a ship. I remember reading this tale. "At 2.14 I saw the torpedo and felt certain that it would mean a hit either in the engine or

the fire room, so I ordered full speed ahead, and put the rudder over hard left. At a distance of between two and three hundred yards, the torpedo took a sheer to the left, but righted itself. For an instant it appeared as if the torpedo might pass astern, but porpoising again, it turned toward the ship and struck us close by the propellers."

So much for blind chances. One hears curious tales. The column of water caused by the explosion tossed onto the forward hatch of one merchant ship a twisted half of the torpedo; there was a French boat struck by a torpedo which did not explode, but lay there at the side violently churning, and clinging to the boat as if it were possessed of some sinister intelligence. I heard of a boat laden with high explosives within whose hold a number of motor trucks had been arranged. A torpedo got her at the mouth of the channel. An explosion similar to the one at Halifax raked the sea, the vessel, blown into fragments, disappeared from sight in the twinkling of an eye, and an instant later there fell like bolides from the startled firmament a number of immense motor trucks, one of

which actually crashed on to the deck of another vessel!

Meanwhile, I suppose, some hundred and fifty feet or more below, "Fritz," seated at a neat folding table, wrote it all down in his log.

X

THE END OF A SUBMARINE

TWO days before, in a spot somewhat south of the area we were going out to patrol, a submarine had attacked a convoy and sunk a horse boat. I had the story of the affair months afterwards from an American sailor who had seen it all from a nearby ship. This sailor, no other than my friend Giles, had been stationed in the look-out when he heard a thundering pound, and looking to port, he saw a column of water hanging just amidships of the torpedoed vessel, a column that broke crashing over the decks. In about three minutes the ship broke in two, the bow and the stern rising like the points of a shallow V, and in five minutes she sank. The sea was strewn with straw; there were broken stanchions floating in the confused water, and a number of horses could be seen swimming about. "All

you could see was their heads; they looked awful small in all that water. Some of the horses had men hanging to them. There was a lot of yelling for help." The other ships of the convoy had run for dear life; the destroyers had raced about like hornets whose nest is disturbed, but the submarine escaped.

We left a certain harbour at about three in the afternoon. Many of the destroyers were out at sea taking in a big troop convoy and the harbour seemed unusually still. The town also partook of this quiet, the long lateral lines of climbing houses staring out blankly at us like unresponsive acquaintances. Very few folk were to be seen on the street. We were bound forth on an adventure that was drama itself, a drama which even then the Fates, unknown to us, were swiftly weaving into a tragedy of vengeance, yet I shall never forget how casual and undramatic the Esplanade appeared. A loafer or two lounged by the door of the public house, a little group of sailors passed, a jaunting car went swiftly on its way to the station; there was nothing to suggest that these isles were beleaguered;

nothing told of the remorseless enemy at the gates of the sea.

All night long under a gloomy, starless sky we patrolled waters dark as the very waves of the Styx. The hope that nourished us was the thought of finding a submarine on the surface, but we heard no noise through the mysterious dark, and a long, interminable dawn revealed to us nothing but the high crumbling cliffs of a lonely and ill-reputed bay. Where were *they* then, I have often wondered? When had they their last look at the sun? Had they any consciousness of the end which time was bringing to them with a giant's hurrying step? At about six o'clock we swung off to the southward, and in a short time the coast had faded from sight.

From six o'clock to about half past ten we swept in great circles and lines the mist encircled disk of the pale sea which had been entrusted to our keeping. We were at hand to answer any appeal for aid which might flutter through the air, to investigate any suspicious wreckage; above all, to fulfill our function of destruction. I have spoken else-

where of the terror which lurks in the word *destroyer*. We were hunters; beaters of the ambush of the sea. About us lay the besieged waters, yellow green in colour, vexed with tide rips and mottled with shadows of haze and appearances of shoal.

We were on the bridge. Suddenly a voice called down the tube from the lookout on the mast:

"Smoke on the horizon just off the port bow, sir."

In a little while a vague smudginess made itself seen along the humid southeast, and some fifteen minutes later there emerged from this smudge the advance vessels of a convoy. Now one by one, now in twos and threes, the vessels of the convoy climbed over the dim edge of the world, a handful of destroyers accompanying the fleet. Almost every ship was camouflaged, though the largest of all, a great ocean drudge of a cargo boat, still preserved her decency of dull grey. A southeast wind blowing from behind the convoy sent the smoke of the funnels over the bows and down the western sky. There was something indescribably furtive about

the whole business. The ships were going at their very fastest, but to us they seemed to be going very slowly, to be drifting almost, across the southern sky. "We advanced," as our report read later, "to take up a position with the convoy." The watch, always keen on the 660, redoubled its vigilance. The bait was there; the hunt was on. Now, if ever, was the time for submarines. I remember somebody saying, "We may see a sub." The destroyer advanced to within three miles of the convoy, which was then across her bow. The morning was sunny and clear; the sun high in the north.

"Periscope! Port bow," suddenly cried the surgeon of the ship, then on watch on the bridge. "About three hundred yards away, near that sort of a barrel thing over there. See it? It's gone now."

Powerful glasses swept the suspected area. The captain, cool as ice, took his stand by the wheel.

"There it is again, sir. About seventy-five yards nearer this way."

This time it was seen by all who stood by. The periscope was extraordinarily small,

hardly larger than a stout hoe handle, and not more than two feet above the choppy sea.

"Full speed ahead," said the captain. "Sound general quarters."

I do not think there was a heart there that was not beating high, but outwardly things went on just as calmly as they had before the periscope had been sighted.

The fans of the extra boilers began to roar. The general quarters alarm, a continuous ringing, sounded its shrill call. Men tumbled to their stations from every corner of the ship, some going to the torpedo tubes, some to the guns, others to the depth charges at the stern. The wake of the destroyer, now tearing along at full speed, resembled a mill race. And now the destroyer began a beautiful manœuvre. She became the killer, the avenger of blood. Leaving her direct course, she turned hard over to port, and at the point where her curve cut the estimated course of the German, she tossed over a buoy to mark the spot at which the German had been seen and released a depth bomb. The iron can rolled out of its chocks, and fell with a little splash into the foaming wake. The buoy,

a mere wooden platform with a bit of rag, tied to an upright stick wobbled sillily behind. For about four seconds nothing happened. Then the seas behind us gave a curious, convulsive lift, one might have thought that the ocean had drawn a spasmodic breath; over this lifted water fled a frightful glassy tremor, and an instant later there broke forth with a thundering pound a huge turbid geyser which subsided, splashing noisily into streaks and eddies of foam and purplish dust. The destroyer then dropped three more in a circle round the first—a swift cycle of thundering crashes. Meanwhile the convoy, warned by our signal and by the uproar turned tail and fled from the spot. Great streamers of heavy black smoke poured from the many funnels, revealing the search for speed. In the area we had bombed, a number of dead fish began to be seen floating in the scum. By this time some of the vessels from the escort of the convoy had rushed to our assistance, and round and round the buoy they tore, dropping charge after charge. The ocean now became literally speckled with dead whiting, and I saw something that

The last of a German U-boat. The depth bomb that destroyed her was dropped by the destroyer shown in a corner of the picture

looked like an enormous eel floating belly upwards.

The convoy disappeared in a cloud of smoke. Little by little the excitement died away. Finally the only vessel left in sight on the broad shield of the sea was another American destroyer, our partner on patrol. The 305 was fitted with listening devices, and she agreed to remain behind to keep an eye and ear open. We were to have a word from her every half hour.

From twelve noon to two o'clock there were no tidings of importance. At 2:20, however, this laconic message sent us hurrying back to the scene of the morning's combat.

"Signs of oil coming to surface."

What had happened in the darkness below those yellow green waves? I am of the opinion that our first bomb, dropped directly upon her, crushed the submarine in like an egg-shell, that she had then sunk to the bottom, and developed a slow leak.

The 660 returned through a choppy sea to the battleground of the morning. We caught sight of the other destroyer from afar. She lay on the flank of a great area defiled

by the bodies of fish, purple T.N.T. dust and various bits of muddy wreckage which the explosions had shaken free from the ooze. Gulls, already attracted to the spot, were circling about, uttering hoarse cries. In the heart of this disturbed area lay a great still pool of shining water and into this pool, from somewhere in the depths, huge bubbles of molasses-brown oil were rising. Reaching the surface, these bubbles spread into filmy pan cakes round whose edges little waves curled and broke.

XI

"FISHING"

A YOUNG executive officer who had discovered that I came from his part of the world, took me there for tea. I fancy that few of the destroyer folk will forget the principal hotel at the Navy's Irish base. We sat in worn plush chairs in a vast rectangular salon lit by three giant sash windows of horrible proportions. Walls newly decked with paper of a lustrous, fiery red showered down upon us their imaginary warmth. The room was cold, horribly cold, and a minuscule fire of coke burning in a tiny grate seemed to be making no effort whatsoever to improve conditions. The little glow of fire in the nest of clinkers leered with a dull malevolence. Cold—a shivery cold. My eye fled to the pictures on the fiery wall. How in the d——l did these particular pictures ever land in this particular corner of south Ireland? Two were photographic

studies of ragged Alabama darkies, pictures of the kind that used to be printed on calendars in the eighteen nineties. One was entitled "I want you, ma honey" (this being addressed to a watermelon), the other being called "I'se just tired of school." These two were varied by an engraving of a race horse, some Charles I cavaliers, and a framed newspaper photograph of the 71st New York Guards en route for Tampa in 1898!

Sugar excepted, there is still plenty of good food in Ireland. The Exec. and I sat down to a very decent tea. I told all that I knew about the Exec.'s friends, that A was in a machine gun company; B in the naval aviation; C in the intelligence department and so forth. And when I had done my share of the talking, I demanded of the Exec. what he thought of his work "over there."

He answered abruptly, as if he had long before settled the question in his own mind:

"It's a game. Some of the sporting fishermen in the flotilla say that it's much like fishing . . . now you use this bait, now that, now this rod, now another, and all the time you are following . . . following the fish.

. . . It's a game, the biggest game in all the world, for it has the biggest stakes in all the world. There's far more strategy to it than one would suspect. You see, it's not enough to hang round till a periscope pops up; we've got to fish out the periscope."

"Fishing, then," said I. "Well, how and where do you fish?"

"On the chequer board of the Irish Sea and the Channel. You see the surface of the endangered waters is divided up into a number of squares or areas, and over each area some kind of a patrol boat stands guard. She may be a destroyer, . . . perhaps a 'sloop.' Now let's suppose she's out there looking for 'fish.'"

"Yes, even as a fisherman might wade out into a river in which he knows that fish are to be caught. But how is your destroyer fisherman to know just what fish are to be caught, and in just what bays and inlets he ought to troll?"

"That's the function of the Naval Intelligence. Have you realized the immense organization which Britain has created especially to fight the submarine? You'll

find it all in the war cabinet report for 1917. Before the war, there were only twenty vessels employed as mine sweepers and on auxiliary patrol duties; to-day the number of such craft is about 3,800, and is constantly increasing. And don't forget the sea planes, balloons, and all the other parts of the outfit. So while our destroyer fisherman is casting about in square *x*, let us say, all these scouting friends of his are trying to find the 'fish' for him. So every once in a while he gets a message via wireless, 'fish seen off bay blank,' 'fish reported in latitude A and longitude B.' . . . If these messages refer to spots in his neighbourhood, you can be sure that he keeps an extra sharp lookout. So no matter where the fish goes, there is certain to be a fisher." *During a recent month the mileage steamed by the auxiliary patrol forces in British home waters exceeded six million miles.*

"Now while you are beating the waters for them, what about the fish himself?"

"The fish himself? Well, the ocean is a pretty big place, and the fish has the tremendous advantage of being invisible. A sub-

marine need only show *three inches* of periscope if the weather is calm. She can travel a hundred miles completely submerged, and she can remain on the bottom for a full forty-eight hours. Squatting on the bottom is called "lying doggo." But she has to come up to breathe and recharge her batteries, and this she does at night. Hence the keenness of the night patrol. And here is another parallel to fishing. You know that when the wind is from a certain direction, you will find the fish in a certain pool, whilst if the wind blows from another quarter, you will find the fish in another place? Same way with submarines. Let the wind blow from a certain direction, and they will run up and down the surface off a certain lee shore. You can just bet that that strip of shore is well patrolled. Moreover, submarines can't go fooling round all over the sea, they *have* to concentrate in certain squares, say the areas which lie outside big ports or through which a great marine highway lies."

"Suppose that you manage to injure a fish, what then?"

"Well, if the fish isn't too badly injured,

he will probably make for one of the shallows, and lie doggo till he has time to effect repairs. Result, every shallow is watched as carefully as a miser watches his gold. And sea planes have a special patrol of the coast to keep them off the shallows by the shore."

"Sometimes, then, in the murk of night, a destroyer must bump into one by sheer good luck?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. Not long ago, a British destroyer racing through a pitch dark rainy night cut a sub almost in half. There was a tremendous bump that knocked the people on the bridge over backward, a lot of yelling, and then a wild salvo of rain blotted everything out. I think they managed to rescue one of the Germans. Pity they didn't get the fish itself. You know it's a great stunt to get your enemy's codes. We get them once in a while. Ever seen a pink booklet on any of your destroyer trips? It's a translation of a German book of instructions to submarine commanders. On British boats they call it 'Baby-Killing at a Glance or the Hun's Vade Mecum.' Great name, isn't it? Tells how to attack convoys and all that sort of

thing. Lots of interesting tricks like squatting in the path of the sun so that the lookout, blinded by the glare, shan't see you; playing dead and so on. That playing-dead stunt, if it ever did work, which I greatly doubt, is certainly no favourite now."

"Playing dead? Just what do you mean?"

"Why, a destroyer would chase a sub into the shallows and bomb her. Then 'Fritz' would release a tremendous mess of oil to make believe that he was terribly injured, and lie doggo for hours and hours. The destroyer, of course, seeing the oil, and hearing nothing from 'Fritz' was expected to conclude that 'Fritz' had landed in Valhalla, and go away. Then when she had gone away, 'Fritz,' quite uninjured, went back to his job."

"And now that stunt is out of fashion?"

"You bet it is. Our instructions are to bomb until we get tangible results. Before it announces the end of a sub, the Admiralty has to have unmistakable evidence of the sub's destruction. Not long ago, they say a sub played dead somewhere off the Channel, sent up oil, and waited for the fishers to go. In a few seconds, 'Fritz' got a depth bomb

right on his ear, and up he came to the top, the most surprised and angry Hun that ever was seen. Bagged him, boat and all. He must have had a head of solid ivory.

"Got to be cruising along, now. It's four o'clock, and our tender must be waiting for me at the pier."

"Going fishing?" I asked politely.

"You bet!" he answered with a grin.

XII

AMUSEMENTS

ON EVERY vessel in the Navy there is a phonograph, and on some destroyers there are two phonographs, one for the officers, and one for the men. The motion of the destroyer rarely permits the use of the machine at sea, but when the vessel lies quietly at her mooring buoy, you are likely to hear a battered old opera record sounding through the port holes of the ward room, and "When the midnight choo choo leaves for Alabam'" rising raucously out of the crew's quarters. When music fails, there are always plenty of magazines, thanks to good souls who read Mr. Burleson's offer and affix the harmless, necessary two cent stamps. Each batch is full of splendid novelettes. We gloat over the esoteric mysteries of the "American Buddhist," and wonder who sent it, we read the "Osteopath's Quarterly," the "Western Hog Breeder," and

"Needlework." Petty officers with agricultural ambitions, and there are always a few on every boat, descend on the agricultural journals like wolves on the fold.

No notice of Queenstown, no history of the Navy would be complete without a word about golf. It is *the* Navy game. Golf clubs are to be found in every cabin; in the tiny libraries Harry Vardon rubs shoulders with naval historians and professors of thermodynamics. If you take the train, you are sure to find a carriage full of golfers bound for a course on the home side of the river. I remember seeing the captain of an American submarine just about to start upon the most dangerous kind of an errand one could possibly imagine. It was midnight; it was raining, the great Atlantic surges were sweeping into the bay in a manner which told of rough weather outside. Just as he was about to disappear into the clamorous bowels of his craft, the captain paused for an instant on the ladder, and shouted back to us, "Tell Sanderson to put that mashie in my room when he's through with it."

Were it not for the great "United States

Naval Men's Club," I fear that Jack ashore would have had but a dull time, for our amusements were limited to a dingy cinema exploiting American "serials" several years old, and a shed in which a company of odd people played pretentious melodramas of the "Worst Woman in London" type on a tiny Sunday school stage. Alas, there were not enough people in the company to complete the cast of characters, so the poor leading lady was forever disappearing into the wings as the wronged daughter of a ducal house, only to appear again in a few minutes as the dark female poisoner, whilst the little leading man with a Kerry Brogue was forever rushing back and forth between the old white-haired servitor and the Earl of Darnleycourt. Once in a while Jack came to these performances, bought the best seat, and left the theatre before the performance was ended. The British Tars, however, sat through it respectably and solemnly to the end.

The Men's Club was to be found at one end of the town close by the water's edge. It was quite the most successful and attractive thing of its kind I have ever visited. The largest

building was a factory-like affair of brick which once housed some swimming baths, then became a theatre, and finally failed and lay down to die; the smaller buildings were substantial huts of the Y. M. C. A. kind which had been attached to the original structure. This institution provided some several thousand sailors with a canteen, an excellent restaurant, a theatre, a library, a recreation room, and, if necessary, a lodging. Best of all, one could go to the Club and actually be warm and comfortable in the American style, a boon not to be lightly regarded in these islands where people all winter long huddle in freezing rooms round lilliputian grates. Enlisted men controlled the club, maintained it, and selected their stewards, cooks and attendants from their own ranks. Upon everybody concerned, the Club reflects the highest credit.

There were "movies" every night, and on Saturday night a special concert by the "talent" in the flotilla. The opening number was always a selection by the Club Orchestra, perhaps a march of Sousa's, for the Navy is true to its own, or perhaps Meacham's

"American Patrol." Then came a long four-reel movie, "Jim the Penman," "The Ring of the Borgias," "Gladiola" or "Davy Crockett." The last terrifying flickers die away, the footlights become rosy; the curtain rises on "The Musical Gobs." We behold a pleasant room in which two people in civilian clothes sit playing a soft, crooning air on violins. Suddenly a knock is heard at the door. One of the performers rises, goes to the door, then returns and says to his partner:

"There's some sailors out there (great laughter in the audience); they say they can play too. Want to know if they can't come in and play with us."

"Sure, tell 'em to come in."

"Come in, boys."

From behind the back drop, a subdued humming suddenly bursts and blossoms into "Strike up the band; here comes a sailor." Enter now three pleasant looking, amiably grinning lads playing the tune. Chairs are brought out for the newcomers and the "Musical Gobs," genuine artists all, play several airs. Another knock is heard and a singer, a petty officer with a good tenor, also begs to

join them. The curtain goes down in a perfect tempest of applause. The screen descends once more, and all present sing together the popular songs whose text is shown, "Gimme a kiss, Mirandy," and "It's a long way to Berlin, but we'll get there." This feature was always a favourite. We then have a clog dancer, two more comic films and the National anthems. When the show is over, almost everybody wandered to the canteen to get "a bite to eat." To o'erleap the bars of the ration system with a real plate of ham and eggs, served club style, was an experience.

So if you were aboard a destroyer that night, you would have heard Jack whistling the new tunes, and his officers discussing golf scores.

XIII

STORM

SOONER or later, destroyer folk are sure to say something about *the* storm. It happened in December and raged for a full three days. Readers will have to imagine what it meant to destroyer sailors; the boat dancing, tipping and rolling crazily without a second's respite; no warm food to eat because a saucepan could not be kept on the stove or liquids in a saucepan; no rest to be had. Imagine being in the look-out's station in such a storm, wondering when the tops of the masts were going to crash down on one's head. It was a hard time. Yet two-thirds of the American flotilla were out in it, and *not a single vessel lost an hour from her patrol.* Indeed the American vessels were about the only patrol boats to stay out during the tempest.

One day in the wardroom of the good old Z, some of the officers began to tell of it. The

first narrator was the radio officer, a tall blond Westerner with big grey eyes, and a little sandy moustache.

"I knew we were in for something when I saw the clouds racing over *against* the wind. Didn't you notice that, Duke? It kept up for quite a while, and kept getting colder and colder. It wasn't one of these squally storms, but one of these storms that starts with a repressed grouch, nurses it along, and finally decides to have it out. Whoopee! Some night, that first one. Everybody stayed on their feet. Couldn't have slept if you'd had the chance to. To get about, you grabbed the nearest thing handy, hung on for dear life, took a step, grabbed the next thing handy and so on. The old hooker did the darndest stunts I ever saw or felt. I came in to get my coat hanging in that corner, and the first thing I knew I was lying on the floor over in the other corner trying to fight my way to my feet again. One of the men in the boiler room got burned by being thrown against a hot surface. Did I tell you how I tried to lie down? Well, just as I had actually succeeded in getting over to this transom

and stretching out preparatory to strapping myself in (you have to strap yourself tight in these destroyer bunks same as in an aeroplane) the old craft sank or swooped or did something more than usually funny, and left me hanging in the air about a foot and a half above the bunk. I must have looked like the subject of an experiment in levitation. A minute later either the bunk came up and caught me a wallop in the back, or I fell down like a ton of brick or we met in mid air, anyway, I thought my spine had been carried away. Then all of a sudden the library door opened and dumped about a hundred pounds of books on me.

"It was really dangerous to go on deck, for the waves could easily have torn one from the life line. One of the boats did, I think, lose a man overboard, but by wonderful luck managed to fish him out again." It is the engineer officer speaking. He is somewhat older than the average destroyer officer; somewhere on the edge of the forties, I should say; of medium height, lean; and with hazel eyes, a thin high nose and a thin, firm mouth. "I was just getting through my watch, had

my foot on the ladder, in fact, when the boat that we lost got smashed in. A wave about the size of a young mountain climbed aboard, hit the deck, caught the boat, and then poured off with the kindling wood. Then to make things interesting, right when it was blowing the hardest, the men's dog took it into his head to come on deck. Of course, he was only a three months' pup then, and didn't know any better. (He does now though, he won't stick his nose out when the weather's bad.) Well, he slipped his collar or something, and ran on deck. The water was washing about under the torpedo tubes like the breakers at Atlantic City, and the deck plates were buckling. Takes a destroyer to do that. But I keep forgetting the dog. The little brute backed up between two of the stacks and started yapping out a puppyish bark at the world to starboard. It was funny in a way to see the little brute there with his short hair blown backwards and his feet braced on the wet deck. Everybody yelled, and one of the men ran out hanging on to the life line, and not a minute too soon either, for a second later a big wave came thumping down on us,

and there was Maloney, the big dark fellow you were talking to this morning, hanging on to the wire by one arm, with the fool dog squashed under the other, and the whole Irish Sea trying to wash them both overboard. I was afraid he'd lose his balance or have the handle that travels along the wire torn out of his grasp. But he got to shelter all right, the darn dog yapping steadily all the time. We had two, almost three days of it, and it never let up one bit. One of our boats got caught in it with only a meagre supply of oil, but managed to make a French port. I've heard that there actually wasn't enough oil left in her tanks to have taken her three miles further. Other destroyers, too, had boats smashed up, and one of 'em came in with her smokestacks bent up for all the world like the crooked fingers of a hand. Some had depth charges washed overboard. It certainly was the worst blow that I remember."

Here the navigator came over with a twinkle in his eye, and touched me on the shoulder.

"Don't let him fill you with that dope," said he, "that storm wasn't in it with the

storms we have on the other side off Hatteras."

"Hatteras, my neck," said the other. "What do you think you are, anyway—Hell-Roaring Jake the Storm King?"

And then the talk shifted to something else.

XIV

ON NIGHT PATROL

IT WAS the end of the afternoon, there was light in the western sky and on the winding bay astern, but ahead, leaden, still, and slightly tilted up to a grey bank of eastern cloud, lay the forsaken and beleaguered sea. The destroyer, nosing slowly through the gap in the nets by the harbour mouth, entered the swept channel, increased her speed, and trembling to the growing vibration, hurried on into the dark. High, crumbling, and excessively romantic, the Irish coast behind her died away. Tragic waters lay before her. Whatever illusory friendliness men had read into the sea had vanished; the great leaden disk about the vessel seemed as insecure as a mountain road down whose length travellers cease from speaking for fear of avalanches. "A vast circular ambush." Somehow the beholder cannot help feeling that the waters should show some sign of the horrors they have

seen. But the sea has engulfed all, memories as well as living men, engulfing a thousand wrecks as completely as time engulfs a thousand years.

The dark came swiftly, almost as if the destroyer had sailed to find it in that bank of eastern cloud. There was an interval of twilight, no dying glow, but a mere pause in the pale ebb of the day. The destroyer had begun to roll. Looking back from the bridge one saw the lean, inconceivably lean, steel deck, the joints of the plates still visible, the guns to each side with their attendant crews, a machine gun, swinging on a pivot like a weather vane, the gently swaying bulk of the suspended motor dories and life boats, the four great tubes of the funnels rising flush from the plates, and crowned with a tremble of vibration from the oil flames below. And all this lean world swung slowly from side to side, rocking as gently as a child's cradle, swayed as if by some gentle force from within.

The destroyer was out on patrol. A part of the threatened sea had been given to her to watch and ward. She was the guardian, . . . the avenger.

The supper hour arrived, men came in groups to the galley door, some to depart with steamy pannikins, there was a smell of good food very satisfying to children of earth. In the officer's wardroom when dinner was over, and the negro mess boys were silently folding the white cloth, securing the chairs, and tidying up, those not on watch settled down to a friendly talk. All the lights except one bulb hanging over the table in a pyramidal tin shade had been switched off. It was very quiet. Now and then one could hear the splash of a wave against the side, a footfall on the deck overhead, or the tinkle of the knives and forks which the steward was putting away in a drawer. The hanging light swayed with the motion of the ship, trailing a pool of light up and down the oaken table. Cigarette smoke rose in wisps and long, languorous oriental coils to the clean ceiling. A sailor or two came in for his orders. Hushed voices talking apart, a direction to do this or that, a respectful business-like "yes, sir," a quiet withdrawal by the only door. It was all very calm, it had the atmosphere of a cruise, yet those aboard might have been

torpedoed any minute, struck a mine, crashed into a submarine fooling about too near the surface (this has happened) or been sunk in thirty seconds by some hurrying, furtive brute of a liner which would have ridden over them as easily as a snake goes over a branch. The talk flowed in many channels, on the problems of destroyers, on the adventures of other boats, on members of the crew soon to be advanced to commissioned rating, and under the thought under the words, could be discerned the one fierce purpose of these fighting lives; the will to strike down the submarine and open the lanes of the sea. Oh, the vigilance, the energy, the keenness of the American patrol! There were tales of U-boats hiding in suspected bays, of merchantmen swiftly and terribly avenged, of voices that cried for help in the night, of life boats almost awash in whose foul waters the dead floated swollen and horrible. The war of the destroyer against the submarine is a matter of tragic melodrama.

The wandering glow of the swaying lamp now was reflected from the varnished table to one keen young face, now to another.

"Running a destroyer is a young man's game," says the Navy. True enough. Pray do not imagine them, as a crew of "hell-driving boys." The destroyer service is the achievement of the man in the early thirties, of the officer with a young man's vigour and energy and the resolution of maturity. After all, the Navy Department is not yet trusting vessels worth several million dollars and carrying over a hundred men to eager youngsters who have no background of experience to their energy, good-will and bravery. If you would imagine a destroyer captain, take your man of thirty-two or -three, give him blue eyes, a keen, clear-cut face essentially American in its features, a sailor's tan, and a sprinkling of grey hair. A type to remember, for to the destroyer captain more than to any other single figure do we owe our opportunity of winning the war.

The evening waned, the officers who were to go on watch at twelve stole off to get a little sleep before being called. The navigator and the senior engineer slept on the transoms of the wardroom. A junior officer lingered beneath the solitary ever-swinging light, reading

a magazine. A little hitch worked itself into the destroyer's motion, a swift upward leap, a little catch in mid air, a descent ending in a quiver. The voice of the waters grew louder, there were hissing splashes, watery blows, bubbly gurgles.

The sleeping officers had not paused to undress. Nobody bothers to strip on a destroyer. There isn't time, and a man has to be ready on the instant for any eventuality.

The door giving on a narrow passageway to the deck opened, and as it stood ajar, the hissing of the water alongside invaded the silent room. A sailor in a blue reefer, a big lad with big hands and simple, friendly face, entered quietly, walked over a transom and said:

"Twelve o'clock, sir."

"All right, Simmons," said the engineer, sitting up and kicking off the clothes at once with a quick gesture. Then he swung his legs over the side of the bunk, pulled on a coat and hat and wandered out to take his trick at the bridge.

He found a lovely, starlit night, a night rich in serenity and promised peace, a night

for lovers, a poet's night. There was phosphorescence in the water, and as the destroyer rolled from side to side, now the guns and rails to port, now those to starboard stood shaped against the spectral trail of foam running river-like alongside. One could see some distance ahead over the haunted plain. The men by the guns were changing watch; black figures came down the lane by the funnels. A sailor was drawing cocoa in a white enamel cup from a tap off the galley wall. The hatchway leading to the quarters of the crew was open; it was dark within; the engineer heard the wiry creak of a bunk into which some one had just tumbled. The engineer climbed two little flights of steps to the bridge. It was just midnight. It was very still on the bridge, for all of the ten or twelve people standing by. All very quiet and rather solemn. One can't escape from the rich melodrama of it all. The bridge was a little, low-roofed space perhaps ten feet wide and eight feet long, it had a front wall shaped like a wide, outward pointing V, its sides and rear were open to the night. The handful of officers and men on watch stood at various points

along the walls peering out into the darkness. Phosphorescent crests of low, breaking waves flecked the waters about; it was incredibly spectral. In the heart of the bridge burned its only light, a binnacle lamp burning as steadily as a light in the chancel of a darkened church, the glow cast the shadow of the helmsman and the bars of the wheel down upon the floor in radiations of light and shade like the stripes of a Japanese flag. The captain, keeping a sharp lookout over the bow, gave his orders now and then to the helmsman, a petty officer with a sober, serious face.

Suddenly there were steps on the companionway behind, the dark outline of some messenger appeared, a shadow on a background of shades. The sailor peered round for his chief and said, "Mr. Andrews sent me up, sir, to report hearing a depth bomb or a mine explode at 12.25."

"Was it very loud, Williams?"

"Yes, sir, I should have said that it wasn't more than a few miles away. We all heard it quite distinctly down below."

Evidently some devil's work was going on in the heart of the darkness. The vibration

had travelled through the water and had been heard, as always, in that part of the ship below the water line.

Williams withdrew. The destroyer rushed on into the romantic night.

"Must have spotted something on the surface," said some one. . . . A radio operator appeared with a sheaf of telegrams. "Submarine seen in latitude x and longitude y," "Derelict awash in position so and so." "Gun fire heard off Cape Z at half past eleven" —it all had to do with the channel zone to the south. The captain shoved the sheaf into a pocket of his jacket.

Suddenly, through the dark, was heard a hard, thundering pound.

"By jingo, there's another," said somebody. "Nearby, too. Wonder what's up?"

"Sounded more like a torpedo this time," said an invisible speaker in a heavy, dogged voice. A stir of interest gripped the bridge; one could see it in the shining eyes of the young helmsman. Two of the sailors discussed the thing in whispers, fragments of conversation might have been overheard.— "No, I should have said off the port bow."

"Isn't this about the place where the *Welsh Prince* got hers?" "Listen, didn't you hear something then?"

From somewhere in the distance came three long blasts, blasts of a deep roaring whistle.

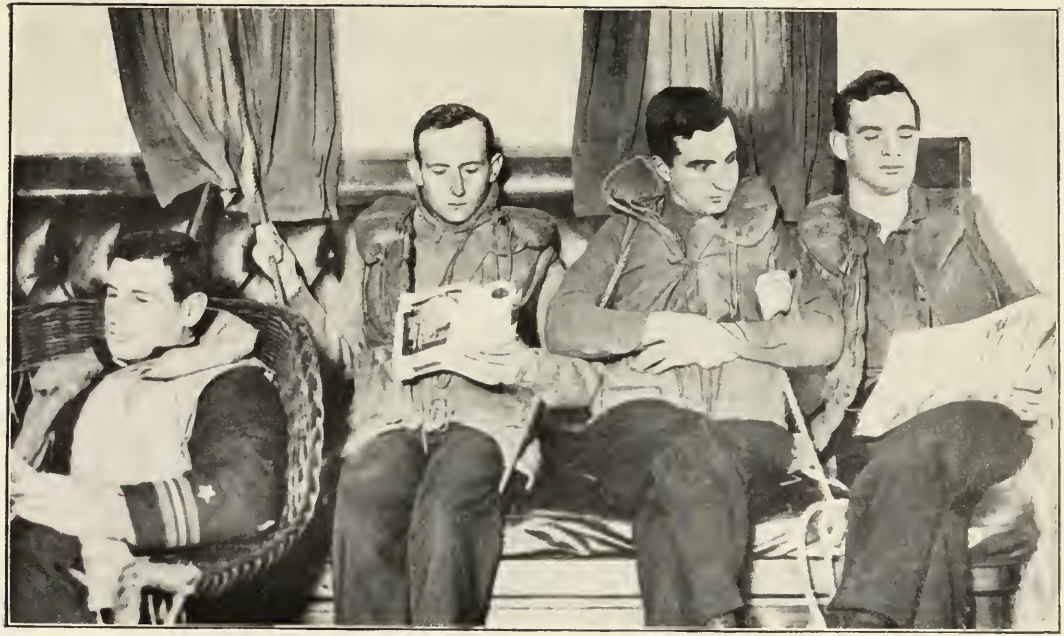
"Something's up, sure!"

The destroyer, in obedience to an order of the captain, took a sharp turn to port, and turning, left far behind a curving, luminous trail upon the sea. The wind was dying down. Again there were steps on the way.

"Distress signal, sir," said the messenger from the radio room, a shock-haired lad who spoke with the precise intonation of a Bostonian.

The captain stepped to the side of the binnacle, lowered the flimsy sheet into the glow of the lamp, and summoned his officers. The message read: "S. S. *Zemblan*, position x y z torpedoed, request immediate assistance."

An instant later several things happened all at once. The "general quarters" alarm bell which sends every man to his station began to ring, full speed ahead was rung on in the engine room, and the destroyer's course



To enjoy their leisure between watches these officers of an American destroyer lash themselves into their seats. A destroyer travelling at high speed in a heavy sea is like a bucking broncho.

was altered once more. Men began to tumble up out of the hatchways, figures rushed along the dark deck; there were voices, questions, names. The alarm bell rang as monotonously as an ordinary door bell whose switch has jammed. But soon one sound, the roaring of the giant blowers sucking in air for the forced draught in the boiler room, overtopped and crushed all other fragments of noise, even as an advancing wave gathers into itself and destroys pools and rills left along the beach by the tide. A roaring sound, a deep windy hum. Gathering speed at once, the destroyer leaped ahead. And even as violence overtook the lives and works of men, the calm upon the sea became ironically more than ever assuring and serene.

"Good visibility," said somebody on the bridge. "She can't be more than three miles away now. Hello, there's a rocket."

A faint bronzy golden trail, suddenly flowering into a drooping cluster of darting white lights gleamed for a furtive instant among the westering winter stars.

"I saw her, sir!" cried one of the lookouts.

"Where is she, O'Farrell?"

"Quite a bit to the left of the rocket, sir. She's settling by the head."

The beautiful night closed in again. O'Farrell and the engineer continued to peer out into the dark. Suddenly both of them cried out, using exactly the same words at exactly the same time, "Torpedo off the port bow, sir!"

The thing had become visible in an instant. It could be seen as a rushing white streak in the dark water, and was coming towards the destroyer with the speed of an express train, coming like a bullet out of a gun.

The captain uttered a quick word of command. The wheel spun, the roaring, trembling ship turned in the dark. A strange thing happened. Just as the destroyer had cleared the danger line, the torpedo, as if actuated by some malevolent intelligence, porpoised, and actually turned again towards the vessel. The fate of the destroyer lay on the knees of the gods. Those on the bridge instinctively braced themselves for the shock. The affair seemed to be taking a long time, a terribly long time. An instant later, the contrivance

rushed through the foaming wake of the destroyer only a few yards astern, and continuing on, disappeared in the calm and glittering dark. A floating red light suddenly appeared just ahead and at the same moment all caught sight of the *Zemblan.*

She was hardly more than half a mile away. Somebody aboard her had evidently just thrown over one of those life buoys with a self-igniting torch attachment, and this buoy burned a steady orange red just off that side on which the vessel was listing. The dark, stricken, motionless bulk leaned over the little pool of orange radiance gleaming in a fitful pool; round the floating torch one could see vague figures working on a boat by the stern, and one figure walking briskly down the deck to join them. There was not a sign of any explosion, no breakage, no splintered wood. Some ships are stricken, and go to their death in flames and eddying steam, go to their death as a wounded soldier goes; other ships resemble a strong man suddenly stricken by some incurable and mysterious disease. The unhappy *Zemblan* was of this latter class. There were two boats on the water, splashing

their oars with a calm regularity of the college crews; there were inarticulate and lonely cries.

Away from the light, and but vaguely seen against the midnight sky, lay a British patrol boat which had happened to be very close at hand. And other boats were signalling—"*Zemblan*—am coming." The sloop signalled the destroyer that she would look after the survivors. Cries were no longer heard. Round and round the ship in great sweeps went the destroyer, seeking a chance to be of use,—to avenge. Other vessels arrived, talked by wireless and disappeared before they had been but vaguely seen.

Just after two o'clock, the *Zemblan's* stem rose in the air, and hung suspended motionless. The tilted bulk might have been a rock thrust suddenly out of the deep towards the starry sky. Then suddenly, as if released from a pose, the stern plunged under, plunged as if it were the last act of the vessel's conscious will.

The destroyer cruised about till dawn. A breeze sprang up with the first glow of day, and scattered the little wreckage which had

floated silly-solemnly about. Nothing remained to tell of an act more terrible than murder, more base than assassination.

XV

CAMOUFLAGE

IN THE annals of the Navy one may read of many a famous duel, and if the code duello were in existence to-day, I feel certain that the present would not be less fiery than the past. The subject which stirs up all the discussion is camouflage. To ask at a crowded table: "What do you think of camouflage," is to hurl a very apple of discord down among your hosts. For there will be some who will stand by camouflage to the last bright drop of blood, and strive to win you to their mind with tales that do "amaze the very faculties of eyes and ears." You will hear of ships melting into cloud, of vessels apparently going full speed backward, of ships whose funnels have one and all been rendered invisible. And now the mocker is sure to ask the pro-camouflager in the most serious of tones if he ever saw the ship disguised as a sunset which the Germans unhappily dis-

covered on a rainy day. The signal gun of the anti-camouflage squad now having sounded, the assault begins with a demand of "What's your theory?" The pro's reply something about breaking up spaces of colour, optical illusions—"if you draw horizontal lines along a boat's hull, she will appear longer; if you draw vertical or angular parallels, the vessel will appear shorter." The anti's answer that such an expedient might possibly, just possibly, deceive an idiot child for exactly five and one-eighths seconds, as for deceiving a wily Hun,—Good Night! "Do you mean to tell me," cries the devotee of camouflage, growing angry, "that a ship painted one flat, dead colour is less visible against the sea than one whose surface is broken up into many colours?" "Yes, that's what I mean," retorts the anti. "You know as well as I do that a thing that looks like Vesuvius in eruption is ten times more easily seen than a boat painted a dull neutral grey."

"Yes," cries some one else, "but hasn't camouflage on land proved its utility?" "I'm talking about naval camouflage," answers the anti. "On land your camouflaged object

is usually stationary itself, and stands in relation to a surface which is always stationary,—the surrounding landscape. Out here, both surfaces, sea and vessel, are constantly in motion and constantly changing their relation to each other." "But I *saw* a boat—" begins a pro. "Oh, cut it out," cries somebody else wholeheartedly, and the discussion ends exactly where a thousand others have ended.

Whether camouflage be valuable or not, it certainly is the fad of the hour. The good, old-fashioned, one-colour boat has practically disappeared from the seas, and the ships that cross the ocean in these perilous times have been docked to make a cubist holiday; the futurists are saving democracy. There are countless tricks. I remember seeing one boat with a false water line floating in a painted sea whose roaring waves contrasted oddly with a frightfully placid horizon, and I recall another with the silhouette of a schooner painted on her side. I remember a little tramp remorselessly striped, funnels and all with alternate slanting bands of apple-green and snuff brown; I have an indistinct memory

of a terrible mess of milky-pink, lemon-yellow and rusty black, which earned for the vessel displaying it the odious title of "The Boil." We saw the prize monstrosity in midocean. Every school of camouflage had evidently had a chance at her. She was striped, she was blotched; she was painted in curves; she was slashed with jagged angles; she was bone grey; she was pink; she was purple; she was green; she was blue; she was egg yellow. To see her was to gasp and turn aside. We had quite a time picking a suitable name for her, but finally decided on the Conscientious Objector, though her full title was "The State of Mind of a C. O. on Being Sent to the Front."

Finally destiny put in my path just the man I wanted to see, the captain of a British submarine. "What do you think of camouflage?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, after a pause, "I can't remember that it ever hindered us from seeing a ship. Visibility at sea strikes me as being more a matter of mass than of colour. The optical illusion tricks are too priceless silly. Must amuse the Huns. You see if the

eye does play him false, Fritz detects the error with his gauges."

The P. C's, I am sure, will put this down as a bit of typical submarine "side." Indignant letters, care H. M. S. X999.

XVI

TRAGEDY

JUST at the fall of night, three days before, a weak and fragmentary wireless had cried forlornly over the face of the waters for immediate help, and had then ceased abruptly like a lamp blown out by a gust of wind. The destroyers, stationed here and there in the vast loneliness of the gathering dark, had heard and waited for "the position" of the disaster, but nothing more came through the night. Presently, it had begun to rain.

And now for three interminable and tedious days and nights rain had been falling, falling with the monotony and purpose of water over a dam. There being little or no wind the drops fell straight as plummets from a sky flat as a vast ceiling, and the air reverberated with that murmuring hum which is the voice of the rain mingling with the sea. Rain greasy with oil it had gathered from the plates poured in little streams off the deck;

drops hissed on the iron of the hot stacks. Clad in stout waterproof clothes, and wearing their waterproof hoods, the crew went casually about their duties, their hardy faces showing no sign of discomfort or weariness.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of a January day.

Presently the lookout, from his station on the mast, reported: "Floating object off starboard bow," and a few minutes later one of the watch on the bridge reported two more floating masses, this time visible to port. The destroyer was making her way into a vast field of wreckage. Within the radius of visibility, there lay, drifting silently about in the incessant rain, an incredible quantity of barrels, boxes, bits of wood, crates, vegetables, apples, onions, fragments of coke, life preservers and planks.

"See if you can spot a name on anything," said the destroyer's captain. But though everybody looked carefully, not a sign of a name could be seen. Mile after mile went the destroyer down the rain lashed sea, mile after mile of wreckage opened before her.

"Life boat ahead showing flag!"

The captain raised to his eyes the pair of binoculars he wore hanging from his neck, and peered out of the window by the wheel.

"Found her yet, sir?"

"Yes . . . it's a small grey boat. Barely afloat, I guess. They've got a shirt or something tied to a mast or an oar. We'll have a look at it. Tell Mullens to have a couple of men stand by with boat hooks in case we run alongside."

The swamped boat, motionless as a stone in the driving rain, lay no more than half a mile off. Voices eagerly discussed the possibility of finding survivors.

"Alive? Course they ain't. Why, the boat's awash."

"Sure, but look at the flag."

"Those poor guys are gonners long ago."

Handled skilfully the destroyer crept alongside the motionless boat, and presently those on the bridge looked directly down upon it. It lay, floating on even keel, not more than six or seven feet off the starboard side, and was held up by its tanks. A red flannel shirt hung soggily against an upright pole, and coloured

the shaft with the drippings of its dye. The interior of the boat was but a deep puddle, a dark puddle into which the rain fell monotonous and implacable. Floating face down and side by side in the water lay the fully clothed bodies of two men, whilst at the stern, sitting on a seat just under water, with his feet in the water and his body toppled over on the gunwale, could be seen a third figure dressed in a kind of seaman's jacket. The wet cloth of his trousers clung lightly to his thin legs and revealed the taut muscles of his thighs. Then boat hooks fished out from the side of the destroyer and drew the heavy craft in. A sailor cried out that all were dead.

"Any name on the boat, Hardy?" asked the officer standing by.

"No, sir."

"Very well. Cast off!" The life boat, watched by some rather horrified eyes, slid alongside the destroyers, and drifted solemnly behind.

"Now," said the captain, who had come on deck, "I want one tidy shot put into that boat, Butler."

Ten seconds later, the roar of the four-inch at the stern burst asunder the murmur of the rain, and the watchers saw the boat of the dead crumple and disappear in the loneliness and rain.

XVII

"CONSOLIDATION, NOT COÖPERATION"

TALKING one day with an English member of the House of Commons, I asked him what he held to be the most important result of American intervention.

"The spirit of coöperation which you have stirred up among the Allies," he answered. "Not that I mean to say that the Allies were continually quarrelling among themselves; the manner in which Britain has shared her ships with other hard pressed nations would refute any such insinuation, but not until you came on the scene was there a really scientific attempt at the coördination of our various forces. You were quite right to insist on a generalissimo. But of course the great lesson you've given us has been through your Navy. There's been nothing like it in the history of the allied forces. What an extraordinary position Admiral Sims has won

in England! His influence is perfectly tremendous; there isn't another allied leader who has a tithe of his power. I really do not think that there is a parallel to it in English history."

Now this is no over-statement of the case. The influence of Admiral Sims over the British people *is* tremendous. All along he has had but on ewatchword, "Consolidation, not Coöperation." It is a splendid phrase, and Admiral Sims has turned it into action. The way, I gathered from various members of the Staff and the Embassy, had not been without its obstacles. For instance, once upon a time certain American forces were to be sent into a distant area, and a member of the Allied Naval Council sitting in London had taken the stand that the little force should be supplied from the United States. Immediately Admiral Sims pointed out that these American forces must be considered as *allied* forces and must be supplied from the nearest and most convenient *allied* sources of supply. And he carried the day. Not only has the Admiral insisted on the *consolidation* of material forces; but he has also

insisted on a consolidation of the allied spirit. Himself a master of diplomacy and tact, he loses no opportunity of reminding the individual officers under his control to bear in mind the good points of other services and to remember the fact that the success of this work would be directly affected by their relations with their comrades of the Great Cause. And this extraordinary consolidation of force and spirit is precisely the thing which more than anything else takes the attention of the visiting correspondent. "Consolidation, not Coöperation"—it is a phrase that well might have been our allied motto from the first.

While in London, I had several talks with Admiral Sims in his office in Grosvenor Gardens. Of the many distinguished men it has been my lot to interview, Admiral Sims stands first for the ability to put a guest at ease. Tall, spare, erect, and walking with a fine carriage, our Admiral is a personality whom the interviewer can never forget. One has but to talk with him a few minutes to realize the secret of the extraordinary personal loyalty he inspires. And he is as popular

in France as he is in England. Speaking French fluently, he is able to carry on discussion with the French members of the Naval Council in their own language.

"Consolidation, not Coöperation." There's a real phrase. And thanks to the great man who said it and insisted upon it, we defeated the common enemy.

XVIII

MACHINE AGAINST MACHINE

THE year stood at the threshold of the spring; a promise of warmth lay in the climbing sun; on land one might have heard the first songs of the birds. At sea, the mists of winter were lifting from the waters, and the sun, for many months shrunk and silver pale, shone hard and golden bright. A fresh, clear wind was blowing from the west, driving ahead of it a multitude of low foam-streaked waves. There was not a sign of life to be seen anywhere on the vast disk of the sea, not a trail, not a smudge of smoke on the horizon's circle, not even a solitary gull or diver. The destroyer, dwarfed by her world, ran up and down the square she had been chosen to guard. She had the air of performing a casual evolution. There was never anything to be found in this particular square. It lay beyond the great highways; even the sight of a coaster was there something of a rarity. Periscopes were never reported from that area, never had been reported,

and probably never would be. Caressed by the sun, enveloped in the serenity of the day as in a mantle, the destroyer went back and forth on her patrol.

The emergence of the periscope a quarter of a mile ahead off the starboard bow had in it something so unattended that the incident had a character of abnormality . . . much as if a familiar hill should suddenly turn into a volcano. It is greatly to the honour of the ship's discipline, that those aboard were not staled by months of unfruitful vigil, and acted as swiftly as if the destruction of a submarine were matter of daily practice. There it lay, going steadily along about two hundred yards away, . . . a simple, most unromantic black rod rising two feet or so above the waves. A white furrow like a kind of comet's tail, streamed behind it, forever widening at the end. Later on, they asked themselves what the submarine could possibly have been doing. Seeking a quiet place to come up to breathe, to effect repairs, to send out a hurried wireless message?

It might have been a rendezvous between the two vessels. One felt that the gods had

brought to pass there no careless drama, but a tragedy long meditated and skillfully prepared. The morning sun watched, a casual spectator, the duel between the two engines of violence.

There had been a command, a call of the summoning bell, a release of power carefully stored for just such an event, and the destroyer leaped ahead like a runner from the starting line. The periscope, meanwhile, continued to plough its way straight ahead almost into the teeth of the wind and the flattened, marbly waves. Presently, either because the destroyer had been seen or heard on the submarine telephone, the submarine began to submerge, sucking in a kind of a foaming hollow as she sank. Aboard the destroyer, they wondered if the keel would clear her, and waited for the shock, the rasping grind. But nothing happened. The first depth bomb fell into the heart of the submarine's swirl even as a well placed stone falls in the heart of a pool. Trembling to the roar of her fans, the destroyer fled across the spot, and turned. The wake of her passing had almost obliterated the platter-shaped swirl the subma-

rine had left behind; one had a vision of the great steel cylinder tumbling, bubbling down through green water to dark, harmless as a spool of thread on the surface, but presently to be changed by the wisdom and cunning of men into monstrous and chaotic strength. One, two, three, four, five . . . a thundering pound. . . . The submarine rose behind them, her bow on the crest of the geyser, an immense, tapering rusty mass, wet and shining in the placid glance of the day. From a kind of hole some distance up the side, a stream of oil ran much like blood from a small deep wound. . . . A gun spoke, and spoke again, a careening whizz, . . . ugly hollow crashes of tearing steel . . . the sub heeled far over on her starboard side . . . those nearest heard, or thought they heard, screaming . . . the bow sank, tilting up the great planes and propellers. A monstrous bubble or two broke on the tormented surface just before she disappeared . . . and with her going, the calm of the spring morning, which had been frightened away like a singing bird, returned once more to the tragic and mysterious sea.

XIX

THE LEGEND OF KELLEY

KELLEY, not Von Biberstein or Hans Bratwurst, is his name, Kelley spelled with an "e." The first destroyer officer whom you question will very possibly have never heard of him, the second will have heard the legend, the third will tell you of a radio officer, a friend of his, who received one of Kelley's messages. So day by day the legend grows apace. Kelley is the captain of a German submarine.

The first time that I heard about him he figured as a young Irishman of good family who had attached himself to the German cause in order to settle old scores. "Lots of people know him in the west of Ireland; he goes ashore there any time he cares to." Another version, perhaps the true one, if there be any truth at all in this fantastic business, is that Kelley is no Irishman but a cosmopolitan, jesting German with a Celtic

camouflage. No less a person than Captain James Norman Hall testifies that the Germans in the trenches often tried to anger the British troops by pretending they were disloyal Irish. So perhaps Kelley is Von Biberstein after all. A third version has it that Kelley is a Californian of Irish origin. Those who hold to this last view have it that Kelley spares all American ships but sends the Union Jack to the bottom without mercy.

Many and varied are Kelley's activities. He has penchant for sending messages. "I am in latitude x and longitude y; come and get me—Kelley," has come at the dead of night into the ears of many an astounded radio operator. Others declare that these messages were sent by Hans Rose, the skipper of the submarine which attacked the shipping off Nantucket in 1916. All agree that Kelley was the beau ideal of pirates. He sinks a ship and apologizes for his action, he sees the women passengers into the boats with the grace and urbanity of a Chesterfield, he comes alongside a wretched huddle of survivors, supplies them with food, and sends out notice of their position. When they ask his name, he replies

"Captain Kelley," and disappears from view beneath the sea. He goes ashore, and proves his visit with theatre tickets and hotel bills. "London hotel bills made out to Kelley, Esquire." He requests the survivors as a slight favour to tell Captain Nameless of the Destroyer XYZ that his propeller shaft needs repairing; that he, Kelley, has been seriously annoyed by having to listen to the imperfect beat via the submarine telephone. There is certainly a flavour of Celt in this chivalry tinged with mockery.

I could never find anybody who had actually seen him, much to my regret, for I should have been glad to describe so famous a person. Months have passed since last I heard of him. Perhaps he is still in the Irish Sea; perhaps he is now at Harwich, perhaps he has gone aloft to join his kinsman "The Flying Dutchman." If so, let us keep his memory green, for he was a pirate *sans peur et sans reproche.*

XX

SONS OF THE TRIDENT

ANY essay on the British sailor must rise from a foundation of wholesome respect. One cannot look at the master of the world without philosophy. And British Jack is the world's master, for he holds in his hands that mastery of the seas which is the mastery of the land. He is a sailor of the mightiest of all navies, an inheritor of the world's most remarkable naval tradition, a true son of Britannia's ancient trident.

What is he like, British Jack? How does he impress those companions who share the vigil of the seas?

To begin with the Briton is, on the average, an older man than our bluejacket. British Jack has not gone into the Royal Navy "for the fun of it" or "to see the world," as our posters say, but as the serious business of his life. His enlistment is an eight-year affair, and by the time that he has completed

it, he rarely thinks of returning to a prosaic life ashore. Thus it comes about that whilst our American sailors are usually somewhere in the eager, irresponsible twenties, British tars are often men of sober middle age. One is sure to see, in any of the "home ports," the fleet's married men out walking on Sunday with their wives and children, forming together a number of honest, steady little groups whose hold on the durable satisfactions of life it is a pleasure to see. The "home ports" idea has well proved its value. It is simple enough in operation. Each ship, according to the plan, bases on some definite port, thus permitting poor Jack (who has enough of roaming at sea) to have a steady home on land. In all the great British bases, therefore, you will find these sailor colonies. I was well acquainted with a retired Navy chaplain who ministered to such a group. These families form a distinct group dependent on the Navy. Marriages are performed by the naval chaplain, the ills of the flesh are looked after by the fleet surgeons, and the rare troubles are brought to the judgment of Jack's favourite officers.

Our American crews are gathered together from all over the vast continent, British crews are often recruited from one section of the country. For instance, a ship manned by a crew from "out o' Devon" is known as a "West Country" ship and its sailors as "Westos." A real Royal Navy man knows in an instant the character of any ship which he happens to visit. The drawled "oa's" and oe's" of the West tell the story. I once heard a "Westo" refer to an officious wharf tender as a "bloody to-ad," a phrase that certainly has character. Then there be ships based on Irish ports. Indeed, there are sure to be Irish sailors on every ship, irresponsible, keen-witted Celts to whom all devilment is entrusted.

The war has not been without influence on the naval personnel. British Jack had, in his own social system, a place of his own. He is not looked down upon, for the British bluejacket has been, is, and forever ought to be the best loved of national figures. Sons of "gentlemen," however, I use the word here in its British sense, did not join the Royal Navy as enlisted men. Such a thing would

have been regarded as "queer" (no mild word, in Britain), and the crew certainly would have looked upon any such arrival as an intruder. But just as the war has placed University men side by side in the ranks with troopers like Kipling's Ortheris, so has it placed among the enlisted personnel of the Royal Navy a large number of men from the educated and wealthier class. There hung in the Royal Academy this spring a portrait of a British bluejacket, a pleasant-looking lad some nineteen or twenty years of age with blond hair, a long face and honest eyes of English grey. It was entitled "My Son." Almost invariably the older visitors to the exhibition, when looking at this picture, would fall to talking of the change in the social system which the portrait symbolized.

There are always a number of boys on British ships, for the British hold that to be a good sailor, one should early become familiar with the sea. The status of "boy" is a kind of distinct rating, and these youngsters are addressed by their last names, viz., Boy Bumblechook or Boy Stiggins. They have shown up wonderfully well. One has but to

recall little Cornell of Jutland to see of what stuff these lads are made.

The British sailor's uniform is picturesque and characteristic, but certainly less attractive than ours. It is cut not of broadcloth or of serge, but of heavy blue worsted, and a detachable collar of blue linen falls back upon the blouse. Our sailors are forever washing the blouses to keep the white stripes of the collar clean; the Briton has only his collar to care for. And there is a difference between the national builds as marked as the difference twixt the uniforms. Our Jack is rangy, lean and quick-moving, the Briton heavier, shorter, and more deliberate. In hours of leisure, the Briton busies himself with knitting, wood-carving or weaving rag rugs; the American, driven by the mechanical genius of the nation, hurries to the ship's machine shop to pound a half-crown into a ring.

The sons of Columbia and the sons of Britannia get on very well together. At the big club house at the Irish base, there are always little groups of British sailors to be seen, quiet, well-behaved fellows, who watch everything with British dignity. Our blue-

jackets, however, are far more chummy with British soldiers than with Britons of their own calling. Navy blue and khaki are forever going down the street arm in arm. The tar is always keen to hear of the front. Tommy does the talking. After all, there is a difference in the vernacular. Witness this poem which I reprint from the August number of *Our Navy*. It is by a Navy man, Mr. R. P. Maulsley. The word Limey, here shortened to "Lima," means, used as a noun, a British sailorman; used as an adjective, British. The term had its origin in the ancient British custom of giving lime juice to ward off scurvy.

THE LIMA AND THE YANKS

By R. P. Maulsley

It was nice and cozy in the "Pub,"
And blowing cold outside.
By the fireplace sat two gobbies,
America's joy and pride.

When a Lima from a cruiser
Thought their talk he'd like to hear,
And sat down just behind them,
With a half o' pint of beer.

And o'er a flowing mug of ale,
That held about a quart,
He heard them swapping stories
About their stay in port.

"Say, this is sure some burg,
Tho' it ain't the U. S. A.,
But did you pipe the classy Jane,
That passed us on the quay?

"She gave me some sweet smile, bo,
And winked her pretty eye,"
"Get out, you big hay-maker,
It was for me she meant to sigh."

"G'wan you homely piece of cheese,
You're talkin' thru' your hat,
I'll betsha just ten plasters,
It was me she was smiling at."

"I'll take that up old-timer,
Why, that's some easy dough,
We'll have another round,
And then we'll have to blow.

"And if I lamp that broad, kid,
And she cottons to me quick,
I'll buy her everything in town,
And make that ten look sick."

They arose and left the Lima,
A gasping in some chairs,

And as they left the room,
He heard them on the stairs.

"Like candy from a baby,
I'll take your coin this day,
And have a high old time and—
Say, how did you get that way?"

The Lima emptied his tankard,
And caught the barmaid's eye,
"I 'eard them Yanks a tarkin',
But what the bloomin' ell'd they seye?"

XXI

THE FLEET

THE fleet lay in the Firth of Forth. It was one o'clock in the afternoon, and the little suburban train which leaves and pauses at the Edinburgh Grand Fleet pier had not yet been brought to its platform. The cold sunlight of a northern spring fell upon the vast, empty station, and burnished the lines of rail beyond the entrance arch. Two porters from the adjoining hotel, wearing coats of orange-red with dull brass buttons, stood lackadaisically by a booking office closed for the dinner hour. Presently, after a piercing shriek intensified by the surrounding quiet, the suburban train backed in with a smooth, crawling noise. Various folk began to appear on the platform, a group of young British naval officers, a handful of older sailors, a captain carrying a small leather affair much like a miniature suit-case, a number of civilians, two "Jacks"

evidently on furlough, and a young sailor lad with a fine bull terrier bitch on a leash. No one entered to share my compartment. The train left behind the clean, grim town . . . rolled on through suburbs and through fields barely awake to the spring . . . paused here and there at tidy, little stations . . . reached the station above the pier. Somewhat uncertain of my path to the landing, I followed a group of officers. A middle-aged soldier sentry with grey hair and ruddy cheeks held me up for my pass, unfolded and folded it again with extraordinary deliberation, and courteously set me on my way. As yet there was no sign of the sea, nor had it once been visible during the journey. One might have been on the way to play golf at an inland field. The path to the pier descended a great flight of steps and passed a space in which men were playing football. . . . A turn down a bit of road, and I was looking at the fleet.

It lay in the great firth, in a monstrous estuary enclosed between barren banks rising to no great height. Bare, scattered woodlands were to be seen, a clump of cottages, a castellated house in a solitary spot, a great wharf with

a trumpery traveller's bookstall in a wooden shed at its entrance, a huddle of grey roofs at the water's edge on the distant side. Over a spur of land the smoke of a giant dockyard rose in a hazy reek to the obscured and silvery sun. The water in which the squadrons lay was for the moment as calm as a woodland pool; in colour, green-grey. . . . An incredible number of ships of war lying lengthwise in orderly lines, bows turned to the unseen river of the rising tide, . . . row after row, squadron after squadron, fleet after fleet, ships of war, dark, terrible and huge, no more to be counted than the leaves of trees. As far as the eye could reach up and down the firth, ships. One beheld there the mastery of the sea made visible, the mastery of all the highways and the secret paths of the waters of earth. Because of this fleet ships were able to bring grain from distant fields, great hopes were kept aflame, and the life blood of evil ambitions poured upon the ground. A grey haze lay at the mouth of the roads and somewhere in the heart of it was target practice being held; for violent blots of light again and again burst open

the dim and veiling fog. Small gulls passed on motionless wings, whistling. Now and then a vessel would run up a tangle of flags. The signal light of a flagship suddenly uttered a message with intermittent flashes of an unnatural violet white glare.

Over earth and sea brooded the peace of empire.

XXII

THE AMERICAN SQUADRON

THE morning found me a guest aboard the flagship of the American battleship squadron attached to the Grand Fleet. Going on deck, I found the sun struggling through thin, motionless mists. A layer of webby drops lay on wall and rail, on turret and gun. Presently a little cool wind, blowing from the land, fled over the calm water in mottled, scaly spots, bringing with it a piping beat of rhythmic music. Half a mile beyond the flagship, the crew of a British warship were running in a column round and round her decks to the music of the ship's band. An endless file of white clad figures bent forward, a faint regular tattoo of running feet. Round and about several of the giants were signalling in blinker. Beyond us stood a titanic bridge, whose network was here and there smouched with clinging vapour, and beneath this giant, a

tanker laden with oil for the fleet passed solemnly, followed by wheeling gulls. Presently two American sailors, lads of that alert, eager type that is so intensely and honestly American, popped out of a doorway and began to polish bright work.

America was there.

Surely it was one of the finest thoughts of the war to send this squadron of ours. Putting aside for the instant any thought of the squadron as a unit of naval strength, Americans and Britons will do well to consider it rather as a splendid symbol of a union dedicated to the most honourable of purposes, to the defence of that ideal of fraternity and international good faith now menaced. They say that when the American squadron came steaming into the fleet's more northern base one bitter winter day, cheer after cheer broke from the British vessels as they passed, till even the forlorn, snow-covered land rang with the shouting.

It has recently been announced that our battleship squadron is under the command of Admiral Hugh Rodman, which announcement the Germans must have taken to heart,

for Admiral Rodman is a man of action if ever one there was. Tall, strongly built, vigorous and alert, he dominates whatever group he happens to find himself in by sheer force of personality. It would fare ill with a German who brought his fleet under the sweep of those keen eyes. Admiral Rodman is a Kentuckian, and a union of blue grass and blue sea is pretty hard to beat, especially when accompanied by a shrewd sense of humour.

I talked with Admiral Rodman about the squadron and its work.

"Always remember," said he, "that this squadron is not over here, as somebody put it, 'helping the British.' Nor are we 'coöperating' with the British fleet. Such ideas are erroneous, and would mislead your readers. Think of this great fleet which you see here as a unit of force, controlled by one ideal, one spirit and one mind, and of the American squadron as an integral part of that fleet. Take, as an instance of what I mean, the change in our signalling system. We came over here using the American system of signals. Well, we could not have two sets of signals going, so in order to get right into

things, we learned the British signals, and it's the British system we are using to-day. . . . There are American *ships* here and British ships but *only one fleet.*

Everywhere I went, I found both British and American officers keen to emphasize this unity. Said a Briton—"Why we no longer think of the Americans of 'the Americans'; we think of squadron X of the fleet. It's just wonderful the way your chaps have got down to business and fallen in with the technique and the traditions. We expected to see you spend some time getting into the life of the fleet and all that, you know; the sort of thing that a boy in a public school goes through before he gets the spirit and the ways of the place, but your people came along in the morning and had picked up everything by the afternoon." And I found the Americans proud of the fleet's essential oneness, proud to share in its great tradition, and to be a part of its history. America is taking no obscure place. Her hosts have given her the place of honour in the battle line.

Battle—that was the thought of everybody aboard the fleet. If only the German "High

An American battleship fleet leaving the harbor

Canal" fleet would really come out and fight it to a finish, or as an American lieutenant put it, "start something." The Germans, however, knew only too well that the famous betoasted *Der Tag* would turn swiftly into a *Dies Iræ* and preferred to surrender. So for lack of an antagonist, the fleet had to be content to keep steam up all the time and to know that everything was prepared for a day of battle. But the fleet did far more than wait. No statement of the Germans was more empty of truth than the silly cry that the British fleet lies "skulking in harbour for fear of submarines." The fleet was busy all the time. Again and again, a visible defiance, it swept by the mine sealed mouths of the German bases. For five years now, the fleet has been on a war footing prepared for instant action, a tremendous task this. "If they only had come out, the beggars."

A day with the fleet in port passed casually and calmly enough. There was none of that melodrama which invests the war of the destroyer and the submarine, and human problems seemed to lack importance, for in the fleet man is somewhat shadowed by the

immense force he has created. On board there were various drills, perhaps a general quarters practice drill that sends everybody scurrying to his station. Hour after hour, the visitor sees the continuous and multitudinous activity needed to keep a dreadnaught in shape as a fortress, an engine, and a ship. Then, when the evening has come, such officers as are off duty may sit down to a game of bridge or go to their rooms to read or study quietly. There are great days when kings and queens come aboard and are royally entertained. Twice a week the entertainment committee of the fleet sent round a steel box full of "movies." However, everybody enjoys them, and laughs. But it is good to escape on deck again, and see the squadron and the fleet beneath the haloed moon.

The shores about are quite in darkness, though now and then a glow appears over the hidden dockyard as if some one there had opened a furnace door. A little breeze is blowing a thin, flat sheet of cloud across the moon; one can hear water slapping against the sides. The sailors on watch walk up and down the decks, shouldering their

guns. In the light one might believe the basketry of the woven masts to be spun of delicate silver bars. Behind us ride the other vessels of the squadron, a row of dark, triangular shapes. The great columnar guns, sealed with a brazen plug, seem mute and dead. The curtain of a hatchway parts, and a little group of officers come on deck to watch a squadron go to sea. One by one the vessels, battleships and attendant destroyers glide past us into the dark, and so swift and silent their motion is that they seem to be less self-propelled than drawn forward by some mysterious force dwelling far beyond in the moonlit sea. A slight hiss of cleaving water, the length of a hurrying grey fortress beneath the moon, and the last of the squadron vanishes down the roads. For a little time one may see the diminishing glares of blinker lights. Squadrons of various kinds are forever leaving a fleet base to go on mysterious errands, squadrons are ever returning home from the mystery and silence of the sea.

A friend comes to tell me that we have been put on "short notice," and may leave at any instant.

XXIII

TO SEA WITH THE FLEET

ON THE morning of the day that the fleet went out, there was to be felt aboard that tensity which follows on a "short notice" warning. Officers rushed into the wardroom for a hasty cup of coffee and hurried back to their beloved engines; the bluejackets, too, knew that something was in the air. A visitor to the flagship will not have to study long the faces of his hosts to see that they are an exceptional lot of men. Whilst among the destroyers there is a good deal of the grey-eyed ram-you, damn-you type; on a battleship there is a union of the elements of thought and action which is very fine to see. Nor is the artist element lacking in many a countenance. I remember a chief engineer whose ability as an engineer was a word in the fleet; it was easy to see, when he took you through his marvellous engine room, that he enjoyed

his labour as much for the wonder of the delicacy, the power and the precision of his giant engines as he did for their mere mechanical side of pressures and horsepower. Nor shall I ever see a more perfect example of coördination and competence than a turret drill at which I was invited to assist. From the distinguished young executive to the lowest rated officer in "the steerage," every man brought to his task not only an expert's understanding of it, but a love of his work, which, I think it is Kipling that says it, is the most wonderful thing in all the world. The vessel was very much what Navy folk call a "happy ship." I must say the prospect of going out with the fleet and with such a wonderful crowd did not make me keenly miserable. "If they only would come out, ah, if . . . !"

"So we are still on an hour's notice," I said to one of my hosts in the hope of getting some information.

"Yes, back again. At two o'clock this morning the time was extended, but after seven we were put back on short time once more."

"I suppose the time is always shifting and changing?"

"Yes, indeed. You know we are always on an hour's notice. Pretty short, isn't it? You see we don't want the Germans to get away with anything if we can help it. Got to be ready to sail right down and smash them. Nobody knows just why the time changes come. Somebody knows something of course. Perhaps one of the British submarines on outpost duty off the German coast has seen something, and sent it along by wireless.

I asked about the German watch on the British bases.

"Subs. Everybody's doing it. I suppose that two or three are hanging off this coast all the time trying to get a squint at the fleet. It's what we call keeping a 'periscope watch' . . . run by the naval intelligence. Little good anything they pick up about us does the Germans! Safety first is their daring game. What they are itching to do is to pick off one of our patrol squadrons that's gone on a little prospecting toot all by itself. They'd try, I think, if they weren't mighty well aware that not a single ship of the crowd

that did the stunt would ever get back to the old home canal."

Presently a sailor messenger arrived, stood to attention, saluted snappily, and presented a paper. The officer read and signed.

"You're in luck," said he. "We are going out . . . due to leave in three hours. Whole fleet together, evidently. Something's on for sure. . . . Hope they're out." And off he hurried to his quarters. I saw "the exec." going from place to place taking a look at everything. Pretty soon the chaplain of the flagship, an officer to whose friendly welcome and thoughtful courtesy I am in real debt, came looking for me.

"Come along," he cried, "you are missing the show. They're beginning to go out already. You ought to be on deck," and seizing me by the arm, he rushed me energetically up a companionway to the world without. There I learned that the departure of the Grand Fleet was no simultaneous movement such as the start of an automobile convoy, but a kind of tremendous process occupying several hours. The scout vessels, were to go first, then the various classes of cruisers and

the destroyer flotillas with whom they acted in concert, last of all the squadrons of battleships. Our own sailing time was three hours distant and the outward movement had already begun.

The day was a pleasant one, the sun was shining clear and a fresh salty breeze was blowing down the estuary. The officers, however, shook their heads, talked of "low visibility," and pointed out that an invisible mist hung over the water, whose cumulative effect was not at all to their liking. First there went out a new variety of submarine, steam submarines of extraordinary size and speed; there followed a swift procession of destroyers and lighter cruisers, many signalling with blinker and flag. The outgoing of the destroyers was a sight not to be forgotten, for more than anything else did it impress upon me the titanic character of the fleet. *Destroyers passed one every fifty seconds for a space of many hours.* You would hear a hiss, and a lean, low rapier of a vessel would pass within a hundred yards of the flagship and hurry on, rolling, into the waiting haze of the open sea, and as you watched this

Even a super-dreadnought is wet at times

first vessel leave your bow astern, you would hear another watery hiss prophetic of the following boat. On our own vessel all boats had long before been hoisted to their places; there were mysterious crashing noises, bugle calls, a deal of orderly action. Time passed; a long time full of movement and stir. The greater vessels began to go out, titans of heroic name, *The Iron Duke, Queen Elizabeth, Lion.* A broad swirling road of water lay behind them as one by one they melted into that ever mysterious obscurity ahead. Then with a jar, and a torrent of crashing iron thunder dreadful as a disintegration of the universe itself, our own immense anchor chains rose from the water below, and the American flagship got under way. We looked with a meditative eye on the bare shores of the firth wondering what adventures we were to have before we saw them again. Behind us the mist gathered, ahead, it melted away. And thus we stood out to the open sea. Night came, starlit and cold. Just at sundown one of the British ships destroyed a floating mine with gun fire. I sought information from an officer friend.

"What about the mine problem?"

"Never bothers us a bit, though the Germans have planted mines everywhere. This North Sea is as full of them as a pudding is of plums."

"Why is it then that the fleet doesn't lose ships when out on these expeditions?"

"Because the British mine sweepers have done so bully a job."

"But once you get beyond the swept channels at the harbour mouths, what then?"

"The mine-sweepers attend to the whole North Sea."

"You mean to say that the Admiralty actually clears an ocean of mines?"

"To all intents and purposes, yes. Haven't you read of naval skirmishes in the North Sea? They are always having them. Many of those skirmishes take place between patrol boats of ours and enemy patrols. Of course it's a task, but the British have done it. One of the most wonderful achievements of the war."

"Suppose the Germans try to reach the British coast?"

"They do their best to find the British path.

As a result, the Germans are always either bumping into their own mines or into ours. I feel pretty sure that their loss from mines has been quite heavy."

"Where, then, are the German cruising grounds? Doesn't their fleet get out once in a while?"

"Not to the outer sea. Once in a while they parade up the Danish coast, never going more than two or three hours from their base. Our steady game, of course, is to nab them when they are out, and cut off their retreat. If the weather had held good at Jutland, this would have been done. But the Germans now hardly ever venture out. Destroyers of theirs, based on the Belgian coast, try to mix things up in the Channel once or twice a year, but the fleet seems to stick pretty closely to dear old Kiel."

"Any more information in regard to this present trip?"

"Not a thing. It's always mysterious like this. Yet in twenty minutes we may be right in the thick of the world's greatest naval battle."

The next morning I rose at dawn to see the

fleet emerge from the dark of night. A North Sea morning was at hand, cold, windy and clear. Now seas have their characters even as various areas of land, and there is as much difference between the North Sea and the Irish Sea as there is between a rocky New England pasture and a stretch of prairie. The shallow North Sea is in colour an honest salty, ocean green, and its surface is ever in motion; a sea without respite or rest. It has a franker, more masculine character than the beleaguered sea to the west with its mottlings of shadow and shoal and weaving, white-crested tide rips. A great armament, scouts, destroyers, and light cruisers had already passed over the edge of the world, and only a very thin haze revealed their presence. Miles ahead of us in a great lateral line, a number of great warships, vast triangular bulks, ploughed along side by side, then came the American squadron in a perpendicular line, each vessel escorted by destroyers. Behind us, immense, stately, formidable and dark, the second American ship followed down the broad river of our wake which flowed like liquid marble from the beat of the propellers.

And behind the American squadron lay other ships, and over the horizon the bows of more ships still were pointing to the mine-strewn German coast. The Grand Fleet line, *eighty miles long*, rode the sea, a symbol of power, an august and visible defiance. Standing beneath the forward turret, beside the muzzles of the titan guns, I felt that I had at last beheld the mightiest element of the war.

Tightly wrapped in a navy great coat, the young officer whose guest I had been at turret drill walked up and down the deck watching the southeastern horizon. What eagerness lay in his eyes! If we only might then have heard a heavy detonation from over the edge of the dawn-illumined sky! . . . All day long we cried our challenge over the sealed waters ahead.

Were "they" out? To this day, I do not know. The ways of the fleet are mysterious. Certainly, none came forth to accept our gage of battle. A time passed, and we were in port again. We saw the vessels we had left behind, the supply ships, tugs, oil tenders, colliers . . . all the servants of the fleet.

Down in the wardroom, the tension relaxed.

The anchor chain rattled out; once more the universe seemed to part asunder. The mail had arrived, joyous event. Somebody put a roll of music into a rather passé player piano, and let loose an avalanche of horribly orderly chords.

And all the time the Olympians were preparing, not the battle of the ages, but the Great Surrender!

XXIV

"SKY PILOTS"

WE KNOW him as chaplain, the gobs use the good old term "Sky Pilot," and the British call him "Padre." His task, no light one, is to look after the spiritual and moral welfare of some thousand sailor souls. He is general counsellor, friend in need, mender of broken hearts, counsel for the defence, censor, and show manager. Now he comes to the defence of seaman, first class, Billy Jones, whose frail bark of life has come to grief on the treacherous reef of the installment plan, and for whose misdemeanours a clamouring merchant is on deck threatening to "attach the ship." Now he is assuring the clergyman of the church on the hill that 2nd class petty officer Edgar K. Lee (who is going to marry pretty little Norah Desmond) is not, as far as he knows, committing bigamy. They tell of a chaplain of the destroyer force

who, pestered beyond bearing by these demands that the American bridegroom be declared officially and stainlessly single, floored his tormentor by replying: "I've told you that as far as we know the man's unmarried. We can't give you any assurance more official. He may be bigamous, trigamous, quadrugamous, or," here he paused for effect, "pentagamous, but I advise you to risk it." The land sky pilot is said to have collapsed.

Aboard the flagship of the Grand Fleet, the chaplain of the vessel was my guide, counsellor, and friend. In the words of one of the sailors, "Our chaplain is a real feller." And indeed it would have been hard to find a better man for the task than this padre of ours with his young man's idealism, friendliness, and energy. In addition to his welfare work, he had his duties as a de-coder, and his spare time he spent tutoring several of the enlisted personnel who were about to take examinations for higher ratings. It is a great mistake, by the way, to imagine that a violent gulf lies between the commissioned officer and the enlisted man. One finds the higher officer only too glad to help the sailor advance, and

many times have they said to me, "Don't write about us, write about the sailors; get to know them; get their story." On this particular ship many of the younger officers were, like the chaplain, giving up their spare time to help the ambitious men along. Correspondence school courses are great favourites in the Navy, and have undoubtedly helped many a sailor on to a responsible rating.

Our flagship chaplain used to make several rounds of the ship every day, "tours of welfare inspection," he used to call them humorously. Everywhere would he go, from wardroom to torpedo station, not neglecting an occasional visit to the boiler room. Friendly grins used to salute him on his passage; as the sailor said he was a "real feller." I often accompanied him on his rounds. When the tour was over, we would go to the chaplain's room for a quiet smoke and a good talk. The chaplain's room was always clean and quiet, and on the bookshelf, instead of weighty books on thermodynamics and navigation, were the pleasant kind of books one found in friendly houses over home.

"Do you know," said the chaplain to me

one day, "you have landed here at an interesting time. There's very little shore leave being given because it can't be given, and as a result the life of the ship is thrown back upon itself for all its amusements and social activities. What do you think of the morale here?"

"I think it's very high," I answered. "The men seem very contented and keen. I've talked with a great many of them. How do you keep the morale up?"

"Well, this ship has always been famous as a 'happy ship'" (here I ventured to say that any other condition would be impossible under the captain we had) "and when men get into the habit of working together good-naturedly, that habit is liable to stick. And I find the men sustained by the thought of active service. You may think it calm here, having just arrived from a destroyer base, but think of what it is over on the American coast."

"Calm?" said I. "Don't put that down to me. The very idea of being with the Grand Fleet is thrilling. It's the experience of a lifetime. And let me tell you right from

personal experience that no sight of the land war can match the impressiveness and grandeur of the first view of the fleet."

"I feel just as you do. The whole thing is a constant wonder. And some day the Germans may come out. Moreover, summer is now at hand, and we shall have a chance to use the deck more for sports. This long, raw, rainy winter doesn't permit much outdoor exercise. As soon as it gets warm, however, we shall have boxing matches on the deck between various members of the crew and the champions of the different ships. We have some good wrestlers, too. At present we are reduced to vaudeville competitions between our various vessels, and movies. I'm doing my best to get better movies. So we shan't fare badly after all."

"When do you hold Sunday services?"

"I have a service in the morning and another in the evening. Yes, I muster a pretty big congregation. But I'm afraid I've got to be going now, got to ram a little algebra into the head of one of the boys. See you at dinner." And our sky pilot was gone. May good luck go with him, and good friends

be ever at hand to return him the friendliness he grants.

They tell a story of a favourite chaplain who retired from the Navy to take charge of a parish on land.

"Good-bye, sir," said one of the old salts to him, as he was leaving the ship. "Good-bye, sir. We'll all look to see you come back with a *bishop's rating*."

XXV

IN THE WIRELESS ROOM

I HAVEN'T the slightest idea where the wireless room is or how to find it. All that I remember is that some kind soul took me by the hand, led me through various passages and down several ladders, and landed me in a small compartment which I felt sure must have been hollowed out of the keel. The wireless room of a great ship is, by the way, a kind of holy of holies, and my visit to it more than an ordinary privilege.

There are as many messages in the air these times as there were wasps in the orchard in boyhood days after one had thrown a large, carefully-selected stone into the big nest. Messages in all keys and tunes, messages in all the known languages, messages in the most baffling of codes. Now the operator picks up a merchantman asking for advice in English, this against all rules and regulations; a request once answered by a profane some-

body with "Use the code, you damned fool." At intervals the Eiffel Tower signals the time; listening to it, one seems to hear the clear, monotonous tick-tock of a giant pendulum. Now it is a British land station talking to a British squadron on watch in the North Sea, now the destroyers are at it, now one hears the great station at Wilhelmshaven sending out instructions to the submarine fleet in ambush off these isles.

How strange it is to come here at midnight and hear the Germans talking! Germany has been so successfully cut off from contact with the civilization she assaulted that these communications have the air of being messages from Mars. There are times when the radio operator picks up frantic cries sent by one U-boat to another; I have before me as I write a record of such a call. It began at 2.14 A.M., shortly after a certain submarine was depth-bombed by an American destroyer. First to be received was *OLN's* clear, insistent call for *RXK* and *ZZN*, probably the two nearest members of the U-boat fleet. Were they cries for help? Probably. Again and again the spark uttered its despairing message.

For some time there was no answer. The other two boats may have been submerged; quite possibly sunk. Then at 2.40 from far, far away came *ADL* calling *OLN*. At 2.45 *OLN* answered very faintly. A minute or two later, *ADL* tried and tried again to get either *RXK* and *ZZN*. But there was no answer. Was she trying to send them to the help of the stricken vessel? At 2.57 *ADL* tries for the hard pressed *OLN*, but no answer comes to her across the darkness of the sea.

Night and day, a force of operators sit here taking down the messages, sending important ones directly to the chief officers, and letting unimportant ones accumulate in batches of four and five. The messages are written or typewritten on a form in shape and make-up not unlike that of an ordinary telegram blank. All day and all night long, the messengers hurry through the corridors of the great ship with bundles of these naval signals. And since everything intended for the Navy comes in code, decoders too must be at hand at all hours to unravel the messages. It is no easy task, for the codes are changed for safety's sake every little while. On board the great

ship I visited, the chaplain did a big share of this work. I can see him now bent over his table in the wireless room, spelling out sentences far more complicated than the Latin and Greek of his university days.

There is one wireless service which will not be remembered with affection by our sailors over there, the Government Wireless Press Service. I was in the Grand Fleet when that dashing business of the first Zeebrugge raid occurred. The "Press News" on the following morning mentioned it, and warned us impressively to keep our knowledge to ourselves. As a result we spoke of it at breakfast time with bated breath. I myself, a modest person, was stricken with a sudden access of importance at possessing a Grand Fleet secret.

Then at ten o'clock the morning papers came down from a certain great city with a full, detailed account of the raid!

The thing that we have most against it, however, is its conduct during the great offensive of the spring of 1918. The air was resounding with the wireless pæans of the on-rushing Germans; and everybody was

worried, and anxious to know the fortunes of our troops. One rushed to breakfast early to have first chance at the press news. Friends gathered behind one's shoulder, and tried to read before sitting down. What's the news? What's the news? This (or something very like it) was the news:

"Dr. Ostropantski, president of the Græco-Lettish Diet, denounced yesterday at a meeting of the Novoe Vremya the German assault on the liberties of Beluchistan."

There was one vast, concerted groan from the sons of the Grand Fleet. Some wondered what the anxious folk far out at sea on the destroyers were saying. Finally the wit of the table shook his head gravely.

"Boys," said he, "where *would* we be if the civilians refused to tell?"

XXVI

MARINES

THIS paper does not deal with the marines fighting in France, but with the marines such as one finds them on the greater ships. The gallant "devil dogs" now adding fresh laurels to the corps have army correspondents to tell of them, for though they are trained by the Navy and are the Navy's men, the Army has them now under its command. It is rather of the genuine marine, the true "soldier of the sea" that I would speak. Having been myself something of a soldier and a sailor, the marines were good enough to receive me in a friendly fashion when I was a guest on one of the battleships now on foreign service.

Even as the traditional nickname for the sailor is "gob," so is "leatherneck" the seaman's traditional word for the marine. I am guileless enough not to know just how marines take this term, but if there is any

doubt, I advise readers to be easy with it, for marines will fight at the drop of a hat. All those aboard declared, by the way, that the antipathy between the sailor and the marine in which the public believes, does not exist, nor do the marines according to the popular notion "police the ship." The marine has his place; the sailor has his, and they do not mix, not because they dislike each other, but simply because the marine and the sailor are the products of two widely different systems of training. Moreover, the marine is bound to his own people by an *esprit de corps* without equal in the world. It was very fine to see each man's anxiety that the corps should not merely have a good name, but the best of names.

We swopped yarns. In return for my gory tales of shelled cities, gas attacks, and air raids, they gave me gorgeous . . . gorgeous tales of the little wars they have fought in the Caribbean. I realized for the first time just what it meant to Uncle Sam to be Central America's policeman. Now, as they spun their yarns, I could see the low, white buildings of a Consulate against the luminous West

Indian sky, the boats on the beach, the marines on patrol; now the sugar plantation menaced by some political robber-rebel, the little tents under the trees, the business-like machine gun. A harassed American planter is often the *deux ex machina* of these tales.

We used to talk in a little office aboard the battleships down by the marines' quarters, which lie aft. I believe it was the sergeant's sanctum sanctorum. There were marine posters on the wall, a neat little stack of the marines' magazines handy by, a few books, and some filing cabinets. Just outside were the marine lockers, each one in the most perfect order, and a gun breech used for loading drills. The sergeant, himself, was a fine, keen fellow who had been in the corps for some time. His men declared themselves, for the most part, city born and bred.

"What happened then?"

"Just as soon as they got the message, a detail was sent into the hills for the defence of the plantation. It was a big sugar plantation. The American manager was seeing red he was so peeved, the harvesting season had come and the help, scared by the insur-

gents, were beating it off into the hills. What's more, the insurgents had told the manager that if he didn't pony up with five thousand dollars by a certain date, they'd burn the place. Actually had the nerve . . ."

"In fiction," said I, "a lean, dark, villainous fellow mounted on a magnificent horse which he has looted from some fine stable dashes up to the plantation door, delivers his threat in an icy tone and gallops back into the bush. Or else a message wrapped round a stone crashes through the window onto the family breakfast table. Which was it?"

I think the marine telling the story wanted very much to utter: "How do you get that way?" however, he merely grinned and answered:

"Neither. A big, fat greaser in a dirty, Palm Beach suit came ambling up one morning as if somebody had asked him to chow. This was his game. A holdup? Oh, no! Only his men were getting a bit restless under the neck, about five thousand dollars restless, and if they didn't get it, there's no telling what they wouldn't do. He thought he could restrain them till Tuesday night, of course

it would be a pretty stiff job to hold them in, but if something crisp and green hadn't shown up by Tuesday P.M., those devils might actually burn the plantation. Did you ever hear such a line of bull? And that's the honest truth of it, too; none of this stone in the mashed potatoes guff."

"And then," I broke in, "the faithful servant gallops through the valley to the shore; a stray bullet knocks off his hat, but he gets there, and delivers his message to the warship in the bay. A bugle blows, the marines rally, launches take them to the beach; they rush over the hills, and get to the plantation just as Devil's-hoof Gomez or Pink-eyed Pedro has set fire to a corner of the bungalow. Rifles crack, bugles sound a charge, the marines rush the Gomez gang who take to their heels. Brave hearts put out the fire. Isn't there always an exquisitely beautiful señorita to be rescued? There always is in the movies. Now, please don't destroy any more of my illusions."

"The message comes all right, all right, but I doubt very much if that faithful servant comes in a hurry. Down there, if a man goes

by in a hurry, everybody in the village will be out to look at him. . . . The major gets the message, works out his plan of campaign, and away we go. Arrived at the plantation, we pitch camp, establish pickets, and generally get things ready to give the restless greasers a hot time. Sometimes the greasers try their luck at sniping; other times, they go away quietly and don't give you a bit of trouble. There aren't any beautiful señoritas, . . . no broken hearts. Yes, it's tough luck."

Thus were my illusions dispelled by a group of Uncle Sam's marines. They forgot to tell me that many members of their little company had been wounded, and seriously wounded in these West Indian shindies. The list of wounds and honours in the records was an impressive roll.

The visitor aboard a warship will see marines acting as orderlies and corporals of the guard and manning the secondary batteries. I attended many of their drills, and never shall forget the snap and "pep," of the evolutions. Nor shall I forget the courtesies and friendly help of the gallant officer under

whose command these soldiers of the sea have the good luck to be stationed.

N.B. (Very secret), to Huns only. The marines man the gun in the "Exec's" office and the corresponding one in the line officers' reading room. If you want to get home to the old home canal, . . . keep away from their range.

XXVII

SHIPS OF THE AIR

AFTER I had been to visit several of the bases, I returned to London, and called at the Navy headquarters. A young officer of the admiral's staff who was always ready and willing to help the writers assigned to the Navy in every possible way, came down to talk with me. "Had I been to Base X? To Base Y? Had I been to see the American submarines? The Naval Aviation?" I grasped at the last phrase.

"Tell me about it," I said. "I had no idea that the sea flyers were over here. Last fall the streets of Boston were so thick with boys of that service that you could hardly move round. And now they are on this side. Where can I find them?"

The officer drew me to a large scale map of the British Isles and the French coast which hung on the wall, plentifully jabbed with

little flags. His finger fairly flew from one dot to another.

"Well," said he, "we have a station here, another station here, another station there, . . . there's a station on this point of land; right about here we're putting up buildings for a depot but there is nobody at hand yet, here's a big station. . . . " I believe that he could have continued for five minutes.

"You seem to have a big affair well in hand," I suggested, rather surprised.

"No," he corrected, "just beginning. The department scheme for the naval aviation service is one of the big things of the war. It's so big, so comprehensive that people over there haven't woken up to it yet. Aren't you going to Base L next week? Why don't you go down the coast a few miles and see the outfit at Z? Only don't forget that we've 'just begun to fight.' Come upstairs and let me give you a letter." A few days later I ran down to see the aviators in their eyrie.

The naval station lay in a sheltered cove hidden away in a green and ragged coast. Landing at a somewhat tumble-down old pier, I saw ahead of me a gentle slope descend-

ing to a broad beach of shingle. Mid-way along this beach, ending under the water, was to be seen a wide concrete runway which I judged to be but newly finished, for empty barrels of cement and gravel separators stood nearby. At the top of the slope, in a great field behind mossy trees, lay the corrugated iron dormitories of a vast, deserted camp once the repose quarters of a famous fighting regiment. There was something of the atmosphere of an abandoned picnic ground to the place. Sailor sentries stood at the entrance of the quiet roads leading to the empty barracks, and directed me to those in authority.

The naval aviation is a new service. For a long time the uniform of the cadets was so unfamiliar that even in their own America the boys used to be taken for foreign officers. It was a case of "I say he's an Italian. No, dear, I'm *sure* he's a Belgian." A not unnatural mistake, for the uniform has a certain foreign jauntiness. In colour, it is almost an olive green, and consists of a short, high-collared tunic cut snugly to the figure, shaped breeches of the riding pattern, and putties to

match. Add the ensign's solitary stripe and star on shoulder and sleeve and you have it.

I found a group of the flyers in one of the tin barracks that did duty as a kind of recreation centre. The spokesman of the party was a serious lad from Boston.

"Fire away," they yelled good-naturedly to my announcement that I was going to bomb with questions.

"First of all, about how many of you are there helping to make it home-like for Fritz in this amiable spot?"

"About fifty of us."

"Been here long?"

"No, just came. You see the station is not really finished yet, but they are hurrying it along to beat the cars. Did you spot that concrete runway as you came up? A daisy, isn't it? Slope just right, and no skimping on the width. Well, that's only one of the runways we're going to have. Over on the other side, the plans call for three or four more."

"And what do these sailors do?" I had noticed a large number of sailors about.

"They look after our machines and the

balloons. You see this is a regular aviation section just the same as the army has, and the sailors are trained mechanics, repair men, clerks and so forth. They're rather taking it easy now because the planes have been somewhat slow in reaching us. You know as well as I do the rumpus that's been made in the States over the air program. Things are breezing up mighty fast now, however, and every supply ship that puts into the harbour brings some of our equipment. The Navy's ready, the camps are being organized, the men are trained; it's up to the manufacturers to hustle along our machines. Please try to make them realize that when you write."

"But, say," put in another, "don't, for the love of Pete, run away with the idea that we haven't any equipment. We've got some planes and some balloons. But we want more, more, more. Anything to keep the Germans on the go."

"What do you use?" I asked. "Mostly balloons," put in a third speaker, a quiet young Westerner who had thus far not joined in the conversation. "Most of us are balloon observers, though Jos here," he indicated the

Bostonian, "is a sea-plane artist. He runs one of the planes."

"Come," said I, "tell the thrilling story."

"There isn't any story," groaned Jos, "that's just the trouble. I've been fooling round these coasts and out by the harbour mouth in the hope of spotting a sub till I feel as if I'd used up all the gasoline in the British Isles. Those destroyers have spilled the beans. Fritz doesn't dare to come round. Ever try fishing in a place from which the fish have been thoroughly scared away? It's like that. Mine laying submarines used to be round the mouth of the harbour all the time, now Fritz is never seen or heard from. . . . The destroyers have spilled the beans. The balloon hounds are the whole show here. Tell him about it, Mac. You've taken more trips than any of the others." The disgruntled sea planer knocked a bull-dog pipe on his shoe, and was still.

"I can't tell much," drawled Mac, a wiry, black little Southerner with a wonderful accent. "They fill the balloon up here, take it out to a destroyer or some patrol boat and tie it on, jes like a can to purp's tail.

Then you go out in the Irish Sea and watch for subs. If you observe anything that looks like a Hun, you simply telephone it down to the destroyer's deck, and she rushes ahead and investigates. Sometimes the observer in the balloon sees something which can't be seen from the level of the destroyer's bridge, and in that case the balloonist practically steers the vessel, . . . so many points to port, so many to starboard, and so on till you land them in the suspected area."

"What's it like up above there in a balloon? From the deck of a battleship or a destroyer, it seems to be a calm matter."

"Don't be too sure of that. I know it looks calm, calm as a regular up-in-the-air old feather baid. And it isn't bad if you have a decent wind with which the course and speed of the ship are in some sort of an agreement. But if the ship's course lies in one direction and the wind is blowing from another, the balloon blows all over the place. When the wind blows from behind, you float on ahead and try to pull the ship after you; if the wind is from ahead, you are dragged along at the end of a chain like a mean dawg. There is

always sure to be a party if the ship zigzags. Now you are pulling towards the bow, now you are floating serenely to port, now you are tugging behind, now you are nowhere in particular and apparently standing on yo' haid."

We went to walk in the grounds. I was shown where the balloon shed was to be, the generators, and a dozen other houses. Evidently the station was going to be "some outfit." Already a big gang of civilian labourers, electrified by American energy, were hard at work laying the foundations of a large structure.

"Yes," said one of the boys, "this is going to be a great place. When it's completed we shall have regular sea-plane patrols of this entire coast, and a balloon squadron ready to coöperate with either the British or the American destroyer fleets. Our boys along the French coast have already made it hot for some Huns, and believe me, if there are any subs left, you just bet we want a chance at 'em?"

Such is the spirit that has driven the Germans from the seas.

XXVIII

THE SAILOR IN LONDON

THE convalescent English Tommy in his sky-blue flannel suit, white shirt, and orange four-in-hand, the heavier, tropic-bred Australian with his hat brim knocked jauntily up to one side, the dark, grey-eyed Scotch highlander very braw and bony in his plaited kilt, these be picturesque figures on the streets of London, but the most picturesque of all is our own American tar. Our "gobs" are always so spruce and clean, and so young, young with their own youth and the youth of the nation. Jack ashore is to be found at the Abbey at almost any hour of the day, he wanders into the National Gallery, and stands before Nelson at St. Paul's; he causes fair hearts to break asunder at Hampton Court. Wherever you go in London, the wonderful wide trousers, and the good old pancake hat, this last worn cockly over one eye, are always to be seen in what

nautical writers of the Victorian school call "the offing."

Our boys come in liberty parties of thirty and forty from the various bases, usually under the wing of a chief petty officer very conscious of his responsibility for these wild sailor souls. Accommodations are taken either at a good London hotel with which the authorities have some arrangement, or the personnel is distributed among various huts and hospitable dwellings. The great rallying centre is sure to be the Eagle Hut off the Strand.

This famous hut, which every soldier or sailor who visits London will long remember, is situated, by a happy coincidence, in modern London's most New Yorkish area. It stands, a huddle of low, inconspicuous buildings, in just such a raw open space between three streets as on this side prefigures the building of a new skyscraper; the great, modern mass of Australia House lifts its imposing Beaux Arts façade a little distance above it, whilst the front of a fashionable hotel rises against the sky just beyond. The ragged island, the sense of open space, the fine high buildings,

. . . "say, wouldn't you think you were back in America again?" Yet only a few hundred feet down the Strand, old St. Clement Danes lies like a ship of stone anchored in the thoroughfare, and Samuel Johnson, LL.D., stands bareheaded in the sun wondering what has happened to the world. The hut within is simply an agglomeration of big, clean, rectangular spaces, reading rooms, living rooms, dormitories, and baths always full of husky, pink figures, steam and the smell of soap. Physically, Eagle hut is merely the larger counterpart of some thousand others. The wonder of the place is its atmosphere. The narrow threshold might be three thousand miles in width, for cross it, and you will find yourself in America. All the dear, distinctive national things for which your soul and body have hungered and thirsted are gathered here. There is actually an American shoe shining stand, an American barber chair, and, Heaven be praised, "good American grub." It is a sight to see the long counter thronged with the eager, hungry bluejackets, to hear the buzz of lively conversation carried on in the pervading aroma of fried eggs, favourite dish

or sandwich of apparently every doughboy and tar. One's admiration grows for the Y. workers who keep at the weary grind of washing floors, picking up stray cigarette buts, and washing innumerable eggy plates. I realized to the full what a poor old college professor who "helped" in a hut on the French front meant when he had said to me, "life is just one damned egg after another." Of course sometimes the "hen fruit"—one hears all kinds of facetious aliases at the Hut—gives way to *soi disant* buckwheat cakes, a dainty, lately honoured by royal attention. Should you stroll about the buildings, you will see sailors and soldiers reading in good, comfortable chairs; some playing various games, others sitting in quiet corners writing letters home. There is inevitably a crowd round the information bureau. Alas, for the poor human encyclopedia, he lives a bewildering life. On the morning that I called he had been asked to supply the address of a goat farm by a quartermaster charged with the buying of a mascot, and he was just recovering from this when a sailor from the Grand Fleet demanded a complete and careful résumé of the British

marriage regulations! Everybody seems cheerful and contented; the officials are attentive and kind; the guests good-natured and well-behaved.

Such is the combination of club, restaurant, and hotel to which our Jack resorts. And there he lives content in his islet of America, while London roars about him. During the week, he wanders, as he says himself, "all over the place."

The good time ends with the Saturday ball game. Everybody goes. Posters announce it through London in large black type on yellow paper. "U. S. Army *vs.* U. S. Navy." The field is most American looking; the "bleachers" might be those in any great American town. The great game, the game to remember, was played in the presence of the king. The day was a good one, though now and then obscured with clouds; a strangely mixed audience was at hand, wounded Tommies, American soldiers speaking in all the tongues of all the forty-eight states, a number of American civilians from the embassy and the London colony, groups of dignified staff officers from the army and the

navy headquarters, and even a decorous group of Britons dressed in the formal garments which are *de rigueur* in England at any high-class sporting event. Then in came the king walking ahead of his retinue, . . . a man of medium height with a most kind and chivalrous face. Our admiral walked beside him. The band played, eager eyes looked down, the king, looking up, smiled, and won the good-will of every friendly young heart. A few minutes later, the noise broke forth again, "Oh you Army!" "Oh you Navy," a hullaballoo that culminated in a roar, "Play Ball!"

The Navy men, wearing uniforms of blue with red stripes, walked out first, closely followed by the army in uniforms of grey-green. The admiral, towering straight and tall above his entourage, threw the ball. A pandemonium of yells broke forth. "Now's the time, give it to 'em, boys, soak it to 'em, soak it to 'em, steady Army, give him a can, run Smithie!" In a corner by themselves, a group of bluejackets made a fearful noise with some kind of whirligig rattles. Songs rose in spots from the audience, collided with

other songs, and melted away in indistinguishable tunes. British Tommies looked on phlegmatically, enjoying it all just the same. There were stray, mocking cat calls. It was a real effort to bring one's self back to London, old London of decorous cricket, tea, and white flannels.

And of course, the Navy won. Over the heads of the vanishing crowd floated,

Give 'em the axe, the axe, the axe,
Where? Where? Where?
Right in the neck, the neck, the neck,
There! There! There!
Who gets the axe?

ARMY

Who says so!

NAVY

It ends with a roar.

Then there is a celebration, and the next morning, his holiday over, Jack is rounded up, and put into a railway carriage. The roofs of London die away, and Jack, dozing over his magazines, sees in a dream the great grey shapes of the battleships that wait for him in the endless northern rain.

XXIX

THE ARMED GUARD

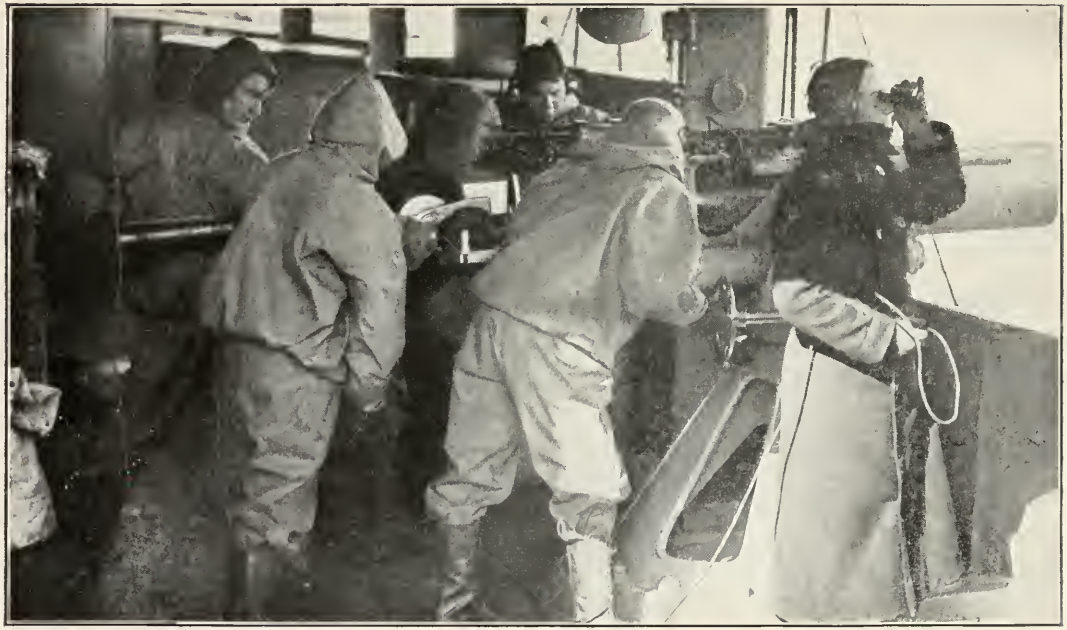
WHEN the Germans began to sink our unarmed merchant vessels, and denounced that they intended to continue that course of action, it was immediately seen that the only possible military answer to this infamous policy lay in arming every ship. There were obstacles, however, to this defensive programme. We were at the time engaged in what was essentially a legal controversy with the Germans, a controversy in which the case of America and civilization was stated with a clarity, a sincerity, and a spirit of idealism which perhaps only the future can justly appreciate. We could not afford to weaken our case by involving in doubt the legal status of the merchantman. The enemy, driven brilliantly point by point from the pseudo-legal defences of an outrageous campaign, had taken refuge in quibbling, "the ship was armed," "a gun was

seen," "such vessels must be considered as war vessels." We all know the sorry story. For a while, our hands were tied. Then came our declaration of war which left our Navy free to take protective measures. The merchantmen were fitted with guns, and given crews of Navy gunners. This service, devoted to the protection of the merchant ship, was known as the Armed Guard.

It was not long before tanker and tramp, big merchantman and grimy collier sailed from our ports fully equipped. Vessels whose helplessness before the submarine had been extreme, the helplessness of a wretched sparrow gripped in the talons of a hawk, became fighting units which the submarine encountered at her peril. Moreover, finding it no longer easy to sink ships with gunfire, the submarines were forced to make greater use of their torpedoes, and this in turn compelled them to attempt at frequent intervals the highly dangerous voyage to the German bases on the Belgian coast. Sometimes the gun crews were British; sometimes American. The cooperation between the two Navies was at once friendly and scientific.

The guns with which the vessels were equipped were of the best, and the gun crews were recruited from the trained personnel of the fleet. One occasionally hears, aboard the greater vessels, lamentations for gunners who have been sent on to the Guard. These crews consisted of some half-dozen men usually under the command of a chief petty officer. A splendid record, theirs. They have been in action time and time again against the Germans, and have destroyed submarines. There is many a fine tale in the records of crews who kept up the battle till the tilt of their sinking vessel made the firing of the gun an impossibility. So far, the gunners on the merchant ships have come in for the lion's share of attention. But there is another and important side of the Armed Guard service which has not yet, I believe, been called to the public notice. I mean the work of the signal men of the Guard.

The arming of the merchant ships was the first defensive measure to be adopted; the second, the gathering of merchantmen into escorted groups known as convoys. Now a convoy has before it several definite prob-



An American gun crew in heavy weather (winter) outfit

lems. If it was to make the most of its chances of getting through the German ambush, it must act as a well coördinated naval unit, obeying orders, answering signals, and performing designated evolutions in the manner of a battleship squadron. For instance, convoys follow certain zigzag plans, prepared in advance by naval experts. Frequently these schemes are changed at sea. Now if all the vessels change from plan X to plan Y simultaneously, all will go well, but if some delay, there is certain to be a most dangerous confusion, perhaps a collision. It is no easy task to keep twenty or so boats zigzagging in convoy formation, and travelling in a general direction eastward at the same time. Merchant captains have had to accustom themselves to these strict orders, no easy task for some old-fashioned masters; merchant crews have had to be educated to the discipline and method of naval crews. Moreover, there have been occasional foreign vessels to deal with, and the problem presented by a foreign personnel. In order, therefore, to assure that communication between the guide ship of the convoy and its attendant vessels

which is, in the true sense of an abused word, vital to the success of the expedition, the Navy placed one of its keenest signalmen on the vessels which required one. He was there to give and to send signals, by flag, by international flag code, by "blinker" and by semaphore. The wireless was used as little as possible between the various vessels of the merchant fleet, indeed, practically not at all.

The system of signalling by holding two flags at various angles is fairly familiar since a number of organizations began to teach it, and the semaphore system is the same system carried into action by two mechanical arms. The method called "Blinker" has a Morse alphabet, and is sent by exposing and shutting off a light, the shorter exposures being the dots, the longer exposures, the dashes. Sometimes "blinker" is sent by the ship's search light, a number of horizontal shutters attached to one perpendicular rod serving to open and close the light aperture. One used to see the same scheme on the lower halves of old-fashioned window blinds. The international flag code is perhaps the hardest signal system

to remember. It requires not only what a naval friend calls a good "brute" memory, but also a good visual memory. Many have seen the flags, gay pieces of various striped, patched, chequered, and dotted bunting reminiscent of a Tokio street fair. The signalman must learn the flag alphabet, committing to memory the colours and their geometric arrangement; he must also learn the special signification of each particular letter. For instance, one letter of the alphabet stands for "I wish to communicate"; there are also numbers to remember, phrases, and sentences. If a signalman cares to specialize, he can study certain minor systems, for instance the one in which a dot and a dash are symbolized by different coloured lights. A signalman must have a good eye, a quick brain, and a good memory. It is a feat in itself to remember what one has already received while continuing to receive a long, perhaps complicated message. Because of these intellectual requirements, you will find among the signalmen some of the cleverest lads in the Navy. "Giles" such a lad, "Idaho," another, and "Pop" was always "on the job."

The Guard has its barracks in a great American port. One saw there the men being sorted out, equipped for their special service, and assigned to their posts. A fine lot of real seafaring youngsters, tanned almost black. The Navy looked after them in a splendid fashion. Said one of the boys to me, "If I had only known what a wonderful place the Navy was, I'd been in it long ago." The boys were sent over in the merchant ships, were cleanly lodged in excellent hotels once they got to land, and were then sent back on various liners. The Armed Guard was a real seafaring service, and its men one and all were touched by the romance and mystery of the sea. They fell in with strange old tramps hurried from the East, they broke bread with strange crews, they beheld the sea in the sullen wrath it cherishes beneath the winter skies. One and all they have stood by their guns, one and all stood by their tasks, good, sturdy, American lads, gentlemen unafraid.

XXX

GOING ABOARD

GILES, who had just been sent to the Armed Guard from the fleet, was waiting for orders in a room at the naval barracks. It was early in the spring, the sun shone renewed and clear; a hurdy gurdy sounded far, far away. The big room was clean, clean with that hard, orderly tidiness which marks the habitations of men under military rule. A number of sailors, likewise waiting for their orders, stood about. There was a genuine sea-going quality in the tanned, eager young faces. The conversation dealt with their journeys, with the ships, with the men, the life aboard, the furloughs in London. "Bunch of Danes . . . good eats . . . chucked Bill right out of his bunk . . . regular peach . . . saw Jeff at the Eagle Hut . . ."

Presently a bosun entered. A man somewhere in the thirties, brisk and athletic. One could see him counting the assembled sailors

as he came, the numbers forming on his soundless lips. The talk died away.

"How many men here?" said the bosun abruptly.

Several of the sailors began counting. There was much turning round, a deal of whispered estimations. Every one appeared to be looking at everybody else. Finally a deep voice from a corner said:

"Thirty-five."

"Any one down for leave?"

Some half dozen, members of a gun crew just home from a long journey, called out that leave had been given them.

"Anybody on sick list?"

There was no answer. In the ensuing silence, the bosun checked off the answers on his list.

"I suppose you all want to go out."

"Sure!"

"Get in line." The bosun backed away, and looked with an official eye at the sturdy group.

"All here, pack up and stand by. At eleven o'clock have all your baggage at the drill office. I'll send a man up to get the mail."

The line broke up, keen for the coming adventure. Giles, the signalman, walked at a brisk pace to his quarters. . . You would have seen a lad of about twenty-two years of age, between medium height and tall, and unusually well built. Some years of wrestling —he had won distinction in this sport at school—had given him a tremendously powerful neck and chest, but with all the strength there was no suggestion of beefiness. The friendliest of brown eyes shone in the clean-cut, handsome head, he had a delightful smile, always a sign of good breeding. In habit he was industrious and persevering, in manner of life clean and true beyond reproach. Giles is an American sailor lad, a *real gob*, and I have described him at some length because of this same reality. The sooner we get to know our sailors the better.

Back in his quarters, he busied himself with packing his bag. Now packing one of those cylindrical bags is an art in itself. First of all, each garment must be folded or rolled in a certain way, the sleeve in this manner, the collar in that (it is all patiently taught at training stations) then the articles them-

selves must be placed within the bag in an orderly arrangement, and last of all, toilet articles and such gear must be stowed within convenient reach. A clean smell of freshly washed clothes and good, yellow, kitchen soap rose from the tidy bundles. In went an extra suit—"those trousers are real broadcloth, don't get 'em nowadays, none of that bum serge they're trying to wish on you," a packet of underwear tied and knotted with wonderful sailor knots, and last of all handkerchiefs, soap, and other minor impedimenta done up in blue and red bandanna handkerchiefs. You simply put the articles on the handkerchiefs and knot the four corners neatly over the top. There you have the sailor. Only at sea does one realize to what an extent the bandanna kandkerchief is a boon to mankind. When the bag was packed, it was a triumph of industry and skill. Shouldering it, the sailor walked to the drill office. He was early. A good substantial luncheon had been prepared. There were plates of hearty sandwiches. Just before noon, a fleet of "buses" took them to the pier.

The day was clear but none too warm, and

great buffeting salvos of dust-laden wind blew across the befouled and busy waters of the port. A young, almost boyish ensign gave each man his final orders, and a kind of identification slip for their captains. The sailors of the Guard, wearing reefers and with round hats jammed tightly on their heads, stood backed against a wind that curled the wide ends of their blue trousers close about their ankles. Presently, grimy, hot, and pouring out coils of brownish, choking smoke, a big ocean-going tug glided over to the wharf and took them aboard. Then bells ran, the propeller churned, and the tug turned her corded nose down the bay. The convoy lay at anchor at the very mouth of the roads. A miscellaneous lot of vessels, mostly of British registration; some new, some very, very old. The pick of the group was a fine large vessel with an outlandish Maori name; Giles heard later that she had just been brought over from New Zealand. The inevitable grimy-decked tankers and ammoniacal mule boat completed the lot. An American cruiser lay at the very head of the line, men could be seen moving about on her, and there

was much washing flapping in the wind. The tug went from vessel to vessel, landing a signalman here, a gun crew there. One by one the lads clambered aboard to shouts of "See you later," and "Soak 'em one for me." Giles was almost the last man left aboard the tug. Presently he darted off busily to a clean little tramp camouflaged in tones of pink, grey, and rusty black. The tug slid alongside caressingly. There were more bells; a noise of churning of water. Over the side of the greater vessel leaned a number of the crew, a casual curiosity in their eyes. Seafaring men in dingy jerseys opening at the throat and showing hairy chests. A putty-faced ship's boy watched the show a little to one side. Presently an officer of the ship, young, deep-chested and with a freshly-healed, puckering, star-shaped wound at the left hand corner of his mouth, came briskly down the deck and stood by the head of the ladder.

Giles caught up his bag, clambered aboard, and reported. The officer brought him to the captain. Then when the formalities were over, the second mate took him in charge, and assigned the lad his quarters and his watches.

The convoy set sail the next morning just as a pale, cold, and unutterably laggard dawn rose over a sea stretching, vast and empty, to the clearly marked line of a distant and leaden horizon. The escorting cruiser, flying a number of flags, was the first to get under way; and behind her followed the merchantmen in their allotted positions, each ship flying its position flag.

Giles watched the departure from the bridge. Behind him the vast city rose silent above the harbour mist; ahead, rich in promise of adventure and romance, lay the great plain of the dark, the inhospitable, the unsullied, the heroic sea.

XXXI

GRAIN

THIS is "Idaho's" story. He told it to me when I met him coming home early this summer. We were crossing in a worthy old transatlantic which has since gone to the bottom, and Idaho, at his ease in the deserted smoking room, unfolded the adventure. "Idaho, U. S. N.," we called him that aboard, is a very real personage. I think he told me that he was eighteen years old, medium height, solidly built, wholesome looking. The leading characteristic of the young, open countenance is intelligence, an intelligence that has grown of itself behind those clear grey eyes, not a power that has grown from premature contact with the world. Until he joined the Navy, I imagine that Idaho knew little of the world beyond his own magnificent West. I consider him very well educated; he declares that preferring life on his father's ranch to knowledge, he cut high

school after the second year. He is a great reader, and likes good, stirring poetry. He is an idealist, and stands by his ideals with a fervour which only youth possesses. And I ought to add that Idaho, in the words of one of his friends, is "one first-class signalman." This is Idaho's story, pieced together from his own recital, and from a handful of his letters.

The crowd aboard the naval tug was so festive that morning, and there was such a lot of scuffling, punching, imitation boxing and jollying generally that Idaho did not see the vessel to which he had been assigned till the tug was close alongside. Then, hearing his name called out, the lad caught up his baggage, and walked on into the open side of a vast, disreputable tramp. The lad later learned that she had been brought from somewhere in the China Sea. The *Sebastopol*, Heaven knows where she originally got the name, was a ship that had served her term in the west, had grown old and out of date, and then been purchased by some Oriental firm. Out there, she had carried on, always seaworthy in an old-fashioned way, always excessively dirty, always a day over due.

When the submarine had made ships worth their weight in silver, the *Sebastopol* must have been almost on the point of giving up the ghost. Presently, the war brought the old ship back to England again. Her return to an English harbour must have resembled the return of a disreputable relative to an anxious family. And in England, in some tremendously busy shipyard, they had patched her up, added a modern electrical equipment and even gone to the length of new boilers. But her engines they had merely tuned up, and as for her ancient hull, that they had dedicated to the mercy of the gods of the sea.

Once aboard, and assigned to his station and watches, the lad had leisure to look over his companions. The *Sebastopol* carried a crew from Liverpool, and was officered by three Englishmen and a little Welsh third mate. The Captain, a first mate of many years' experience, to whom the war had given the chance of a ship, was in the forties; tall and with a thin, stern mouth under a heavy brown moustache; the first mate was a mere youngster: the second, a middle-aged volunteer, the third, an undersized, excitable Celt

with grey eyes and coal black hair touched with snow white above the ears. The Welshman took a liking for Idaho; used to question him in regard to the West, being especially keen to know about "opportunities there after the war." He had a brother in Wales whom he thought might share in a farming venture. Of the captain the lad saw very little; and the first mate was somewhat on his dignity. Practically every man of the crew had been torpedoed at least once, many had been injured, and had scars to exhibit. All had picturesque tales to tell, the gruesomest ones being the favourites. The best narrator was a fireman from London, a man of thirty with a lean chest and grotesquely strong arms; he would sit on the edge of a bunk or a chair and tell of sudden thundering crashes, of the roaring of steam, of bodies lying on the deck over which one tripped as one ran, of water pouring into engine rooms, and of boilers suddenly vomiting masses of white hot coal upon dazed and scalded stokers. It was the melodrama of below the water line. Then for days the narrator would keep silent, troubled by a pain in one of his frag-

mentary teeth. All the men kept their few belongings tied in a bundle, ready to seize the instant trouble was at hand. The cook complained to Idaho that he had lost a gold watch when the *Lady Esther* was torpedoed off the coast of France, and advised him paternally to keep his things handy. One of the oilers, a good-natured fellow of twenty-eight or nine, had been a soldier, having been invalided out of the service because of wounds received late in the summer on the Somme. An interesting lot of men for an American boy to be tossed with, particularly for a lad as intelligent and observing as our Idaho. The boy was pleased with his job and worked well. He did not have very much to do. Signalling aboard a convoyed ship, though a frequent business, is not an incessant one. He knew that his work would come at the entrance to the zone. Sometimes he picked up messages intended for others. "*Mt. Ida*, you are out of line," "*Vulcanian*, keep strictly to the prescribed zigzag plan." Now he would see the *Sicilian* asking for advice; now there would be a kind of telegraphic tiff between two of the vessels of the "Keep

further away, hang you" order. Twenty ships running without lights through the ambush of the sea, twenty ships, twenty pledges of life, satisfied hunger . . . victory. In other days, one's world at sea was one's ship; a convoy is a kind of solar system of solitary worlds. Hour after hour, the assembled ships straggled across the great loneliness of the sea.

The crew had a grievance. It was not against their officers, but against his majesty's government, against "a bloody lot of top hats." A recent regulation had forbidden sailors to import food into the United Kingdom, and all the dreams of stocking up "the missus' " larder with American abundance had come to naught. Idaho says that there was an engineer who was particularly fierce. "Don't we risk our lives, I arsk yer," he would say, "bringing stuff to fill their ruddy guts, and now they won't even let us bring in a bit of sugar for ourselves." The rest of the crew would take up the angry refrain; a mention of the food regulations was enough to set the entire crew "grousing" for hours.

And then came trouble, real trouble.

On the fifth day out Idaho, called for his

early watch, found the boat wallowing in a heavy sea. The wind was not particularly heavy, but it blew steadily from one point of the compass, and the seas were running dark, wind-flecked, and high. The *Sebastopol*, accustomed to the calm of eastern seas, was pitching and rolling heavily. Presently the cargo began to shift. Now, to have the cargo shift is about the most dangerous thing that can happen to a vessel. One never can tell just when the centre of gravity of the mass will be displaced, and when that contingency occurs, the big iron ship will roll over as casually and as easily as a dog before the fire. It takes courage, plenty of courage, to keep such a ship running, especially if you are down by the boilers or in the engine room. You have to be prepared to find yourself lying in a corner somewhere looking up at a ceiling which, strange to say, has a door in it. The *Sebastopol* leaned away from the wind like a stricken man crouching before a pitiless enemy; the angle of her smokestack more than anything else betraying the alarming list. In her stricken condition, the ship seemed to become more than ever personal and human. Pres-

ently her old plates bulged somewhere and she began to leak.

The vessel carried a cargo of grain, in these days more than ever a cargo epical and symbolic; a holdful of rich grain, grain engendered out of fields vast as the sea, bred by the fruitful fire of the sun, rippled by the passing of winds from the mysterious hills, grain, symbolic of satisfied hunger, . . . victory. A cargo of grain, life to those on land, to those on board, danger and the possibility of a violent if romantic death. The crew, too occupied with the emergency to curse the stevedores, ran hither and thither on swift, obscure errands. And the weather grew steadily worse, the leak increasing with the advance of the storm. Down below, meanwhile, a force of men hardly able to keep their balance, buffeted here and there by the motion of the ship, and working in an atmosphere of choking dust, transferred a number of bags from one side to another. Unhappily, the real mischief was due to grain in bins, and with this store little could be done. And always the water in the hold increased in depth.

The pumps, orders had been given to

start them directly the leak was noticed. Three minutes later, the machinery and the pipes, fouled with grain, refused to work. They saw bubbles, steam, a trickle of water that presently stopped, and lumps of wet grain that some one might have chewed together, and spat forth again. Idaho did a lot of signalling in code to the guide ship of the convoy. The *Sebastopol* began to drop behind. An order being given to sleep up on the boat deck so as to be ready to leave at any instant, the men dragged their bedding to whatever shelter they could find. The captain appeared never to take any time off for sleep. Day after day, through heavy seas, under a sky torn and dirty as a rag, the old *Sebastopol* listing badly and sodden as cold porridge, carried her precious cargo to the waiting and hungry east. Giving up all hope of keeping up with her sisters, she fell behind, now straggling ten, now fifteen miles astern. At length the weather changed; the sea became smooth, blue and sparkling, the sky radiant and clear.

Then the destroyers came. There was a parley, and the other vessels of the convoy zigzagged wildly for a while in order to allow

the *Sebastopol* to catch up. But in spite of all attempts, the old ship fell behind again and was suffered to do so, lest the others, compelled to adopt her slow speed, be seriously handicapped in their race down the gauntlet. Then it was discovered that the leak had gained alarmingly; there was even talk of abandoning the vessel and taking to the boats. A try was made to pump out the boat with an ancient hand engine. The contrivance clogged almost at once. According to Idaho, it was much like trying to pump out a thick bran mash such as they give sick calves. And they were only two days from land. Barely afloat, just crawling, and with the submarine zone ahead of them. . . . But the gods were kind, and the old boat and the solitary destroyer went down the Channel and across the Irish Sea as safely as clockwork toys across a garden pool. Yet they passed quite a tidy lot of wreckage. Nearer . . . nearer all the time, till late one afternoon two big tugs raced to meet them at the mouth of a giant estuary. The *Sebastopol* was at the end of her tether. Another day, and it would have been a case of taking to the boats.

The tugs hurried her into a waiting dry dock.

Idaho, his papers signed, his bag upon his shoulder, got into a little tender which was to take him over to the harbour landing. Looking up, he saw some of the crew leaning over the rail. . . . They grinned with friendly, soot-streaked faces, waved their arms. . . . The *Sebastopol* was safe, the rich cargo of grain, the life-giving yellow grain was safe. . . . The tug slid off into the busy, noisy riverway.

And thus came Idaho of the Armed Guard to the Beleaguered Isles.

XXXII

COLLISION

".....Regret to report collision in latitude x and longitude y between tank steamships *Tampico* and *Peruvian*....."

Extract from an Admiralty paper.

WHEN supper was over, the two sailors of the Armed Guard attached to the ship went out on deck for a breath of evening air. It was just after sundown, a clean calm rested upon the monstrous plain of the sea; one golden star shone tranquil and lonely in the west. The convoy was almost at the border of the zone. To the left the lads could see the twin funnels of the big grain ship; the tattered, befouled horse boat, the little, rolling tramp said to be full of T.N.T., and the long low bulks and squat houses of the two tanks.

"Whoever's on that tramp is some bird at signals," said the bigger of the boys, my friend "Pop." "Generally starts to answer my sig-

nal before I'm through. Know who's aboard her, Robbie?"

"I think it's that big new guy from the *Pennsylvania*," answered Robbie, meditatively.

"Dalton's on the horse boat, isn't he?"

"Sure, either he or Ricci. Pete Johnson's on the first tank, and that fresh little Rogers guy's on the other."

There was a pause. Pop spat with unction over the side.

Suddenly their vessel entered a fog bank, passing through a detached island or two of it before plunging on into the central mass. The convoy instantly faded from sight. Every now and then, out of the wall of grey ahead, a little swirl of fog detached itself, and floating down the darkening deck, melted into the opaque obscurity behind. Drops of moisture began to gather on the lower surface of the brass rails of the companionways; wires grew slippery to the touch; little worm-like trails of over-laden drops slid mechanically down sloping surfaces. The fog, thickening, flowed alongside like a vaporous current. Overhead, however, the sky was fairly clear, though the greater stars shone aureoled and

pale. There was very little sound, merely the steady hissing of the calm water alongside, occasional voices heard in a tone of consultation,—the heavy slam of a door. An hour passed. The fog showed no sign of lifting, seeming rather to become of denser substance with the dark. Pop was glad that there was no ship following directly behind, and wondered if the others were dragging fog buoys. The ship's bell rang muffled and morne in the fog. Suddenly, out of the clinging darkness, out of the oppressive obscurity, there came, momentary, brazen, and incredibly distant a dull and muffled sound. So far away and mysterious was its source that the sound might have been imagined as coming from the dark beyond the stars. An instant later, as if the only purpose of its mysterious existence had been to sink a tanker, the fog melted into the night, and a little wind, a little, timid, trembling breath brushed the great plume of smoke from the funnel lightly aside. A bright starlit night came into being as if by enchantment, as if created out of the fog by the intervention of divine will.

The motionless black shapes of the colliding tankers could be seen far, far astern. After the crash, they had drifted apart. The wireless was crackling, blinker lights flashed their dots and dashes of violet white, a whistle blew. "Am standing by," came a message. The chief of the convoy sent out a peremptory command. Presently a light appeared on one of the vessels, a little rosy glow like a Chinese lantern. The glow sank, disappeared, and rose again, having gathered strength. One of the tankers was on fire. Soon a second glow appeared close by its stern. A glow of warm, rosy orange. In a few minutes they could see tongues of fire, and two boats rowing away from the vessel. They did not know that the men in the boats were rowing for their lives through a pool of oil which might take fire at any instant. A few minutes passed; the light grew brighter. Suddenly, there was a kind of flaming burst: a great victory of fire. The tanker, well down by the head, floated flaming in an ocean that was itself a flame, floated black, silent, and doomed to find an ironic grave in the waters under the fire. Great masses of

smoke rose from the burning pool into the serene sky, and hid the vessel when she sank.

Half an hour later, a little, rosy light lay at the horizon's rim. Suddenly, like a lamp blown out, it died.

XXXIII

THE RAID BY THE RIVER

THE convoy of merchantmen, after a calm, quite uneventful voyage across the ambushed sea, put into a port on the Channel for the night, and the following morning dispersed to their various harbours. Some sort of coast patrol boat "not much bigger than an Admiral's launch," the words are those of my friend Steve Holzer of the Armed Guard, took the S.S. *Snowdon* under her metaphorical wing, and brought her up the Thames. This *Snowdon* was one of a fleet of twelve spry little tramps named for the principal mountains of the kingdom, a smart, well-equipped, well-ordered product of the Tyne. Steve, quick, clever, and alert, had got along capitally with the "limeys." His particular pals were a pair of twin lads about his own age, young, English, blond, and grey-eyed; young, slow to understand a joke, honest, good-tempered, and sincere. I have

seen the postcard photograph of themselves which they gave Steve as a parting gift. Steve himself is a Yankee from the word go, a genuine Yankee from somewhere along the coast of Maine. He stands somewhat below medium height, is lean-faced and lean-bodied; his eyes twinkle with a shrewd good humour. A great lad. He tells me that his people have been seafaring folk for generations.

The *Snowdon*, escorted by her tiny guard, ran down the coast, entered the Thames estuary, passed the barriers, and finally resigned herself to the charge of a tug. Late in the afternoon, the mass of London began to enclose them, they became conscious of strange, somewhat foul, land smells; the soot in the air irritated their nostrils. The ship was docked close after dusk. The feeling of satisfaction which seizes on the hearts of seamen who have successfully brought a ship into port entered into their bosoms; everybody was happy, happy in the retrospect of achievement, in the prospect of peace, security, good pay, and good times.

Their vessel lay in a basin just off a great bend in the river, in a kind of gigantic concrete

swimming pool bordered with steel arc-light poles planted in rows like impossibly perfect trees. To starboard, through another row of arc poles and over a wall of concrete, they could see the dirty majesty of the great brown river and the square silhouetted bulks of the tenements and warehouses on the other side. To port, lay a landing stage some two hundred feet wide, backed by a huge warehouse over whose dingy roof two immense chimneys towered like guardians. The space stank of horse; the river had lost the clean smell of the sea, and breathed a reek of humanity and inland mire. A mean cobbled-stone street led from a corner of the landing space past wretched tenements, fried fish shops, and pawnbrokers' windows exhibiting second rate nautical instruments, concertinas, and fraternal emblems. It was all surprisingly quiet.

Steve, hospitably invited to remain aboard, went to the starboard rail and stood studying the river. The last smoky light had ebbed from the sky; night, rich and strewn with autumnal stars, hung over the gigantic city, and a moon just passing the first quarter hung close by the meridian, and shone reflected

in the pool-like basin and the river's moving tide. One of the huge chimneys suddenly assumed a great, creamy-curling plume of smoke which dissolved mysteriously into the exhalations of the city. From down in the crew's quarters came the musical squeals of a concertina, and occasional voices whose words could but rarely be distinguished. The arc lights by the basin edge suddenly flowered into a dismal glow of whitish yellow light strangled by the opaque hoods and under cups affixed by the anti-aircraft regulations. Another concertina sounded further down the street. The moonlight, like a kind of supernal benediction, fell on smokestack and funnel, on shining grey wire and solemn, rusted anchor, on burnished capstan and finger smoutched door. Heat haze, flowing in a swift and glassy river, shone above the smokestack in the moon.

Suddenly, Steve heard down the street a sustained note from something on the order of a penny whistle, and an instant later, a window was flung up, and a figure leaned out. It was too dark to see whether it was a man or a woman. Then the same whistle was

blown again several times as if by a conscientious boy, and a factory siren with a sobbing human cry rose over the warehouses. At the same moment, the lights about the dock flickered, clicked, and died. There was a confused noise of steps behind, there were voices—"Hey, listen!" "Wot's that?" the last in pure cockney, and a questioning, doubting Thomas voice said: "A raid?" The figure of the captain was seen on the bridge. One of the ships' boys went hurrying round, doing something or other, probably closing doors. The twins strolled over to Steve, and informed him in the most casual manner that they were in for a raid. It was Steve's first introduction to British unemotionalism, and I imagine that it rather let him down. He says that he himself was "right up on his tiptoes." He also had a notion that bombs would begin to rain from the sky directly after the warning. The twins soon made it clear, however, that the warning was given when the raiders were picked up on the east coast, and that there was generally some twenty minutes or half an hour to wait before "the show" began. Every once in a while,

somebody in the group would steal a look at the pale worlds beyond the serried chimney pots and at the moon, guiltless accomplice of the violence and imbecilities of men.

Presently, a number of star shells burst in fountains of coppery bronze. Every hatch covered, every port and window sealed, the *Snowdon* awaited the coming of the raiders. Whisles continued to be heard, faint and far away. From no word, tone, or gesture of that English crew could one have gathered that they were in the most dangerous quarter of the city. For the one indispensable element of a London raid is the attack on the water-front, the attack on the ships, the ships of wood, the ships of steel, the hollow ships through which imperial Britain lives.

There is little to be seen in a London raid unless you happen to be close by something struck by a bomb. The affair is almost entirely a strange and terrible movement of sound, a rising, catastrophic tide of sound, a flood of thundering tumult, a slow and sullen ebb.

"There! 'Ear that?" said some one.

Far away, on the edge of the Essex marshes

and the moon-lit sea, a number of anti-aircraft guns had picked up the raiders. The air was full of a faint, sullen murmur, continuous as the roar of ocean on a distant beach. Searchlight beams, sweeping swift and mechanical, appeared over London, the pale rays searching the black islands between the dimmed constellations like figures of the blind. They descended, rose, glared, met, melted together. The sullen roaring grew louder and nearer, no longer a blend, but a sustained crescendo of pounding sounds and muffled crashes. A belated star shell broke, and was reflected in the river. A police boat passed swiftly and noiselessly, a solitary red spark floating from her funnel as she sped. The roaring gathered strength, the guns on the coast were still; now, one heard the guns on the inland moors, the guns in the fields beyond quiet little villages, the guns lower down the river—they were following the river—now the guns in the outer suburbs, now the guns in the very London spaces, ring, crash, tinkle, roar, pound! The great city flung her defiance at her enemies. Steve became so absorbed in the tumult that he

obeyed the order to take shelter below quite mechanically. A new sound came screaming into their retreat, a horrible kind of whistling zoom, followed by a heavy pound. Steve was told that he had heard a bomb fall. "Somewhere down the river." Nearer, instant by instant, crept the swift, deadly menace. A lonely fragment of an anti-aircraft shell dropped clanging on the steel deck.

"You see," explained one of the twins in the careful passionless tone that he would have used in giving street directions to a stranger, "the Huns are on their way up the river, dropping a kettle on any boat that looks like a good mark, and trying to set the docks afire. The docks always get it. Listen!"

There was a second "zoom," and a third close on its heels.

"Those are probably on the *Ætna* basins," said the other twin. Their aim's beastly rotten as a rule. If this light were out, we might be able to see something from a hatchway. Mr. Millen (the first mate) makes an awful fuss if he finds any one on deck. "I know what's what, let's go to the galley, there's a window that can't be shut." . . . The three

lads stole off. Beneath a lamp turned down to a bluish-yellow flame, the older seaman waited placidly for the end of the raid, and discussed, sailor fashion, a hundred irrelevant subjects. The darkened space grew chokingly thick with tobacco smoke. And the truth of it was that every single sailor in there knew that the last two bombs had fallen on the *Ætna* basins, and that the *Snowdon* would be sure to catch it next. By a trick of the gods of chance, the vessel happened to be alone in the basin, and presented a shining mark. The lads reached the galley window.

By crowding in, shoulder to shoulder, they could all see. The pool and its concrete wall were hidden; the window opened directly on the river. Presently came a lull in the tumult, and during it, Steve heard a low, monotonous hum, the song of the raiding planes. More fragments of shrapnel fell upon the deck. The moon had travelled westward, and lay, large and golden, well clear of the town. The winter stars, bright and inexorable, had advanced . . . the city was fighting on. Suddenly, the three boys heard

the ominous aerial whistle, one of the twins slammed the window to, and an instant later there was a sound within the dark little galley as if somebody had touched off an enormous invisible rocket, . . . a frightful "zoom," and impact . . . silence. They guessed what had happened. A bomb intended for the *Snowdon* had fallen in the river. Later somewhere on land was heard a thundering crash which shook the vessel violently. A pan or something of the kind hanging on the galley wall fell with a startling crash. "Get out of there, you boys," called the cook. Ship's galleys are sacred places, and are to be respected even in air raids. And then even more slowly and gradually than it had gathered to a flood, the uproar ebbed. The firing grew spasmodic, ceased within the city limits, lingered as a distant rumble from the outlying fields, and finally died away altogether. The sailors, released by a curt order, came on deck. The top of the concrete wall was splashed and mottled with dark puddles and spatters of water. All agreed that the bomb had fallen "bloody close." The peace of the abyss

rules above. Far down the river, there was an unimportant fire.

Said Steve—"I certainly was sore when I didn't have any excitement on the way over in the convoy, but after that night in the *Snowdon*, I decided that being with the Armed Guard let you in for some real stuff. It's a great service."

With which opinion all who know the Guard will agree.

XXXIV

ON HAVING BEEN BOTH A SOLDIER AND A SAILOR

WHEN this cruel war is over, and the mad rounds of parades, banquets and reunions begin, I shall immediately set to work to organize the most exclusive of clubs. A mocking and envious friend suggests that our uniform consist of a white sailor hat, a soldier's tunic, British, French, or American according to the flags under which we served, and a pair of sailor trousers with an extra wide flare. For the club is to be composed of those fortunate souls who like myself have seen "the show" on land and on sea. To my mind, however, instead of mixing the uniforms, it would be better to dress in khaki when we feel military; in blue when our temperament is nautical. Think of belonging to a club whose members can dissect a trench mortar with ease and at the same time say: "Three points off the port bow" without turning a hair. I should admit marines only

after a special consideration of each case. Not that I don't admire the marines. I do. I yield to no one in my admiration of our gallant "devil dogs." But the applicant for admission to our club must have first served as a bona fide soldier and then as a bona fide sailor or vice versa. Not that I am a sailor or ever was a sailor in Uncle Sam's Navy. All that I can claim to have been is a correspondent attached to the Navy "over there." But four months' service, most of it spent at sea on the destroyers, subs, and battleships entitles me, I think, to membership, consequently, being president, I have admitted myself.

"Well, you've seen the war both on land and on sea; which service do you prefer . . . the army or the Navy?" This question is hurled at me everywhere I go. I answer it with deliberation, enjoying the while to the full the consciousness of being an extraordinary person, a sort of literary Æneas, *multum jactatus et terris et alto.* And I answer briefly:

"The Navy."

I hasten to add, however, that you will find

my answer coloured by a passion for the beauty and the mystery of the sea with which some good spirit endowed me in my cradle. I was born in one of the most historic of New England seacoast towns where brine was anciently said to flow through the veins of the inhabitants. On midsummer days the fierce heat distils from the cracked, caked mud of tidal meadows the clean, salty smell of the unsullied sea; dark ships, trailing far behind them long, dissolving plumes of smoke, weave in and out between the tawny, whale-backed islands of the bay, and tame little sea birds almost the colour of the shingle run along at the edge of the in-coming tide. So I admit a bias for the service of the sea.

Does the Navy demand as much of the sailor as the Army does of the soldier? A vexed question. The Army, comparing grimly its own casualty lists with the Navy's occasional roll sometimes imagines naturally enough that the sailor lives, as the old hymn has it, "on flowery beds of ease." As a whole there is no denying that living conditions are far better in the naval service, though much depends on the boat to which the sailor is

assigned. A soldier in the trenches sleeps in his clothes, so does a sailor on a destroyer or a patrol boat, and I do not believe that I felt much more comfortable at the end of a long trip in an old destroyer during which the vessel rolled, pitched, tossed, careened, stood on her head, sat on her tail and buckled than I did after a week or so at the front. Certainly, there was little to choose between the overcrowded living quarters of the sailors and a decent "dug-out." True, the "Toto," alias greyback, alias "Cootie" or his occasional but less famous accomplice the "crimson rambler" does not infest a Navy ship. How many times have I not heard Army folk say in heartfelt tones, "Those Navy people can keep *clean*." But a truce to the Cootie. Much more has been made of him than he deserves. During the first six months of the war the creature was in evidence, but after the hostilities began to limit themselves to the trench swathe, and this localizing war made possible a stable system of hospitals, cantonments and baths, the Cootie became as rare as a day in June and to have such guest was an indication of abysmally bad luck

or personal uncleanliness. Moreover, a little gasoline begged from a lorry driver and sprinkled on ones clothes confers unconditional immunity. Consider the crew of a submarine. They do have have to splash about in a gulley of smelly mud the consistency of thick soup, or wander down alleyways of red brown mud, so cheesy that it sticks to the boots till one no longer lifts feet from the ground, but shapeless, heavy, thrice cussed lumps of mire. No one has yet risen to sing the epic of the mud of France; yet 'tis the soul of the war. The submarine sailors are spared the mud, but they live in a sealed cylinder into which sunlight does not penetrate, live in the close atmosphere of a garage; they can not get exercise or change clothes. A submarine crew that has had a hard time of it looks quite as worn out as soldiers just out of battle and their colour is far worse. And if there is a more heroic service than this submarine patrol, I should like to know of it.

And now the army in me rises to protest. "I admit," says the military voice, "that service on ships may be a confounded sight more disagreeable than I had imagined, but

the sailor has a chance when he gets to port of changing his uniform, whilst a poor lad of a soldier must fight, eat, and sleep in the same old uniform, and must limit his changes to a change of underclothes."

True, oh military spirit. Civilian, and thou, too, oh sailor, do you know what it is to be confined, to be wedded, without jest, "till death do us part" to *one* suit. One faithful, persistent, necessary uniform and *one* only. Two-thirds of the joy of permission is the pleasure of getting out of a dirty, stale, besweated uniform. Heaven bless, Heaven shower a Niagara of happiness on those kindly ladies who sent us supplies of socks and jerseys! Don't be content to knit Johnny socks and a sweater, keep on knitting him a number of them, and send them over at intervals. The dandies of a section used to leave extra clothes in villages behind the lines. Alas, sometimes, the group, after service "*aux tranchées*" was not marched back to the same village, and it was difficult to get permission to visit the other village, even were it near. Such expedients, however, are for luxurious times. Quite often there are no habita-

ble villages for miles behind the lines, or else the civilian inhabitants have been ruthlessly warned away. In such circumstances there is no clean cache of clothes to be left behind in Madame's closet. But the sailor . . . though he returns as grimy as a printers' devil and as bearded as a comic tramp, there is always a clean suit of "liberty blues" in his bag, and to-morrow, clad in the handsomest of all naval uniforms, he will be found ashore, breaking fair British or Irish hearts.

I have tried to show that in the judgment of an ex-soldier, the difference between the life of a sailor in a fighting ship and the life of a soldier in a fighting regiment is by no means as great as it has been imagined. The army, I suppose, will grumble at such a pronunciamento. Let an objector, then, try being a lookout man all winter long on a destroyer . . . or try firing a while. All is not quite purgatorial even at the front. Most army men know of quiet places along the line held on our side by rubicund, wine-bibbing, middle-aged French "territoriaux," *bons pères de famille* who show you pictures of Etienne and Maurice; and garrisoned on the enemy's

border by fat old Huns who want very, very much to get home to their great pipe and steaming sauerkraut. In such places each side apologizes for the bad caste of their supporting artillery, whilst grenade throwing is regarded as the bottom level of viciousness. Once in a while people die there of old age, gout, or chronic liver. No one is ever killed. Such "ententes cordiales" were far more frequent than those behind the line have ever suspected. On the other hand, some twenty miles down the trench swathe there may be a hillock constantly contested, a strategic point which burns up the lives of men as casually as the sustaining of a fire consumes faggots. Now it is the quick, merciful bullet in the head, now the hot, whizzing éclat of a high explosive, now the earthquake of the subterranean mine. But after all, a mine at sea is no more gentle than one on land, and to have a mine exploded under him is perhaps the eventuality which a soldier fears more than anything else. On land, the thundering release of a giant breath from out of the earth, a monstrous pall of fragments of soil, stones, and dust . . . perhaps of fragments more

ghastly, at sea, a thundering pound, a column of water which seems to stand upright for a second or two and then falls crashing on whatever is left of the vessel. *Quelle monde!*

There is a distinct difference between the psychology of the soldier and that of the sailor. A soldier of any army is sure to be drilled, and drilled, and drilled again till he becomes what he ought to be, a cog in an immense machine scientifically designed for the release of violence; a sailor, drilled scientifically enough but not so machinally, preserves some of the ancient freedom of the sea. Then, too, the soldier with his bayonet is a fighting force; the sailor, though prepared for it, himself rarely fights, but works a fighting mechanism, . . . the ship. The battleship X may sink the cruiser Y, but there is rarely a "*corps a corps*" such as takes place for instance in a disputed shell crater. Thus removed from the baser brutalities of war, the sailor never reveals that vein of Berseker savagery which soldiers will often reveal in a conquered province. As a class, sailors are the best-natured, good-hearted souls in the world. Rough some may be, some may be scamps, but brutal,

never. Moreover, living under a discipline easier to bear than the soldiers, Jack has not the sullen streaks that overtake betimes men under arms. Of course, he grumbles, enlisted men are not normal if they don't grumble, but Jack's grumbling is as nothing compared to the fierce, smothered hate for things in general which every soldier sometimes feels.

I would follow the sea, because I am a lover of the mystery and beauty of the sea, and because my comrades would be sailormen. I would knock at the Navy's door because, after all is said and done, the naval power is the ultima ratio of this titanic affair. I have seen many of the great scenes of this war, among them Verdun on the first night of the historic battle, but nothing that I saw on land impressed me as did my first view of the British Grand Fleet in its northern harbour, . . . the dark ships, the hollow ships, rulers of the past, rulers of the future, unconquered and unconquerable.

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H. B. B.

END

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