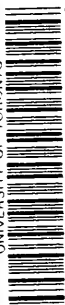


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# THE MERCHANT NAVY

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**HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAR**  
**BASED ON OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS**

BY DIRECTION OF THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE

**THE**  
**MERCHANT NAVY**

Vol. II

BY  
**ARCHIBALD HURD**

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27.11.24

LONDON  
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1924

THE Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have given the author access to official documents in the preparation of this work, but they are in no way responsible for the accuracy of its statements or the presentation of the facts.

## P R E F A C E

IN the first volume of this History of the part which the Merchant Navy took in the Great War, the record was carried down to the early months of 1915, when the conscience of the world was shocked by the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, with a loss of nearly 1,200 lives. The present volume continues the narrative to the eve of the German Declaration of "unrestricted submarine warfare" on February 1st, 1917.

During this period of twenty months the war at sea passed through what may be called an intermediate stage. In the spring of 1915 the American President came forward as the general advocate of neutral rights at sea. Although he confined his protests to cases in which the sovereign rights of the United States had been disregarded, Mr. Wilson none the less became, in effect, the spokesman of all neutrals. The sinking of the *Arabic* in September brought on a crisis between America and Germany, and at the end of the month the Imperial Government stated that it "regretted and disapproved" the incident. No guarantee for the future was given; but the American Government was satisfied, knowing, probably, that the apology meant more than appeared. Washington had, in fact, scored a diplomatic victory; for the German Government had ordered their submarine commanders to "cease from any form of submarine war on the West Coast of Great Britain or in the Channel." In the Mediterranean, sinkings went on much as usual, as there was here less chance of injuring American citizens. For the rest of the year a restricted form of submarine warfare, against which the American Government made no protest, continued in the zone of operations.

The High Naval Command at Berlin obeyed these restrictions most reluctantly, and pressed their Government for wider powers. Early in the new year the Chief of the Great General Staff, von Falkenhayn, reported to

the Emperor that the army would not be able to force a decision without naval assistance, and this admission seems to have given new force to the naval arguments for unrestricted submarine warfare. During February 1916 the restrictive rules under which submarine commanders were acting were cancelled; and on March 24th the steamer *Sussex*, which had a number of American citizens on board, was torpedoed without warning in the English Channel.

Thoroughly exasperated, the American Government now issued what amounted to an ultimatum. The Germans gave way, and early in May Count Bernstorff presented a Note in which his Government promised that henceforth the campaign would be conducted in accordance with the general principles of international law, and that no vessel would be sunk until some provision had been made for the safety of the passengers and crew.

These concessions ushered in a new phase of the conflict. The Imperial Chancellor had yielded to the American demands in the teeth of fierce opposition from the officers of the naval and military commands. The thought of loyally supporting the Government in the attitude it had adopted evidently never entered their minds, as the events recorded in this volume attest; and for the rest of the year they strove, by making progressive encroachments upon the pledges given, to restore the submarine campaign to the position which it had lost. They were tolerably successful; for at the end of 1916 merchant vessels were being sunk without warning in the Atlantic and North Sea as well as the Mediterranean: in January 1917 the number of lives lost in British merchant ships was 276, and 245 of these died as a result of the submarine campaign. When, a few weeks later, the German Government declared unrestricted submarine war, it was practically announcing an accomplished fact, but the decision proved the final influence which brought the United States into the war.

In this volume an attempt has been made to reflect the course of events as they affected merchant seamen, and all who were forced by circumstances to travel by sea. It traces the gradual crescendo of callousness exhibited by the enemy seamen, and of the necessarily slow evolution of measures of defence.

Provision had been made by the Admiralty against

enemy cruisers which might escape on the high seas, and that these measures were not inadequate experience proved. By the end of March 1915, as has been recorded, this menace had been laid, and during the period covered by this volume the only losses inflicted by enemy surface craft on merchant shipping were due to the spasmodic appearance of raiders whose depredations furnish a narrative of permanent interest to the student of war. The Admiralty had repeatedly warned the nation that it could give no guarantee that no enemy vessel would ever succeed in breaking through, by night or in thick weather, the cordon provided by the Grand Fleet and its auxiliary forces.

The success which attended the dispositions of the Admiralty after the institution of the patrol by the Tenth Cruiser Squadron exceeded all expectations. The stoppage of seaborne supplies combined with the system of commercial embargo which had been slowly elaborated, became so effective, in spite of political action initiated by neutral States, that the Germans were commercially isolated from the rest of the world, except in so far as they were able to obtain supplies overland from neighbouring countries, and were in a position to take the fullest advantage of the protests of neutrals against the strict enforcement of the blockade.

It is perhaps not generally realised that the blockade, supported by the ships of the Grand Fleet, was actually enforced by merchant ships which, though under the command of naval officers, who had under them a nucleus of active service ratings and men from the Royal Fleet Reserve, were principally manned by merchant seamen. The spirit in which these operations were prosecuted in fair weather and in foul, and in high latitudes where cold and fog prevail, constitutes the supreme vindication of the character and seamanlike qualities of the Merchant Navy, which was to be re-enforced before the war came to its close by thousands of incidents of splendid and daring heroism in face of hopeless odds, and noble self-sacrifice in the common cause. Captain Charles Fryatt, in particular, supplied his fellow-seamen in these anxious months with a noble example of unflinching courage and unwavering dignity in face of accusers who were determined, as is revealed in these pages, to encompass his death at any

cost of honour—little thinking what influence the judicial murder of this merchant captain would have in crystallising neutral opinion against Germany. Captain Fryatt came to be accepted throughout the civilised world as the typical figure of the British merchant seaman. Their fellow-countrymen were dependent for life on their staunchness and seamanlike skill, and the trust was gloriously vindicated.

Nor in reviewing the part which the Merchant Navy bore during the war can we ignore its services in meeting the constant demands of the Royal Navy, or its essential contribution in the movement of troops. A fighting fleet without the support of a merchant navy must be demobilised. Moreover, an island State, if it would exercise military influence overseas, is dependent upon the efficiency of its sea communications, and in the chapter which deals with the transport of the first million troops posterity is provided with a classic example of how the seas can be bridged and increasing armies kept supplied with munitions, food, and all their various requirements.

But while the Merchant Navy was supporting the Royal Navy, as well as the new armies, in near and many distant theatres, it was also fighting its own battles, almost defenceless though it was. The extent to which the submarine would be pressed into the service of a belligerent State had not been foreseen in any country. The mere fact that the Germans possessed only about a score of submarines when hostilities opened, and that at International Conferences the conditions under which warfare on seaborne commerce might be conducted had been accepted by all maritime Powers, had contributed to a feeling of security which events were speedily to dissipate.

The record of the sufferings of the merchant seamen, as set forth in official and other documents which have been placed under contribution in the preparation of this volume, constitutes an epic of the sea to which history provides no parallel. For many months the men of the Merchant Service were without any semblance of defence. At the very moment when armament was required for the Mercantile Marine, the new armies had to be fitted out, while the Royal Navy itself also required guns and other equipment. The British Government, confronted with the treble demands for guns and ammunition as well as for



trained gunners, was powerless to do all that the desperate situation of the merchant seamen suggested as desirable. But by the opening of the year 1916, a considerable proportion of the larger and most essential ships of the Mercantile Marine had been defensively armed. The progress in this respect was not, as will be seen, without its influence on enemy policy. The success with which defensively armed ships beat off attack, and in many cases inflicted serious loss on the enemy, defeated the enemy tactics, and their increasing embarrassment was at last to find expression in the declaration from Berlin on February 1st, 1917, inaugurating the intensive submarine campaign in defiance of international law and the code of humanity, as well as the pledges which had been repeatedly given.

In the varying circumstances of the twenty months with which this volume deals, merchant seamen not only maintained in efficiency the antennæ of the blockade operations, while at the same time supporting the Navy and the armies confronting the enemy overseas, and supplying the 45,000,000 people of the United Kingdom with food, but also formed the backbone of the Auxiliary Patrol. In this new navy, amateurs and professionals—in fact, anyone who had acquired familiarity with sea conditions—were mobilised. The record of the Auxiliary Patrol is an enheartening revelation of the sea aptitudes of the British people. Acknowledgment is again made of the assistance of Lieutenant-Commander E. Keble Chatterton, R.N.V.R., in the preparation of this portion of the History.

The Admiralty, the Board of Trade, and many ship-owners have unreservedly placed their records under contribution for this History. Without their assistance it would have been impossible to present this narrative of the ordeal, without its parallel in the long and varied records of humanity, to which merchant seamen were submitted during the Great War.



# CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . . pp. v-ix

## CHAPTER I

### SUBMARINES IN BRITISH WATERS

The United States and the sinking of the *Lusitania*—The brotherhood of the sea vindicated—An enemy stratagem—The sinking of the s.s. *Strathnairn* with a loss of twenty-one lives—The ordeal of the s.s. *Armenian*—A British master's humanity towards his dog—The fate of the s.s. *Anglo-Californian*—No mercy by the enemy for women and children—248 lives lost in August 1915—The destruction of the liner *Arabic*—Experience of the crew of the s.s. *Diomed*—The liner *Hesperian* sunk—Irritation in America—The enemy's campaign on the West Coast and in the English Channel temporarily abandoned . . . . . pp. 1-41

## CHAPTER II

### AUXILIARY CRAFT'S FIGHT AGAINST THE SUBMARINES

Varied tasks of the Auxiliary Patrol—Submarine on passage to the Mediterranean—Zeppelin raid on Dover—The trawler *Amadavat's* intervention saves a merchant ship—Excursion steamer's fight with a submarine—The *Inverlyon's* fight with a Flanders submarine—Raid off the Irish coast—Beaten by high seas—Attack on an oil-tanker . . . pp. 42-49

## CHAPTER III

### THE FISHERMEN'S ORDEAL

The importance of the fishing industry—Defencelessness of the trawler—Wholesale destruction of fishing-craft—Ingenious disguises to trap the enemy—Submarine versus submarine—The destruction of U40—An attack on fishing-vessels off the Hebrides—A long duel—The misfortunes of U41—Admiral Startin's stratagem—Heavy losses of sailing-ships—The salvage of the s.v. *Kotka*—Mine-sweeping operations—Keeping open the Archangel route—Success of a Lowestoft smack—The Admiralty's attitude to the fishing industry . . . . . pp. 50-73

## CHAPTER IV

## THE SEA TRANSPORT OF THE FIRST MILLION TROOPS

The British Army dependent on merchant shipping for transport overseas and on the Navy for protection—Interdependence of naval and military policy—Previous transport movements—Creation of the Expeditionary Force—Its quick mobilisation—Embarrassments of a defensive policy . . . . . pp. 74-81

## (a) THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE DISPATCHED TO FRANCE

The cross-Channel movement—Pre-war plans—A change of base—Navigational difficulties—Moral of a mistake—Attempt to relieve Antwerp—Unexpected demands on the Merchant Service—Scenes at Ostend—Distress of the refugees . . . . . pp. 81-88

## (b) THE EMPIRE MOBILISATION

Lord Kitchener's decision to mobilise trained troops in France—Troops dispatched from Egypt, Malta, and Gibraltar—The New Zealand Expeditionary Force—Territorial troops sent oversea—First contingent of the Australian Expeditionary Force—Movement of Canada's Expeditionary Force—Egyptian garrison's voyage to England—Wessex and Home Counties Territorial Divisions sent to India—British troops brought home from India—Reinforcements from New Zealand and Australia—Wessex Reserve Territorial Division moved to India. . . . . pp. 89-96

## (c) THE DARDANELLES EXPEDITION

Orders for 29th Division and Naval Division to sail for the Mediterranean—Rapid embarkation and errors in packing the holds of transports—Nineteen transports and five store transports employed—Concentration at Alexandria—The 2nd Mounted Division moved to Egypt—Transports for Australian and New Zealand troops—Completing the First Million—The Merchant Service's record—No lives lost . . . . . pp. 96-99

## CHAPTER V

## MERCHANT SEAMEN AND THE BLOCKADE

The blockade of Germany instituted by a squadron of old cruisers—Early capture of a German vessel—Difficulties of examination of suspected ships at sea—Reconstruction of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron—Liners requisitioned—Retention of Mercantile Marine crews—Arduous and perilous work—Increasing danger from submarine and mines—The *Viknor* sunk by a mine—Admiralty appreciation of work of Northern Patrol—Disposal of Patrol in January 1915—Difficulties of maintaining the Patrol—Sinking of the *Bayano* by a submarine—Foundering of the *Clan Macnaughton*—Strengthening of the Squadron and increased efficiency of the Patrol—Aid rendered by the Patrol to neutral shipping—Running the blockade—A ruse to trap a suspected vessel—New base in the Shetland Islands—Installation of the wireless direction finder—The

*India* torpedoed—The coal problem—Seamanship and courage of prize commanders and crews—Eventful voyages—Admiral Jellicoe's tribute to the work of the Patrol—Action of the *Alcantara* and *Andes* with the German raider *Grief*—Curiosities of contraband—Change in the command of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron—Tribute to Rear-Admiral de Chair  
pp. 100-156

## CHAPTER VI

### THE AUXILIARY PATROL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The attack on Gallipoli—Activity of submarines—The problem of the Straits of Otranto—Mine-sweeping vessels for the Dardanelles—Trawlers at work in the Straits of Gallipoli—Enforced retirement under heavy fire—Another unsuccessful attempt—A change in tactics—Essential aid to the army—The anti-submarine patrol—Rescue of the Serbian army—Sinking of an Austrian U-boat—Defending the Otranto Straits—The situation in the Mediterranean—Overworked fishermen relieved . . . pp. 157-176

## CHAPTER VII

### SUBMARINE INVASION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

German successes in the Mediterranean—Concentration of the enemy in southern waters—Merchant vessels sunk without warning—Action of the *Woodfield* with a submarine—Spirited fight by the *City of Marseilles*—The enemy's blows at the communications of the Allies—The experience of the *Clan Macleod*—Sinking of the *Clan Macfarlane*—Terrible experiences of the crew at sea—Adrift for seven days. . . . pp. 177-203

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SINKING OF THE P. & O. LINER " PERSIA "

Torpedoed without warning—Breach of pledge to the United States—A tragic scene—334 lives lost—An American passenger's experiences—Another passenger's ordeal—Lord Montagu's tribute to the crew—Thirty hours without food or water . . . . . pp. 204-215

## CHAPTER IX

### IN THE HANDS OF THE BEDOUINS

The sinking of the *Coquet*—Callous conduct of a submarine commander—Cast adrift 200 miles from the nearest land—" Nothing short of murder "—Terrible experiences at sea—One boat lost—Landing on the desolate African coast—Attacked by Bedouins—An unequal fight—Survivors taken prisoner—Wanderings in captivity—Release after nearly eight months  
pp. 216-230

## CHAPTER X

### THE MERCHANT SERVICE ON THE DEFENSIVE

The policy of supplying guns and ammunition to merchant ships for defensive purposes—Attitude of the United States Government to the

use of American ports by armed vessels—Proclamation by Germany of “war zone”—A new problem—The extension of defensive armament policy—Admiralty instructions to masters of armed merchant ships—Status of armed vessels—Gunnery training of merchant seamen—Right of self-defence—Memoranda of the United States respecting armed merchant vessels—Attitude of neutral countries towards entry of armed vessels into their ports . . . . . pp. 231-246

## CHAPTER XI

### THE WAR OFF THE FLANDERS COAST, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE ENEMY'S MINE-LAYING ACTIVITY

Importance of Ostend and Zeebrugge to the enemy—First attack on Zeebrugge by the Dover Patrol—Employment of pleasure steamers and drifters—Second attack on Flemish coast—Ordeal of the fishermen—Work of the Auxiliary Patrol—Laying and maintaining the mine barrage off the Flemish coast—A difficult operation—Destruction of submarines by drifters—Gallant work of drifters in range of enemy batteries—Destruction of the armed yacht *Sanda*—Tribute of Admiral Bacon to the courage of officers and crews of drifters and trawlers—Loss of the *Brighton Queen* by mine—Difficulties of the campaign off the Flemish coast—Co-operation of the Army essential to success—Enemy's violation of neutral waters—Enemy's mine-laying—Trawlers sunk—Mine-field across the Moray Firth—A widespread campaign—Trawlers working double “tides”—4,574 mines destroyed—Reorganisation of the mine-sweeping service—Enemy activity overseas—Salving a mine . . . . . pp. 247-265

## CHAPTER XII

### FISHING-CRAFT ON WAR SERVICE, 1915-16

Work of the Royal Naval Motor-Boat Reserve—More seaworthy craft required—Orders for 550 motor-launches—Varied tasks of the new type of craft—First effective barrage—Not a complete success—The barrage abandoned—Assisting the French Navy—Successful operations by drifters against a submarine—Rescue of German seamen—The enemy taken by surprise—U74 destroyed by trawlers—Enemy's dead set on trawlers—A fisherman's “battle”—Mine-laying submarine destroyed—An enemy raid on the fishing-fleets . . . . . pp. 266-282

## CHAPTER XIII

### RAIDS ON DOVER STRAITS AND OTHER INCIDENTS

German destroyers based on Zeebrugge—Raid on the drifters guarding the Dover barrage—Attack on the Tenth Drifter Division—A second attack—Heavy British casualties—Another attempted raid—German plans miscarry—Creation of the Anti-Submarine Department—Difficulties in the English Channel—An armed trawler to the rescue—A German prisoner's good fortune . . . . . pp. 283-289

## CHAPTER XIV

## RESUMPTION OF THE SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN IN BRITISH WATERS

Confusion of policy in Germany—Sinking of a merchant ship 236 miles from the nearest land—Brotherhood of the sea—Ship sunk at anchor by a Zeppelin—The s.s. *Teutonian* destroyed off the Fastnet—Progress of the campaign in British waters—Vessels torpedoed without warning—The escape of an oil-tanker—Value of defensive armament—Loss of the *Minneapolis*—The *Goldmouth's* unequal duel—Torpedoing of the *Sussex*—The German Government's pledge . . . . . pp. 290-306

## CHAPTER XV

## THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FRYATT

The ordeal of the s.s. *Brussels*—Communications in the North Sea—Shipmaster's "highly meritorious and courageous conduct"—Escape of the *Brussels*—Captain Fryatt's manœuvre—The Admiralty's congratulations—Capture of the *Brussels*—Captain Fryatt and the first officer made prisoners—Solitary confinement for cross-examination—Trial by court-martial—Fruitless request for postponement from Berlin—The case for the defence—American intervention—Captain Fryatt's heroic death—Neutral condemnation of German action—Court of inquiry in Berlin—Captain Fryatt condemned as "a *franc-tireur* of the seas"—Lord Stowell's judgment—"Defence is a natural right"—American rulings. pp. 307-336

## CHAPTER XVI

## THE ENEMY'S FINAL PLUNGE

Division of opinion in Germany on the use of submarines—Temporary success of the Imperial Chancellor—Activities in the Mediterranean—A defenceless ship, the *Destro*, saved by speed—The hopeless duel of the *Roddam*—Abandonment thirty-five miles from land—Enemy operations in the Arctic Ocean—The policy of *spurlos versenkt*—The loss of the *Rappahannock*—A demonstration off the North American coast—Sinkings in British waters—The problem of the passenger ship—A German commander's humanity—Over thirty hours in the boats—The fate of the s.s. *Cabotia*—The *Fabian* under fire—Prisoners on board a submarine—The sink-at-sight campaign in the Mediterranean—P. & O. liner *Arabia* torpedoed without warning—Increasing disregard at sea of German pledges—The destruction of the *City of Birmingham*—A Clan liner's fight—The escape of the s.s. *Palm Branch*—Experiences of the crews of German submarines—Mounting losses of merchant ships—Successful action of the *Caledonia*—The oil-tanker *Conch* set on fire in the English Channel—An exhibition of fine seamanship—The enemy's guile—The hard fate of the *Artist*—On the eve of the intensive campaign . . . . . pp. 337-379

## CHAPTER XVII

## CRUISES OF THE GERMAN RAIDERS

## I. THE "MÖWE"

False sense of security at sea—Warnings of the Admiralty—Escape of the *Möwe* from Hamburg—First capture off Cape Finisterre—Utilisation of British cargo of coal—Looting of the *Author*—The Elder Dempster steamship *Appam* captured—Gallant fighting of the *Clan Mactavish*—Dispatch of the *Appam* to Newport News with prisoners—Action of the United States authorities—Raider's seizure of the *Westburn*—Prisoners placed on board the *Westburn* for purposes of release—Arrival at Santa Cruz—Ship scuttled by Germans—Return of the *Möwe* to Germany—Second cruise begun—Spirited action of the *Mount Temple*—The *Yarrowdale* intercepted and used as an auxiliary—Crowded with prisoners, the *Yarrowdale* is dispatched to Swinemünde—The misfortunes of the *Dramatist*—An Admiralty collier sunk—300 prisoners placed on board the *Hudson Maru* and landed at Pernambuco—Fate of the *Netherby Hall*—Fine resistance by the *Otaki*—Posthumous Victoria Cross awarded to Lieutenant Bisset Smith, R.N.R., the master of the *Otaki*—Return of the *Möwe* to Germany . . . . . pp. 380-415

## II. THE "SEADLER"

American sailing-ship converted into a raider and fitted with a motor—Gallant attempt of the *Gladys Royle* to escape—Chase of the *Lundy Island*—A British captain's experience on his honeymoon—The *Horngarth* under fire for nearly an hour—British seamen prisoners placed on board a captured French vessel and sent to Rio de Janeiro—Wreck of the *Seeadler* off Mopelia Island . . . . . pp. 415-422

## III. THE "WOLF"

The s.s. *Wachenfels*, equipped with mines, guns, and torpedoes and provided with a seaplane, is sent to sea as a raider—Seizure of the *Turritella* and use as an auxiliary raider—The captured ship intercepted by H.M.S. ODIN and then scuttled by the Germans—The misfortune of the *Jumna*—Master's diary of life on board the raider—Prisoners' uncomfortable quarters—Extensive mine-laying by the *Wolf*—A fortunate meeting—The *Wairuna* chased by the raider's seaplane and captured—Mine-laying in New Zealand waters—The raider in hiding with her latest prize—A narrow escape—The Spanish steamer *Igotz Mendi* seized and used as a prison ship—Homeward journey of the *Wolf* in company with the *Igotz Mendi*—Stranding of the *Igotz Mendi*—Merchant ships damaged or sunk by the *Wolf's* mine-fields . . . . . pp. 422-435

APPENDIX A.	INSTRUCTIONS TO MERCHANT CAPTAINS .	pp. 436-440
„	B. INTERPRETATION OF SAME BY GERMAN COURT OF INQUIRY . . . . .	p. 441
„	C. ANALYSIS OF VESSELS INTERCEPTED .	pp. 442-443
INDEX . . . . .		pp. 444-464



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
THE LOSS OF A BRITISH MERCHANT SHIP . . . . .	36
AN ARMED DRIFTER . . . . .	70
ON WATCH IN THE ARCTIC . . . . .	100
A BOARDING BOAT ON DUTY . . . . .	112
ON THE FORECASTLE OF AN ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER . . . . .	124
LEFT IN AN OPEN BOAT . . . . .	218
DRIFTERS HOISTING IN A TORPEDO . . . . .	268
ARMED TRAWLERS IN THE NORTH SEA . . . . .	272
RELEASING A DEPTH CHARGE FROM A DRIFTER . . . . .	284
VESSEL HIT BY A GERMAN SUBMARINE . . . . .	358
SUNK WITHOUT WARNING . . . . .	376
THE SINKING OF THE "GEORGIC" . . . . .	400

## MAPS

THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON IN THE AUTUMN OF 1915 . . . . .	156
THE MINE PERIL IN HOME WATERS . . . . .	265
STATISTICAL DIAGRAM OF BLOCKADE OPERATIONS	}
THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON, THE WORK- ING OF THE BLOCKADE IN 1915 . . . . .	

At end of  
volume  
with Ap-  
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# THE MERCHANT NAVY

## CHAPTER I

### SUBMARINES IN BRITISH WATERS

THE sinking of the *Lusitania*, in circumstances which have already been described, involving the loss of 1,198 lives, focused the attention of the world upon the character of the war upon commerce which the enemy was prosecuting, and emphasised the fundamental characteristics which differentiated it from commerce destruction as practised by belligerents in former wars. The United States Government, already disturbed by the destruction of the *Falaba* and other ships conveying American citizens, could not avoid taking official notice of the sinking of a great liner which had left one of its ports, carrying a large number of Americans, with a guarantee that it was a peaceful vessel of commerce. Within less than a week of the disaster, the State Department at Washington had drafted and forwarded to Berlin an explicit protest. In this Note, dated May 13th, 1915, the United States Government stated that

“ It assumes . . . that the Imperial Government accept, as of course, the rule that the lives of non-combatants, whether they be of neutral citizenship or citizens of one of the nations at war, cannot lawfully or rightly be put in jeopardy by the capture or destruction of an unarmed merchantman, and recognise also, as all other nations do, the obligation to take the usual precautions of visit and search to ascertain whether a suspected merchantman is in fact of belligerent nationality, or is in fact carrying contraband of war under a neutral flag.”

The attention of the Imperial Government was called with the utmost earnestness to the fact that “the

objection to their present method of attack against the trade of their enemies lies in the practical impossibility of employing submarines in the destruction of commerce without disregarding those rules of fairness, reason, justice, and humanity, which all modern opinion regards as imperative. It is practically impossible for the officers of a submarine to visit a merchantman at sea and examine her papers and cargo. It is practically impossible for them to make a prize of her, and, if they cannot put a prize crew on board of her, they cannot sink her without leaving her crew and all on board of her to the mercy of the sea in her small boats."

In some instances, it was added, "time enough for even that poor measure of safety was not given," and it was finally declared that it was manifest that "submarines cannot be used against merchantmen, as the last few weeks have shown, without an inevitable violation of many sacred principles of justice and humanity." This Note was something more than a mere assertion of the right of American citizens to use the seas: it constituted an indictment of the principles governing the submarine war, reminding the nations of the world, whether belligerent or neutral, of the unprecedented character of the ordeal to which British merchant seamen in particular were being exposed.

In contrast with the savagery which had marked the destruction of the *Lusitania*, an example of the sentiments of brotherhood which continued to move the seamen of the old maritime races to assist comrades in distress, irrespective of race, language, or creed, was furnished by the crew of a Norwegian steamer less than a fortnight after the sinking of the Cunard liner. The steamer *Drumcree* (4,052 tons) was passing Trevoise Head on May 18th when a violent explosion occurred. Though a double watch on the bridge had been maintained since leaving port, no one had seen a submarine, but the wake of a torpedo had been observed about 100 yards away off on the star-board beam. Time did not permit of the helm being used successfully, and the vessel was struck near the cross bunker. She was wrecked from practically No. 2 hold to the engine-room; she had gaping holes in her side and deck; the deck-plates were buckled and the beams twisted

into strange shapes. The water poured into the hold, as well as into the engine- and boiler-rooms. The wireless-room and its installations were reduced to ruins, but the operator, though he had been injured, remained at his post until the master (Mr. A. Hodgson), having satisfied himself that it was impossible to make a call for assistance, sent him to his boat. Fortunately all the boats had been swung out when the *Drumcree* left Barry Dock, and as the ship lost way they were lowered and quickly manned and then stood by.

In the meantime Captain Hodgson, in company with the chief officer, had made a hasty survey and had satisfied himself that there was still a chance of saving the ship, although the water had risen to sea level in the injured compartments. In spite of the warning signal which Captain Hodgson had hoisted, several vessels, regardless of danger to themselves, closed on the *Drumcree*. The Norwegian steamer *Ponto* was hailed by Captain Hodgson, and the master was told that the *Drumcree* was in no immediate danger of foundering in the moderate weather which then prevailed. He was asked to give a tow in the direction of Cardiff, keeping close to the land on the English side of the Channel. Though the neutral master cannot have been unconscious of the peril in which he stood, he readily agreed to render this service and brought his ship smartly into position under the bow of the *Drumcree*. With the help of the two crews, hawsers were made secure, and then the *Ponto*, having taken sixteen of the crew of the *Drumcree* out of one of the lifeboats, began to tow the damaged steamer. That the position of the *Ponto* was an unenviable one was shown shortly afterwards when a second attack was made on the crippled ship, a torpedo striking her farther aft than on the first occasion. Another explosion occurred, throwing the hatch coverings of No. 3 hold and other wreckage into the air, whilst a column of water rose as high as the mast. The ship began to settle by the stern with a list to starboard, and it looked as though she would sink at once. The *Ponto* had no recourse but to free herself from her dangerous companion. Captain Hodgson ordered the remainder of the officers and men of the *Drumcree* into the lifeboat which was lying alongside. A hasty inspection of the after part of the vessel showed that the water was still

rising, so at last Captain Hodgson joined his men, intending to remain in the vicinity until his vessel disappeared.

“The submarine, however, now appeared, showing only the periscope, close to the stern of the ship and manœuvred,” as Captain Hodgson afterwards recorded, “as if bent on further mischief. We therefore pulled to the *Ponto*, which was standing by, and relieved our boat of most of its load. Then, as the captain of the *Ponto* was naturally anxious about the safety of his own ship, some of the officers and engineers volunteered to remain by the ship [the *Drumcree*] in the boat with me until she should sink or so that we might at least (in the unlikely event of her remaining afloat) hoist a night warning signal. The *Ponto*'s people, however, warned me that the submarine was again in sight close to us, and I therefore felt compelled to abandon her and boarded the *Ponto* with my officers at 5 p.m.”

The signal station at Lundy was told of the position of the derelict, since she might become a danger to navigation in the darkness. In recounting the circumstances in which his ship was lost, Captain Hodgson remarked that “the captain of the *Ponto* is, in my opinion, deserving of very great credit for the resolute manner in which he stood by us, at no small risk to himself and his own crew, as also for the courtesy and consideration with which he received us on board and provided for our wants, which has been deeply appreciated by us all.” Though his ship had gone down, the master had the satisfaction of testifying that his crew had behaved well and had carried out orders without confusion, although they were new to the vessel and had had but one opportunity of carrying out boat drill. “The officers and men,” he added, “I will not attempt to praise; they worked with me to the last in endeavouring to bring the ship to port and were as reluctant as I to abandon her.”

Though the submarine war was still in its early stage, merchant seamen were learning that the enemy was adopting every expedient of which he could think to lure them to destruction. On the last day of May, when the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's ship *Demerara* (11,484 tons), on passage from Liverpool to Lisbon, was off the south

coast of Ireland, what appeared to be a mine was observed floating on the surface of the water. The master [Lieutenant G. S. Gillard, R.N.R. (retired)], recognising that a mine was a danger to navigation, approached to within 200 yards. Rifle fire was then directed on the supposed mine, which was hit several times. The bullets of the .45 Martini appeared to produce no effect, so Captain Gillard decided to use his 4.7-inch gun. One shell fell close to the supposed mine but failed to detonate it. An hour after this attempt had been made to destroy what was thought to be a danger to shipping, the periscope of a submarine was seen on the starboard quarter. The enemy vessel at once pursued the British ship, firing from time to time. The *Demerara* put on her best speed and the enemy's fire was returned at 1,000 yards, the British red ensign having been hoisted. The submarine then dived. The *Demerara* was manœuvred with skill so as to keep the submarine on the quarter between the wake and bow waves. Periodically the submarine showed her periscope, and each time fire was opened by the British ship. In all thirteen rounds were discharged. The thirteenth was a lucky shot. It appeared to strike the top of the periscope. As it did not ricochet, the captain of the *Demerara* assumed that the periscope had been hit. Whether that was the case or not, at any rate nothing further was seen of the submarine. Events supported the conjecture that the mine which the *Demerara* had tried to destroy was merely a decoy.

The incident had a curious sequel. On September 6th the German Legation at Buenos Aires delivered a *note verbale* to the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs to the effect that

“ The steamer of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company *Demerara*, which will arrive here probably to-morrow, the 7th, was guilty of attacking the armed forces of His Majesty the German Emperor. It is thus demonstrated that her armament was not mounted for purposes of defence. For this reason the Imperial Legation begs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic to be good enough to take the requisite steps in order that the competent authorities shall apply the treatment of war vessels, from every point of view, to the said vessel on her arrival.”

The British Government was able to show that the British vessel had employed its guns merely for the purpose of offering defence against an attack carried out, moreover, under cover of a decoy mine. Captain Gillard was mentioned in despatches in recognition of the skilful manner in which he had saved his vessel.

When May closed the record showed that in that month nineteen ships, of 84,025 tons, had been sunk. In the amount of tonnage destroyed, as well as in the number of men, women, and children killed, this month was the worst which had yet been experienced, and in no corresponding period during the remainder of the war did the destruction of human life reach so high a figure. In addition to the shipping destroyed, nineteen vessels, of 117,591 tons, were damaged or molested by enemy submarines. No losses were sustained owing to the action of mines or aircraft.

During the early months of the summer events were to show that the protest of the United States Government, the sense of brotherhood exhibited by neutral seamen, and the pluck, skill, and endurance of British officers and men were producing no effect on the official mind of Germany. It was still believed in Berlin that the submarine would prove the instrument of speedy victory, and then Germany would be free to deal with neutrals, and in particular with the United States. So the campaign against merchant shipping was pursued with a relentless insensibility to all human instincts. On the opening day of June eight men were killed when the *Saidieh* (3,303 tons) was sunk. On June 9th the *Lady Salisbury* (1,446 tons) went down, three men losing their lives, and six days later the master of the *Strathnairn* (4,336 tons), as well as twenty of his companions, was drowned. The month closed with the sinking of the *Armenian* (8,825 tons) with the loss of twenty-nine lives, of the *Scottish Monarch* (5,043 tons) with a loss of fifteen lives, and of the *Lomas* (3,048 tons) with the loss of one life. The blowing up of the *Arndale* (3,583 tons) by a mine at the entrance to the White Sea, when three were killed, raised the death roll for the month of June to eighty-one.

Ample evidence was forthcoming that the Germans, in spite of their protestations, had no intention of abandoning the practice of torpedoing ships without



warning. The *Saidieh* was on her way from Alexandria to Hull when she met her fate near the Elbow Buoy in the North Sea at 2 p.m. on June 2nd. She was unarmed, and had almost completed her voyage when a shock was felt from stem to stern and volumes of water rose on the starboard side. The chief mate (Mr. Daniel Jenkins), standing on the bridge with the Trinity pilot, who had been taken aboard at Deal, at once sounded the whistle and ordered all hands to get ready to lower the boats. Two minutes previously the master (Mr. J. R. Ryall) had gone into his cabin. He rushed to the deck when he felt the concussion. The ship was rapidly sinking, and within six minutes had disappeared beneath the waters. In addition to her crew of forty-one officers and men, she had on board eight distressed seamen. When the boats were swung out, six firemen and an A.B. were reported as missing, and the presumption was that they had been killed by the explosion. While No. 3 boat, which contained several members of the crew and the stewardess, was being lowered an accident occurred. One of the falls had been cut by a Greek seaman, the boat capsized, and the occupants were thrown into the water. They were fortunately rescued, patrol-vessels having quickly come to the scene. While these events were occurring, the chief mate noticed a submarine's periscope 50 or 100 yards distant, but the enemy had no compassion on the unfortunate mariners and their companions. After being rescued, the stewardess died from the shock she had sustained. The survivors and the body of the dead stewardess were landed at Chatham.

The sinking of the *Strathnairn* caused heavier casualties than had occurred in any ordinary trading-vessel since the *Tangistan* went down on March 9th. The *Strathnairn* (master, Mr. John Browne) was bound from Penarth to Archangel with coal. At 9.30 p.m. on June 15th, when the vessel was twenty-five miles N. by E. from Bishop and Clerks, the second mate (Mr. J. H. Wood), who was asleep in his cabin, after being relieved by the chief officer, was thrown out of his bunk by an explosion. When he reached the deck he noticed that, although way was still on the ship, a lifeboat and a gig had been lowered and had been smashed against the vessel's side. Captain Browne came to the conclusion that the vessel was sinking and

slipped down a lifeline into a lifeboat which had been lowered with a number of Chinese seamen in it. Owing to the boat's painter being cut before the boat had been released from the dropping gear, it also collided with the vessel's side and all the occupants were washed out of it. Realising the error which had been made in lowering the boats too soon, Mr. Wood waited until the ship was stopped before launching the remaining gig. Fortunately the *Strathnairn*, though a little deeper in the water, had taken only a slight list to port, and the gig was successfully launched with the assistance of the remaining ten Chinamen on board. Mr. Wood allowed the gig to drift astern in the hope of picking up the captain, but was disappointed.

At this moment he saw the periscope of a submarine moving round the stern of the vessel, taking no interest in the plight of the unhappy survivors. For some time the gig remained near the doomed ship, and then Mr. Wood decided to row to the eastward. Early on the following morning, after a night of many vicissitudes, he and his companions were picked up by the *Amanda* of Padstow, and later in the day reached Milford Haven. The experience of the first engineer (Mr. J. C. Smith) and the Chinese carpenter was less happy. The former jumped overboard with the Chinaman and throughout the night the two men, white man and yellow man, clung for life to a capsized boat. Not until 6.30 on the following morning, after nine hours' physical and mental agony, were they picked up by the *Abbotsford* of Glasgow and landed at Swansea.

These two vessels, together with the *Inkum* (4,747 tons), the *Strathcarron* (4,374 tons), the *Lady Salisbury* (1,446 tons), the *Erna Boldt* (1,731 tons), the *Leuctra* (3,027 tons), the *Dulcie* (2,033 tons), the *Tunisiana* (4,220 tons), and the *Dumfriesshire* (2,622 tons), were all torpedoed without warning. The *Armenian*, the *Scottish Monarch*, and the *Lomas* were, however, captured before being sunk. Nevertheless the loss of life was heavy. The first-named vessel, of the Leyland Line, was on voyage from Newport News to Avonmouth with 1,422 mules for H.M. Government. Shortly after noon on June 28th, she was steering to pass ten miles north of Lundy Island when she received a wireless message from Crookhaven stating that submarines were active south of the Smalls. The master (Mr. James Irickey) determined to make for Trevoise Head. At 6.40

p.m., when twenty miles west of this point, a submarine was sighted on the port bow, about three miles away, steaming towards the *Armenian* on the surface. As the British ship, though unarmed, had a speed of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  knots, Captain Irickey decided to make a fight for it.

He accordingly headed for the submarine with the intention of ramming her. The enemy, however, opened fire and Captain Irickey turned his ship stern on to the submarine so as to decrease the target. Several shots fell ahead and astern of the merchantman until the range was found, when the wireless telegraph house was wrecked. Another shell entered the firehold and started a fire. Captain Irickey with his officers and men set to work to subdue the flames, but other fires were caused by subsequent shells. One struck the steering gear, putting it out of action, and another fell on the engine-room hatch, sending debris on to the engines, which were, however, kept at full speed. During this phase of the one-sided action twelve of the crew were killed and others injured. Captain Irickey still held on to his course.

When the unequal ordeal had lasted nearly an hour, the funnel was struck, the shell passing down into the body of the ship. The stokehold was put in darkness and the boilers were so damaged that steam could not be maintained. The master then realised that escape was impossible. He hoisted the white flag and blew the ship's whistle in token of surrender, preparations being made simultaneously to abandon ship. Whether the submarine failed to notice the British signals or was determined to punish to the uttermost so persistent an opponent will never be known. At any rate the shells continued to fall on the crippled vessel, damaging the boats' falls and causing some of the boats to hang by one fall only, with the result that many men were thrown into the water. Eventually all the surviving members of the crew were able to get away. The captain, satisfied that no one was on board, himself left. But shortly afterwards an improvised raft was seen leaving the *Armenian* with the chief engineer, the veterinary surgeon, and the purser; they also were rescued. When all six boats were clear of the ship, the submarine approached and, getting into position on the port quarter, fired a torpedo into the *Armenian*. Under Captain Irickey's orders, the hatches of the lower hold had

previously been battened down, the ballast tanks pumped out, and the refrigerator boxes secured, thus giving additional buoyancy to the vessel. Consequently the first torpedo left the *Armenian* still afloat and another was discharged, this time into the stokehold, with the result that the ship forthwith began to sink rapidly. Owing to the action of the captain, the enemy had to expend about fifty shells, as well as two torpedoes. As she sank rapidly the *Armenian*, with a length of 530 feet, presented a remarkable spectacle; half her length was reared into the air.

The ship having been dispatched, the submarine—U38—dived and disappeared. The commander showed, however, a measure of humanity; before diving he rescued three or four men from the water. Captain Irickey's boat being the only one with a compass, the other boats were collected and connected astern. A course was then made for land under sail. At 7 o'clock the following morning the Belgian steam trawler *President Stein* took the men on board and at noon turned them over to the destroyers MANSFIELD and MILNE, which landed them at Avonmouth that afternoon. The unequal action resulted in the loss of twenty-nine lives, including the fourth engineer and twenty American cattle attendants. The Admiralty marked their appreciation of the master's efforts to save his ship and its valuable cargo by conferring upon him the Distinguished Service Cross. The quartermaster, W. A. Goss, and two firemen, T. Davies and E. G. Talbot, received the D.S.M., and the second officer, Mr. H. O. Davies, and the chief engineer, Mr. J. Crighton, obtained "mentions."

The *Scottish Monarch* was a slower ship than the *Armenian*, but nevertheless the master (Mr. R. H. Potter) made a determined effort to get away from the enemy. The vessel was forty miles south of Ballycotton Light, County Cork, when the third officer sighted two submarines about two miles off on the starboard beam. They were flying the German ensign. Captain Potter immediately went on the bridge and starboarded his helm so as to bring the submarines astern of him. He proceeded to steer a zigzag course at about  $11\frac{1}{2}$  knots. One of the submarines then disappeared, but the other quickly overhauled the *Scottish Monarch* and when about a mile away opened fire.

The first shell did little damage, but three later ones, fired at close quarters, made a hole in the port side of the vessel. There was nothing for it but to stop the engines and lower the boats, into which the crew made their escape. Captain Potter, however, remained on the bridge while the submarine continued firing at intervals, holding the starboard side. When the decks of the *Scottish Monarch* were awash, the master got into his own boat during an interval in the attack, and three-quarters of an hour later the *Scottish Monarch* sank out of sight. Captain Potter and nineteen of the crew were picked up by the *Miami* of Glasgow, about thirty miles south of Hook Point, early on the following morning and landed the same day.

The submarine's attack had caused no casualties, but in leaving all these men afloat far from land the enemy became responsible for the loss of fifteen lives. The sea was choppy and the two boats which were still afloat remained in company for some time, but soon the one under the first mate (Mr. J. Gabrielsen) capsized. All the hands managed to regain the boat, but she was full of water and the tanks were adrift on the starboard side. In the meantime sight had been lost of the master's boat. The unfortunate men, with the first mate, were left without hope of succour in their waterlogged craft. Before midnight she had capsized three times more and only four men were left—the first mate, the carpenter (Michael Appson), and two seamen, all of them with lifebelts on. On the following morning a vessel was seen, and the carpenter hoisted a handkerchief on a stick hoping to attract attention. Although the strange ship passed close by the boat, the pitiful signal of distress was evidently not seen. Then the two seamen became exhausted and were washed overboard. Vessels appeared on the horizon and disappeared, since there was no means of attracting their attention. About five o'clock that afternoon, after weary hours of hope unfulfilled, the first mate, who was sitting aft, dropped with exhaustion into the water which filled the boat, and died. The *Scottish Monarch* having gone down on the evening of June 29th, it was not until eight o'clock on the evening of July 1st that the carpenter, the sole survivor of the boatload, was picked up by a fishing-boat and landed on the following afternoon at St. Ives, where the body of the first mate was quietly carried ashore. Among the

flotsam and jetsam washed up at Ile de Batz nearly a fortnight later was a cylindrical lifebuoy bearing the name of the sunken ship, all that remained of the *Scottish Monarch* of Glasgow.

The experience of the *Lomas*, to the sinking of which reference has been made, was happily less tragic. All went well on her voyage from Buenos Aires to Belfast until June 30th, when the vessel was some distance off Bishop Rock. The master (Mr. Phillip Evans) was on the bridge when, in the clear morning light, he saw a submarine about two miles astern of him well exposed on the surface. He at once gave orders for all possible speed and steered so as to keep the enemy ship astern of him. The submarine gave chase, and when she had drawn within two miles of the *Lomas* began firing.

Captain Evans still held on his course, counting the shells as they fell. Seventeen shells were fired and nine of them hit the vessel, the second mate being killed. The *Lomas* was only making about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots, so, as escape was impossible, the master stopped the ship after an ordeal which had lasted an hour and a half. The submarine was then almost alongside the vessel. When the crew had left the ship in the boats, the enemy vessel set to work to sink her by gunfire and torpedo. As the *Lomas* began to settle down, the submarine commander hailed the lifeboats to put the inquiries which, according to established custom, should have preceded offensive action. What was the name of the vessel and her nationality, her tonnage and cargo; where did she come from and where was she bound? All these questions having been answered, and the *Lomas* having gone down, the submarine disappeared. One man had been killed during the stern chase, but the master and the rest of the crew were fortunate in being picked up within an hour and landed at Milford Haven.

These were a few of the tragic incidents which marked the progress of the submarine campaign during the month following upon the destruction of the *Lusitania* and the dispatch of the Note of protest by the United States Government. The record would be incomplete were there no reference to the circumstances which attended the destruction of the *Iona* (3,344 tons) on June 3rd. The *Iona* was twenty-two miles off Fair Island (lat.  $59^{\circ} 13' N$ .

and long.  $1^{\circ} 12' W.$ ) when she was pursued by a submarine. The master (Mr. D. Ritchie) had hopes of escape and ordered all possible speed. The submarine then began firing, one shot passing through the after wheel-house, and a second striking the port side of the saloon. Captain Ritchie's own cabin was wrecked and a fireman was injured. Realising that it was hopeless to make further resistance, the master stopped the ship and the crew took to the boats. While the men were taking their places, the enemy ship continued firing, one shot injuring the second mate; the steward was also slightly wounded. The ship was then sunk by a torpedo. The shipless officers and men were thus left afloat without apparent hope of rescue. The submarine, after sinking the *Iona*, destroyed a trawler which was in the vicinity, and the merchant seamen and fishermen then joined company and shaped a course for land. They rowed in desperation through the night, and happily on the following morning were sighted by the patrol trawler *Dover* and taken into Kirkwall.

The month of July opened badly for the British Mercantile Marine, no fewer than seven vessels being destroyed on the first day. Of these two were attacked near the Fastnet and the remainder at the entrance of the English Channel. The enemy continued to exhibit a wide catholicity, not disdaining to sink comparatively small sailing-vessels, at a great expenditure of time, labour, and explosives. The enemy's methods in this respect were illustrated in the case of the sailing-vessel *L. C. Tower* (518 tons). This little four-mast schooner (master, Mr. L. C. Tower) was on her way to Newport, Monmouthshire, with timber when she fell in with a submarine. With all sails set, she was making a course towards Lundy Island. It must have been apparent to the Germans that the vessel was of comparative unimportance, but, nevertheless, they overhauled the *L. C. Tower* at their best speed, ordered the vessel to be abandoned, and then expended a good deal of trouble in setting her on fire. The crew got ashore at Crookhaven in their motor-boat, and the vessel, burnt to the water's edge, was afterwards towed into Berehaven. On the afternoon of the same day the *Welbury* (3,591 tons) was sunk in the same locality. The master (Mr. Robert Newton), on noticing that the enemy was trying to signal

“Abandon ship immediately,” turned his vessel’s head towards the nearest point of land. The submarine, noticing the manœuvre, proceeded to cut the *Welbury* off, and then discharged a warning gun. The pursuit was a short one, as the enemy craft had the advantage of speed, and, moreover, maintained a steady fire on the vessel, not ceasing even after she had stopped. One shot went through the engine-room. Whereas in the case of the *L. C. Tower* the British flag was confiscated, no step was taken to obtain such a souvenir out of the *Welbury*.

More serious events were in the meantime happening at the entrance to the Channel; the *Gadsby* (3,497 tons), the *Craigard* (3,286 tons), and the *Richmond* (3,214 tons) being sunk off the Wolf Rock, and the *Caucasian* (4,656 tons) and the *Inglemoor* (4,331 tons) captured and destroyed off the Lizard. In the case of the *Gadsby* (master, Mr. St. John Olive) the submarine commander showed unexpected consideration for the men whom he was leaving afloat in their small boats; he inquired whether they had provisions and sails, and then, giving them the position—which proved to be incorrect—torpedoed the merchant ship and disappeared. Fortunately the crew was soon afterwards picked up by a Greek steamer and landed at Londonderry, without further misadventure, two days later.

At this early date in the submarine campaign, British seamen were irritated by the ignominious fate which was dogging them; their vessels were in most cases of slow speed and they were, in accordance with the custom of many years, without any means of defence. The story of the *Craigard* (master, Mr. A. McCullough) may be given as typical of the misfortunes which often faced the dauntless men of the British Merchant Navy. From the beginning of his voyage, from Galveston (Texas) to Le Havre, nothing but disaster had befallen him. On June 16th the high-pressure engine broke down. That seemed the crowning disaster. After a stoppage of ten hours, Captain McCullough was able to proceed at an average speed of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots. His troubles, however, were not over.

“At about 8.30 p.m. July 1st and in lat.  $49^{\circ} 8'$ , long.  $6^{\circ} 10' W$ . I saw,” he afterwards declared, “to the southward of us, and at a distance of about six to seven miles,



what seemed to me something like a torpedo-boat coming up to us very fast, a dense volume of smoke coming from the craft. I had my doubts what this stranger might be ; however, I was not long kept in suspense, for without any warning whatever the stranger commenced firing at us, and as he came nearer he displayed a signal to get into the boats at once, and at the same time he hoisted the German flag. When he commenced firing I ordered the helm hard a-starboard, stopped my engines, and ordered the boats to be lowered, keeping the craft as well astern as possible. He kept firing away at us until he saw the boats in the water. Then he went on the port quarter and let us have a few more on the port side. He then left us and went after another steamer about a mile to the north of us and commenced shelling this steamer, putting about a dozen shells into her on both sides. Afterwards he returned to my steamer and finished her off about 9 p.m. of the same date ; it being dark at the time, I do not know whether he boarded her or not, as we were about a mile away from the steamer when a terrific explosion occurred at the hour named above. Thus I was forced to abandon my ship through not having any arms on board to retaliate or defend ourselves, and, being in a helpless state as regards speed, I could not do more than I did."

The crew were more fortunate than perhaps they realised at the time. None of them was injured, and eight hours after they had taken to the boats they were picked up by one of His Majesty's ships and landed at Plymouth.

The sinking of the *Caucasian* and the *Inglemoor* took place in the early morning, and was marked by an incident suggesting that, though the enemy was bent on ignoring the higher code of humanity, some of the German seamen still retained, curiously enough, a kindly feeling towards dumb animals. The *Caucasian* (master, Mr. F. H. Robinson), on voyage from London to Norfolk and Jacksonville, U.S.A., was about eighty miles south of the Lizard when at 5.45 a.m. a submarine was sighted in the clear morning light. She was on the surface and was coming at full speed towards the merchantman. She signalled "Abandon ship at once," but Captain Robinson, though his vessel could not do more than about 9 knots, ignored the order and steered a zigzag course, hoping to

keep the enemy astern. The submarine then opened fire, the shells falling all round the *Caucasian*, and at last the steersman left the wheel. The master, who had been on the upper bridge watching the movements of the submarine, descended to the lower bridge and took the wheel, while the second mate remained on the lookout. After a chase of sixty-five minutes, the seventeenth shell struck the compass stand and steering standard, with disastrous results, the vessel becoming unmanageable.

When the crew had taken to the boats, the enemy commander came alongside and declared that he intended to sink even the lifeboats, because his order to stop had not been obeyed. At that moment Captain Robinson's dog fell overboard, and instinctively he jumped into the water to save it. He was clinging to the rails of the submarine, when the German commander exclaimed with surprise, "You jump overboard to save a dog!" The master made no reply, but the commander, evidently moved at Captain Robinson's affection for his dog, announced that the boats could proceed. That there was a limit to the enemy's consideration was, however, proved a short time afterwards when the *Inglemoor* (master, Mr. A. W. Stonehouse) appeared on the scene. Captain Stonehouse, noticing the two boats full of men with a submarine near-by, decided to rescue the distressed mariners; he hoped that the enemy would, in the circumstances, spare his own vessel. He was, however, to be disappointed. He was compelled to abandon the *Inglemoor* under heavy fire. He reminded the enemy commander that the crews of the two vessels amounted to about one hundred men, and asked permission for them to go on board the motor-barge he had been towing. The request was granted. The submarine then torpedoed the *Inglemoor* and nothing more was seen of her. Jury-sails were rigged on the barge, the master and men of the *Caucasian* were picked up, and later on the motor engine was started. These companions in misfortune fortunately fell in with a patrol-vessel soon after noon and were eventually taken in to Penzance, thankful that they had fared no worse than they had done. Captain Robinson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

In one day upwards of 23,000 tons of shipping had been sunk, but fortunately the enemy was unable to maintain

this high standard of destruction during the remainder of the month, which closed with a total loss of less than 49,000 tons owing to the submarine campaign. On July 3rd only two ships, the *Renfrew* (3,488 tons) and the *Larchmore* (4,355 tons), were captured, both of them being sunk by gunfire off the Wolf Rock, an area which had already yielded the enemy so many prizes. The master of the latter ship (Mr. Isaac Jones) afterwards put on record a succinct, but none the less eloquent, account of his experiences. In the early morning he heard two muffled reports to the east-south-east, apparently some distance away. Shortly afterwards two destroyers crossed his bow going full speed towards the firing, and the *Larchmore* forthwith hoisted her colours. This dramatic incident occurred at 5.30 in the morning, and suggested that U39, which had already done so much injury, was being hotly pursued. The *Larchmore* proceeded on her voyage, the course of events suggesting that immediate danger of an attack was over. Shortly after seven o'clock, however, the submarine appeared again, half submerged, two to two and a half miles away. She at once rose to the surface and opened fire. A rapid succession of shots fell on the merchant ship, and Captain Jones was thrown down by the concussion, injuring his knee. For a quarter of an hour the firing was vigorously maintained as the submarine drew in towards the doomed vessel. One shell killed the donkeyman, and the ship was holed in several places. Escape was impossible, so the crew took to the boats, shells falling round them as they sought this miserable means of safety. The submarine afterwards approached the boats where the dying donkeyman lay, and Captain Jones was cross-examined. This minor ordeal was soon over, and the submarine resumed firing into the merchant vessel. He was busily engaged in this task when a cruiser appeared on the horizon. Assistance had come too late to save the ship, but at least the crew were assured of their own safety. Captain Isaac Jones, who was mentioned in despatches, was, in company with the other survivors, afterwards landed at Falmouth, together with the master (Mr. J. F. Stevenson) of the *Renfrew*, which had also been submitted to a heavy bombardment because the master had refused to capitulate at the first signal which U39 had made. Two other ships, the *Arabia* (7,933 tons)

and the *Guido* (2,093 tons), were also chased on this day, but managed to escape.

Only two ships were attacked on July 4th, and one of these, the little sailing-vessel *Sunbeam* (132 tons), was captured off Wick. A conspicuous vindication of the resourcefulness and high courage of British merchant seamen was supplied by the officers and men of the *Anglo-Californian* (7,333 tons). At 8.30 a.m. this vessel, on passage from Montreal with a large number of horses, was about ninety miles south of Queenstown when an enemy submarine was sighted breaking surface on the port beam about three miles away. The master (Mr. Frederick Parslow) immediately realised the imminent danger which confronted him. Every effort was made to increase speed, and the ship was manœuvred so as to bring the enemy astern. An S.O.S. signal was sent out, and to the relief of everyone on board was at once answered by a British man-of-war. For half an hour the submarine continued to chase the *Anglo-Californian*, gaining on her rapidly. At last the enemy came within firing distance, and then for an hour and a half, while the merchantman zigzagged backwards and forwards to confuse the aim of the enemy, a steady fire was maintained. The British vessel was frequently hit, and in order to save life Captain Parslow decided to obey the signal to abandon ship. The engines were stopped and the boats manned: the port after-lifeboat was successfully lowered, but one of the falls of the starboard boat was struck by a shell, with the result that the boat fell away and capsized. The submarine at last ceased firing and then closed. Captain Parslow's courage in maintaining the chase had not, however, been fruitless, for at this juncture an armed ship, the *PRINCESS ENA*, which had been slowly overhauling the submarine, opened fire at 9,000 yards, to the consternation of the enemy. The shot fell short, but a wireless message from a destroyer "to hold on" gave Captain Parslow fresh courage. The course of events seemed to be favouring him, so the firemen who were in the boat still on the davits were ordered to go once more below, and orders were given for the ship to get under way. The men responded with fine spirit to the master's orders. The submarine, fearing that after all the ship might escape, opened fire at close range on the bridge and boats, rifles as well as the vessel's

guns being brought into use. Captain Parslow and his men were without any means of defence. In a few moments the upper bridge had been wrecked and the master killed; the steering wheel and compass had been damaged and one of the port davits smashed, causing a boat to drop into the sea, together with all its occupants. The chief officer again ordered the ship to be abandoned, the firemen came up from below, and the remaining boats were manned and lowered. The outlook seemed black when suddenly the destroyers MENTOR and MIRANDA steamed up. The submarine, counting discretion the better part of valour, dived out of sight. The *Anglo-Californian* then proceeded under escort to Queenstown, which was reached in safety.

Captain Parslow had succeeded in saving his ship, but at the sacrifice of his own life, and twenty members of his crew were also killed, seven others being wounded. Everyone on board, from the master downward, had exhibited pluck and coolness, as well as seamanlike competency, in the emergency. Frederick Parslow, the son of the master, had remained on the upper bridge with his father throughout the action, steering the ship. By little short of a miracle, he was unwounded, although one of the spokes of the wheel was blown away and the bridge was riddled. Under the unnerving circumstances which confronted him down below, the chief engineer (who, with Mr. Frederick Parslow, afterwards received the Distinguished Service Cross) maintained discipline. Throughout the fierce fusillade the wireless telegraph operator stuck to his post on the lower bridge, sending and receiving accurately a number of messages. A veterinary surgeon (Mr. F. Neal), who was in charge of the 900 horses on board, not only rendered aid to the animals, of which twenty were killed, but under heavy fire attended to wounded members of the crew. The chief officer (Mr. H. O. Read), who in the later phase of the action, after the death of the master, acquitted himself well, was, in common with the second engineer (Mr. H. F. Suddes) and the wireless operator, awarded a mention in despatches. As long as the memory of these early days of the submarine campaign persists, the story of the unequal fight put up by the unarmed *Anglo-Californian* under her heroic captain will be retold as an epic of the war by sea.

That the Germans had lost respect for the common humanities to which civilised seamen of all nationalities, not excluding avowed pirates of earlier days, had always paid respect, was shown by the circumstances in which the *Meadowfield* (2,750 tons) was destroyed on July 9th. The four preceding days had been disappointing for the enemy. On the 5th, on the 6th, and on the 7th not a single vessel had been captured. Aircraft had unsuccessfully attacked the *Groningen* (988 tons) four miles off the Galloper, but the bombs had missed their objective and she had escaped unscathed. The 8th was also a poor one for the Germans, for only one ship, the *Guido* (2,093 tons), was torpedoed off Rattray Head. The *Traquair* (1,067 tons) was chased on the same day near Knock Deep, but her speed enabled her to escape. The submarine commanders must have known that the German Admiralty were anxiously looking for better results than were being achieved, and it may be that irritation under failure accounted for the callousness exhibited by the submarine which fell in with the *Meadowfield* on the afternoon of July 9th. She was a Glasgow vessel and was carrying copper ore from Huelva. She had started on her voyage on July 3rd, and was fifty miles south-west of the Tuskar when the master (Mr. Thomas Dunbar) heard the sound of a shot. He took up his glasses to ascertain whence it had come. Just as he had picked up the outline of a submarine on the port quarter, another shot was fired which wrecked the chart-room under the bridge as well as the wheel-house, killing Neil McLean, who was at the wheel. Captain Dunbar immediately ordered the engines to be stopped. In addition to his crew he was carrying five passengers, including two ladies and two children, and he could not put their lives in added danger by resistance. He had confidence that if the Germans realised that the *Meadowfield* had on board children as well as women they would at least cease firing while the boats were lowered. So the two children were held up and must have been seen by two of the officers of the submarine who were watching all that was happening on board the vessel through their glasses. That they had no mercy was proved by the fact that the shelling of the merchant-ship still continued. In a statement which he subsequently made on oath, Captain Dunbar recorded subsequent events :

“Deponent ordered the boats out, and the mate and fourteen hands got into the port boat and deponent and the remainder of those on board, who included two lady passengers, one male passenger, and two children, got into the second boat, which was the starboard lifeboat. As the port boat was being lowered the submarine ceased firing, but as soon as she got clear recommenced, and continued firing during the time deponent’s boat was being lowered and got away.”

Thus Captain Dunbar found himself in charge of two heavily laden boats, which included among their freights two women and two children, forty-two miles from the nearest land. The submarine continued to shell the *Meadowfield* until she sank, and then disappeared. Fortunately at 9 o’clock that night the two boats were seen by the Grimsby trawler *Majestic*, and Captain Dunbar and his companions were safely landed at Holyhead shortly after midnight. That the sinking of the *Meadowfield* resulted in the loss of only one life was due to no consideration on the part of the Germans.

On the same day the *Ellesmere* (1,170 tons) was torpedoed forty-eight miles from the Smalls, apparently by the same submarine. The master (Mr. C. W. Heslop) was on passage to Liverpool when the enemy was sighted two miles on the starboard bow. Captain Heslop brought the submarine astern of him and then the shells began to fall. The second one carried away the after davit of the starboard lifeboat. Four other shells afterwards struck the ship, but still the master hoped against hope that he might save his ship. With shells falling around him, he still held on his course. At last a shell passed through the bridge deck, killing one man and shattering the left arm of another. The firemen down below were in no mood to continue the unequal struggle, and, as there was no place from which to navigate the vessel, the master ordered the Red Ensign to be lowered in token of surrender. A few minutes later, after the crew had got away, the *Ellesmere* was torpedoed. Captain Heslop, who was subsequently “mentioned” for his spirited conduct, had made a plucky effort to save his ship, and in his sworn statement after he and his companions had been rescued by the armed trawler *OSPREY II*, he declared that the casualty “might

have been avoided by having a gun and a gun's crew on board the *Ellesmere*." That was the cry of many ships' masters at this period, but new armies were being raised and equipped and required all the armament which the country could provide.

These were the only two vessels which were sunk on July 9th; two other ships were attacked, but effected their escape. The Pacific Steam Navigation Company's *Orduna* (15,499 tons) was molested by gunfire and torpedo off Queenstown; the gunfire was ineffective, and the torpedo missed the target. For the second time the master (T. M. Taylor) could congratulate himself on the skillful and successful handling of the great liner he commanded, for on the 28th of the previous month he had been chased off the Smalls. Another vessel which was also brought safely into port on July 9th was the Leyland liner *Etonian* (6,438 tons), which, having eluded the enemy near Queenstown on May 7th, was again chased by a submarine off the south of Ireland. Competent use of her high speed saved her from destruction.

The master (J. C. Murray) of the *Winlaton* (3,270 tons) showed on July 10th how even a slow ship handled with determination could worst the enemy. The afternoon was far spent when a submarine was seen steaming hard towards the merchantman with the evident intention of cutting her off. The *Winlaton* had little speed, and her master dismissed the idea of a chase. He decided that his only course was to steer straight for the enemy. This he proceeded to do, to the evident surprise of the officers of the submarine. The Germans watched the merchantman for some time, and when she was about a mile away from them they put the nose of the submarine down and were soon out of sight. Twenty minutes later the submarine again appeared on the surface, well astern of the *Winlaton*, but after a short interval steamed slowly away. This was the first instance reported to the Admiralty of a slow ship sighting a submarine at a distance and by steering straight for her causing her to dive and decline action. In recognition of his initiative and courage, Captain Murray was given a commission as a Lieutenant, R.N.R. and a "mention."

During the remainder of the month, though thirteen ships were chased by submarines, only six of them were



destroyed, and of these but two—the *Grangewood* (3,422 tons) and the *Iberian* (5,223 tons)—exceeded 2,000 tons. The master of the last-named ship (Mr. Thomas B. Jago) attempted to get away. Circumstances seemed to favour him, for the submarine was about seven miles distant when first sighted in a position over seventy miles south of the Fastnet. He had under his orders a well-found ship with a turn for speed, and when he gave orders for a full head of steam he received excellent support from the engine-room. The enemy, however, had evidently noticed that the *Iberian* was unarmed, and he had no hesitation, therefore, in attempting to overhaul her. As he gained upon the merchantman, shells began to fall, and one of them pierced the deck and decapitated four men besides wounding several others. The next shell struck in the same place and blew one man to pieces. Captain Jago realised that he could not expose his crew to further risk of death, and accordingly he ordered the ship to be stopped. Leaving behind the bodies of the four men who had been killed, but taking with them the eight wounded, the officers and remaining men manned the boats and were soon clear of the doomed vessel. The submarine then closed in and discharged a torpedo into the *Iberian*. The commander, having reproached Captain Jago with running away, provided bandages and lint for the wounded, and then, having discharged another torpedo into the port side of the merchantman, disappeared. "Had I had a gun," the master afterwards recorded, "I would have sunk the submarine and certainly the *Iberian* would have escaped." Late that night the boats attracted the attention of a steamer, which took the exhausted officers and men on board. Before Queenstown was reached two of the wounded seamen died. Captain Jago was "mentioned" for his service.

During the remaining days of the month sixteen more lives were lost, four on board the *Firth* (406 tons), which was sunk near Aldeburgh Napes buoy, and eleven in the *Mangara* (1,821 tons), which was destroyed near Sizewell buoy, Aldeburgh. Both vessels were torpedoed without warning. The other casualty occurred in the *Turquoise* (486 tons). This ship, together with the *Nugget* (405 tons), was captured and sunk by gunfire off the Scillies. The month of July closed with the loss of twenty ships,

of 52,847 tons, the *African Monarch* (4,003 tons) having been blown up by a mine on the 6th of the month at the entrance of the White Sea and two men killed. Nineteen other ships, of 88,886 tons, had been molested or damaged, including two which struck mines and the one, already mentioned, which had been attacked by aircraft. The deaths reached a total of fifty-nine.

During August enemy submarines made a determined attempt to justify the high hopes which the Germans had entertained when they determined to employ submarines, as well as mines, in attacking ocean-borne trade. Before the month closed forty-nine vessels of the British Mercantile Marine, of 147,122 tons, had been sunk with a loss of no fewer than 248 lives. Twenty-one other ships had escaped, but nevertheless the toll exacted of men and ships was a heavy one. So far as tonnage is concerned, it was indeed the most successful month the Germans had hitherto experienced, and it was apparent that exceptional efforts were being made to support public confidence throughout Germany in the ultimate victory of the Central Powers as the result of the campaign. Although seven ships disappeared after striking mines, the great bulk of the tonnage fell to the submarine. August 1915 was indeed a black month for British shipowners and British seamen.

On August 1st the *Clintonia* (3,830 tons), after a spirited defence by her master (Mr. Geoffrey Donnelly) under a heavy fire, was sunk thirty miles from Ushant; five Europeans and five Lascars were drowned owing to the capsizing of a ship's boat, and a number of men were wounded during the running fire which the submarine maintained before Captain Donnelly ordered his engines to be stopped.

On the same day three more casualties from drowning occurred when the *Ranza* (2,320 tons) was overtaken off Ushant by U68. After the ship had been abandoned and had disappeared beneath the waves and the submarine had gone away, the shipless crew hoisted sail. One of the boats capsized; she was righted with difficulty, but was still waterlogged and the sails had been lost. About an hour later she again capsized and was once more righted. For six hours the unfortunate seamen, when they were not fighting for life in the water, were

sitting in the boat with the water covering them up to the chest. One fireman became delirious and fell to the bottom of the boat and was drowned before he could be picked up. His body was quietly lowered over the side. Fortunately, during the evening of this tragic Sunday a French fishing-boat rescued the twelve survivors. The other boat of the *Ranza* was picked up by a Dutch vessel.

During the succeeding days of August the losses of tonnage continued to mount up, many useful vessels of considerable tonnage being destroyed. On the 3rd inst. the *Costello* (1,591 tons) was sunk by gunfire ninety-five miles W. by S. from Bishop Rock, with a loss of one life; two men were killed in the *Glenby* (2,196 tons) thirty miles N. from the Smalls; two seamen were killed in the *Dunsley* (4,930 tons), which was sunk off the Old Head of Kinsale; and then occurred one of the outstanding crimes of the submarine campaign when the White Star Company's liner *Arabic* (15,801 tons) was sunk by U24. The enemy craft had bombarded the naphtha tanks near Harrington on August 16th, and then, proceeding by way of the St. George's Channel, had reached a position where the Atlantic traffic was thick. The *Arabic* had left Liverpool early in the afternoon of August 18th with 137 cabin passengers and forty-nine third-class passengers, of whom many were of neutral nationality. They included twenty-six Americans, as well as French, Russians, Belgians, Swiss and Spanish travellers, with a German who possessed a Home Office permit. The crew numbered 248. As the vessel was outward bound to the United States, there was no possibility that she carried ammunition. All the boats were fully equipped and carried compasses, oilbags, oil lamps, sea anchors, and matches, and were in a thoroughly seaworthy condition. The boats were carried inboard on their chocks, and all rafts and patent boats were unlashd and ready to float off. Six hundred lifebelts had been placed about the decks, fore and aft, so as to be handy in case of an emergency. The watertight doors had been closed, as well as the doors of the shaft tunnel, and the lower deck ports had been secured. Every precaution had, in fact, been taken to secure the safety of the ship and all on board.

About 9 o'clock on the following morning, when the vessel was about fifty miles off the Old Head of Kinsale,

a steamer was sighted five miles away on the starboard bow. The *Arabic* was zigzagging, in view of the general peril to which British ships were exposed in these waters, and the general direction of her course gradually brought her nearer to what was evidently a British merchant ship, which was stopped. It was noticed that two boats under sail, full of men, were making towards the land, which was, of course, out of sight. Observers on board the *Arabic* saw that the steamer was well down by the head, and realised at once that she had been torpedoed by the enemy. This vessel was the *Dunsley* of London, which had been subjected to a heavy shelling for twenty minutes—two men being killed, as already stated, and six others injured before the master (Mr. P. L. Arkley) abandoned hope of saving his ship.

The chief officer and the second officer were on watch on the bridge of the *Arabic* when the sinking *Dunsley* came into sight. The master of the *Arabic* (Mr. W. Finch) concluded that the *Dunsley* had been torpedoed, so he altered course about three points to the southward, intending to keep well clear of the area in which a submarine might be lurking. For some time the liner continued on her new course, still zigzagging, and a wireless message was promptly dispatched notifying the fate which had overtaken the *Dunsley*. No submarine, however, was seen at this period either from the bridge or by the lookout men. The passengers and others who were watching the *Dunsley* sinking lower and lower in the water were hoping that after all the *Arabic* would escape molestation, when the ship was shaken from end to end by an explosion, the wireless-room being wrecked and the aerial carried away. The second officer (Mr. F. F. Steele) had just moved to the starboard end of the bridge when a line of air-bubbles on the starboard bow, about 100 yards away, caught his attention. He instantly realised that a torpedo had been discharged at the liner, and he shouted to the master, "Here he is, sir. He has let go at us. Hard a-starboard!" Captain Finch, who had also observed the menacing streak, at once gave orders for a full head of steam and the helm was put over. Everyone on board who was aware of the impending crisis anxiously waited to see if the ship would clear the torpedo. Doubt was quickly resolved, the vessel being struck aft, almost

abreast of the jigger mast. The *Arabic* was doomed; the second officer put the engine-room telegraph to "Stop" and then to "Full speed astern" so as to get way off her, and thus enable the boats to be launched. Captain Finch, noticing that the ship was beginning to list to port, ordered everyone to the boats, for there was no time to be lost.

It is unnecessary to describe the scene on board when the passengers, who included a large number of women and children, realised that within a few minutes the *Arabic* would probably sink. The sequel showed that the ship had been well organised for an emergency; while of the crew of 243, 21 lost their lives, only 18 passengers—12 cabin and 6 steerage—were reported missing, so efficiently and quickly were the boats swung out, lowered, and filled. Seeing that the time which separated the impact of the torpedo and the sinking of the *Arabic* amounted to only eight minutes, it was due to no act of mercy on the part of the enemy that the death-roll was not far greater. Captain Finch remained on the bridge directing operations for the saving of life, and when the *Arabic* sank, having righted herself before she plunged stern first, he went down with her. A few seconds later he rose to the surface, to discover that his vessel had completely disappeared. A man of robust build, of about seventeen stone, he managed to cling to a raft from which, exhausted though he was, he swam to a boat. He helped a fireman into her and then picked up a woman and a baby before he himself sought this poor means of safety. After another fireman had been rescued, the whole of the little company transferred to a lifeboat which was near-by, and Captain Finch took command of all the craft which were afloat among the wreckage. Mr. Bowen, chief officer, and Mr. Oliver, first officer, had also remained in the ship until the last, Mr. Oliver diving overboard from the forward part of B Deck on the starboard side, while Mr. Bowen slid down the after fall of No. 1 emergency boat, to be picked up by one of the boats already in the water.

As soon as the engines had stopped, all hands left the stokehold except one man who was standing by the telegraphs and a junior engineer (Mr. P. G. Logan). No purpose was to be served in remaining, so they too began to climb up to the deck. What happened to the fireman

is uncertain, but Mr. Logan escaped and was afterwards able to give an account of his experiences. He left the engine-room on the port side of the deck below the main deck. Securing a lifebelt, he ran along the port alleyway. When he had advanced a short distance, the water met him and he threw the lifebelt away, as it impeded his progress. At last he was able to reach the companionway to the poop, which was already three feet under water. On the starboard side a boat, with about a dozen persons in it, was already afloat on the falls, indicating the rapidity with which the *Arabic* was sinking. Mr. Logan unhooked the forward fall and a quartermaster released the after fall. The boat was thus got clear of the vessel, which disappeared a few minutes later. Just as the *Arabic* was sinking, Mr. Logan saw a collapsible boat with six or seven persons in her, who were apparently unable to control her. As the boat was only ten or fifteen yards away, he took off his boots and boiler suit and swam towards her, and then took charge. With the aid of his companions, he pulled towards the wreckage and fourteen persons were rescued from the water.

In the meantime Mr. Steele, the second officer, had taken charge of No. 11 boat, which was safely lowered with thirty-seven occupants. The first officer had found temporary safety in this overcrowded boat, but a few minutes later he transferred to another, while the third officer went to a collapsible boat which was near-by. Apparently a large proportion of the deaths were due to the capsizing of No. 16 boat. This craft was drawn by the suction of the water towards the rapidly sinking *Arabic*, which had assumed an almost perpendicular position. A davit caught the boat and smashed it into pieces. Forty-two or forty-three people were consequently thrown into the water. An able seaman managed to reach one of the rafts, with which the White Star Line had recently equipped the *Arabic* as well as other vessels under their control, and from this position of comparative safety he effected a number of rescues. The carpenter of the *Arabic*, Norman MacAuley, was also responsible for saving a number of lives. As soon as the fate of the vessel was certain, he went to the saloon door on Deck C and assisted some ladies in putting on their lifebelts. He then plunged down to the after part of

E Deck to investigate the damage which had been done there, but he was driven back by the flow of water. Going to the boat deck, he was able to give aid to a number of other lady passengers and subsequently returned to Deck C. He afterwards gave an account of his later experiences :

“ My boat station was No. 7. I helped people into No. 7 boat and then, as there were plenty of hands there, I assisted others into No. 5 and No. 3 boats. The water was now coming over the stern, and C Deck was submerged for a considerable distance. No. 3 boat was filled up, and as no passengers were to be seen on deck, I took my place in this lifeboat and kept her clear of the ship's side as she was lowered. The boat reached the water safely. My boat picked up two other persons—one steward and one passenger—after the boat had sailed four times through the wreckage.”

These chance stories of the manner in which the *Arabic*, with her freight of 429 persons, was abandoned in the urgent emergency convey some conception of the fine spirit exhibited by officers and men, from Captain Finch downwards, in their care of those confided to their charge. Fortunately the S.O.S. signal which had been sent out by the liner when the *Dunsley* was seen to be in distress was responded to quickly by patrol vessels, and all the survivors, numbering 390, were landed at Queenstown.

The remainder of the month yielded other incidents to show that nothing that had yet occurred by sea had broken the spirit of British merchant seamen. They would not admit defeat even when, unarmed themselves, they were confronted by a desperate enemy possessing gun and torpedo in association with power of submergence, enabling him to deal stealthy and mortal blows. Among the narratives of this period there stands out the case of the *Eimstad* (689 tons). A submarine hailed the ship off Cross Sand Light-vessel on August 17th, at the same time opening fire with both guns. None of the eleven shells hit the *Eimstad*. Then a torpedo was fired, which missed. In the meantime the master (Mr. F. A. Holder) had all lights doused, himself cutting the steam-light halyards. An attempt to ram the submarine failed,

but the spirit which was exhibited eventually caused the enemy to abandon the contest and he disappeared. Captain Holder was "mentioned" for saving his ship. Another conspicuous case of resistance was that of the *Diomed* (4,672 tons), belonging to Messrs. Alfred Holt & Co. This ship (master, Mr. J. Myles) was outward bound from Liverpool to Shanghai. She carried a crew of fifty-three hands, and had on board a mixed cargo of about 8,000 tons. At 11 o'clock on the morning of August 22nd the *Diomed* was about fifty-seven miles W.N.W. from the Scillies—an area in which very heavy losses were sustained during this month—when a submarine was observed. Captain Myles was on the bridge with the chief officer, and as the *Diomed* could steam at about  $13\frac{1}{2}$  knots and the enemy was distant at least six miles, he determined to make a fight for his vessel and all that she carried. So the helm was ported and very soon the submarine was lost to sight.

It looked as though the *Diomed* would escape. But after she had run for a considerable time in a westerly direction, a submarine—whether the same one as had been first sighted or another is uncertain—was observed on the port beam. The distance was again estimated at about six miles. Once more the helm was ported in order to bring the submarine astern. These incidents occupied three-quarters of an hour, and the immunity they had hitherto rewarded his efforts gave Captain Myles fresh confidence. But at last the enemy lessened the distance separating her from the merchantman and opened fire. The range was about three miles. For over two hours the chase had been in progress when the shot began to break up the stern of the ship; fire was then concentrated on the fore part of the vessel, and then it was directed against the bridge. The enemy had made no signal and was flying no flag. The first victim was the third steward, who was killed while standing on the fore part of the ship. Shortly after two o'clock Captain Myles was mortally wounded as well as the quartermaster, while the chief officer (Mr. F. A. McGowan Richardson), on whom the command had now devolved, was himself seriously injured.

By this time the position of the *Diomed* had become hopeless, and the chief officer ordered the vessel to be abandoned. Two boats on the port side had been reduced to matchwood by the shell-fire, and of the two



boats on the starboard side one had been holed. This damage was unfortunately not observed until the boat had been lowered into the water with twenty men in her, when she rapidly filled and capsized. Mr. John Rennie, the second mate, took charge of the uninjured starboard boat, but an internal explosion in the engine-room of the *Diomed* resulted in a quantity of water being shipped. In these circumstances the prospect of any of the officers and men being saved seemed slight.

The Germans on board the attacking submarine evinced no interest in their fate. The damaged starboard boat had capsized, and the unfortunate men who had been in her were left to the mercy of the waves. Mr. Rennie, fully realising his responsibility, succeeded in getting his boat baled out, and then the men in the water were picked up. Those who were clinging to the capsized boat had to be left for the time being, as Mr. Rennie, with thirty-four men in his charge, could do nothing for them. He had hopes of getting out the gig before the *Diomed* sank, and with this intention drew in towards the doomed vessel. The submarine had apparently disappeared, but as soon as Mr. Rennie approached the *Diomed*, the enemy reappeared on the surface and made towards him, compelling him to abandon his purpose. In the circumstances nothing more could be done, and a few minutes later the *Diomed* disappeared beneath the waves. Mr. Rennie in his heavily laden boat then headed for the Irish coast. At about six o'clock he fell in with a destroyer, which promptly returned to the spot where the *Diomed* had been sunk and picked up the survivors on the capsized starboard boat. In the deposition which he subsequently made Mr. Rennie stated that the "submarine rendered no assistance. The Commander looked at the men in the water and shook his fist at me, saying something in German." The splendid resistance which Captain Myles and his officers and men had made in the effort to save their ship was highly commended by the Admiralty, and the Distinguished Service Cross was conferred on the chief officer. The toll of life lost was ten, the master and two others being killed by the shell-fire and seven being drowned through the capsizing of the starboard lifeboat, which the enemy's shell-fire had rendered unseaworthy.

Three other incidents find place in the record of this month, and they all occurred on August 21st at the entrance to the Channel. The *Cober* (3,060 tons) and the *Ruel* (4,029 tons) were sunk, but the other vessel, the *San Melito* (10,160 tons), was rescued. The master (Mr. John J. Peterfield) of the former put up a plucky fight on this summer day. He came across a submarine when forty-five miles S.S.W. from the Scillies. He promptly brought her astern of him and a chase lasting an hour ensued, during which the enemy maintained an intermittent fire of high-explosive shells. At last the poop was struck and considerable damage was done. Some of the men of the *Cober*, without waiting for orders, rushed the boats and tried to lower one of them, with the result that several of them were thrown into the water. Captain Peterfield still continued on his course, ordering the chief officer to endeavour, in another boat, to rescue the men who were fighting for life about two miles off. In this he succeeded against heavy odds. All hope of saving the *Cober* had been abandoned, and Captain Peterfield, bowing before the inevitable, at last prepared to abandon his ship. The submarine had submerged, and as he left the ship at 1.20 p.m. a torpedo struck the *Cober* on the port side, and in a short time she sunk. Fortunately for Captain Peterfield, who was "mentioned" for his conduct, as well as for his companions, they were soon afterwards picked up by the Dutch steamer *Monnikeandam* and were landed at Falmouth.

The *Cober* was a slow ship, but the *San Melito* (master, Mr. James D. Jackson) was one of the Eagle Oil Transport fleet with a turn for speed. She was seventy miles S.W. from the Lizard when a submarine appeared. Captain Jackson manœuvred his ship to bring the enemy astern at 2.50 p.m., and in the meantime ordered full speed. An official record of subsequent events is to the following effect :

"The *San Melito* was struck on the starboard side by a shell, the concussion stunning the master, and at the same time the quartermaster left the wheel, which was taken by the chief officer (Mr. W. Piper) for the remainder of the action. The submarine continued to chase and shell the *San Melito* until about 3.30 p.m., doing slight

damage to the ship, but causing no casualties among the crew. Patrol craft then appearing about five miles off, the submarine dived and disappeared."

In these circumstances, owing to the courage and determination of Captain Jackson and his officers and men, the *San Melito* was saved. Captain Jackson, the chief officer, and the chief engineer (Mr. W. Morrilee) were mentioned in despatches, and Captain Jackson was also given a commission as Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve.

The officers and men of the *Ruel* were singled out for a demonstration by the enemy of the brutal methods he was prepared to adopt in the hope of breaking the spirit of the British merchant seaman. This ship left Gibraltar on August 16th for Barry Roads, in ballast, and on the afternoon of August 21st a submarine appeared on the starboard quarter and opened fire at a range of about three miles. The master (Mr. Henry Story) altered his ship's course to westward and, raising all steam, which gave him a speed of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  knots, managed to keep the submarine astern of him. A chase ensued which lasted for one and a half hours, when a shell passed through the *Ruel's* stern, another bursting over the bridge. By this time the enemy was only a mile away, and the crew of the *Ruel* took to the two boats. The submarine then closed in and fired six effective shots. The enemy had killed one man, a steward, and had wounded eight others, but he was still unsatisfied and proceeded to fire on the boats, the submarine commander picking men off with his revolver. Captain Story, the second officer (Mr. W. J. Stenhouse), and Lieutenant D. Blair, R.N.R., subsequently made a statement on oath to the effect that "when in the act of abandoning the steamer *Ruel* in a sinking condition due to attack by a German submarine, we were fired on while alongside and pulling away from the above vessel, the wounds of those injured showing that both shrapnel and rifle bullets were used." They added that "the submarine was distant about 150 yards, and close enough for the crew to observe that we and the remainder of the crew of the steamer *Ruel* were abandoning the ship and had given up any further attempts to escape." The *Ruel* sank forty-five miles S.W. from Bishop Rock, and the survivors were fortunate in that as she disappeared the armed trawler

*Dewsland* appeared upon the scene, accompanied by the drifter *Campania*. These two craft, though they arrived too late to save the *Ruel* from destruction, drove off the submarine and rescued Captain Story and his companions, who were landed, without further incident, at St. Mar, in the Scillies.

For reasons which were afterwards to be revealed, the losses from submarine attack both of ships and men during September were far less heavy than in the preceding month. The number of ships—eight, of 11,997 tons—blown up was, however, the highest hitherto recorded, suggesting that the enemy had been devoting increased attention to the laying of minefields. In all seventy-seven men were killed and the thirty ships which were sunk were of 101,690 tons. A further indication of a temporary lull in the submarine campaign in the waters surrounding the British Isles was furnished by the small number of ships which were molested by the enemy but succeeded in making their escape.

Twenty-seven vessels were interfered with by submarines, and their records furnish a number of illustrations of the spirit exhibited by officers and men in the unequal contest. The master (Mr. Henry John) of the *Whitefield* (2,422 tons) made a spirited effort, under a running fire, to elude capture off Cape Wrath, on the north-west coast of Scotland, on September 1st, while on his way from Archangel to Nice. On the following day the *Roumanie* (2,599 tons), also outward bound from Archangel, was captured and destroyed by bombs off St. Kilda. Although the *Churston* (2,470 tons) was mined off Orfordness, four men being killed, on September 3rd, the British Mercantile Marine suffered no other loss on that day. Within twenty-four hours, however, enemy submarines had obtained full compensation for this failure; three large ships met their end off the Fastnet, the *Cymbeline* (4,505 tons), the *Mimosa* (3,466 tons), and the Allan liner *Hesperian* (10,920 tons).

In the case of the first ship six lives out of a total crew of thirty-seven were lost owing to the action of the enemy commander. He had kept the vessel under fire for about half an hour, and then as the crew were leaving the ship a torpedo was discharged which hit the vessel amidship on the port side under the bridge. One of the boats

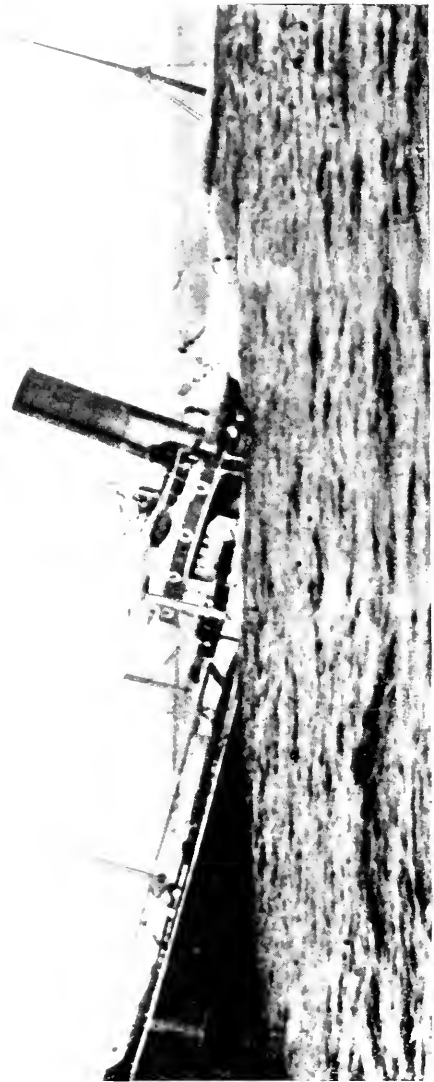
was smashed by the explosion and six men were killed, the remainder being fortunately picked up by the other boat. For sixteen hours the survivors were buffeted about by the waves, wondering whether they would ever see land again. Five of their number had been injured by the explosion, one of them seriously. The submarine had made off as soon as it was certain that the *Cymbeline* could not survive. By a happy chance these distressed mariners in sad plight were observed by the Swedish barque *Albatros*, and at last they reached Brandon Quay. One incident of interest marked the destruction of the *Mimosa*, one of the vessels of the Anglo-American Oil Company. When the master (Mr. T. N. Hugo) had taken to the boats, the commander of the submarine, apparently feeling some pity for his victims, east adrift 137 miles S.W. by W. from the Fastnet, told Captain Hugo that he would tell the first trawler he saw to pick them up.

The sinking of the *Hesperian*, a great passenger liner with over 600 persons on board, again attracted attention to the callous inhumanity with which the campaign was being conducted by the enemy. Only a few days before Count Bernsdorff, the German Ambassador, had assured the United States Government that "passenger liners will not be sunk without warning and without insuring the safety of the non-combatants aboard providing that the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance." The *Hesperian* was nevertheless sunk. She was outward bound from Liverpool to Quebec and Montreal, with a general cargo, and carried about 300 passengers. There was no suspicion, therefore, that she had on board either munitions or troops, but nevertheless she was torpedoed without warning. It was a fortunate circumstance, and to the credit of her owners, that she had sufficient lifeboat accommodation for more than three times as many persons as were on board, and that there was a liberal supply of lifebuoys and lifebelts, otherwise the death-roll would have been far heavier than it was.

The vessel was going at full speed, zigzagging on her course, when she was struck. That the subsequent explosion was due to a torpedo and not to a mine was proved by fragments of the missile which were secured by the master (Mr. W. S. Main) and by members of his crew. The attack on the *Hesperian* was therefore a flagrant viola-

tion of the pledge which the enemy had so recently given to the United States. The impact of the torpedo and the explosion which followed stopped the vessel, and Captain Main sounded the boats-station signal on the steam whistle and ordered the chief officer to get the passengers into the boats. Of the 314 passengers a large number were women and children, and the order went forth, "Women and children first," the crew being instructed to stand by their stations. The ship, after shivering fore and aft under the impact, had listed ten degrees to the starboard and sank by the head. A column of water and debris was thrown up into the air a distance of about 100 feet and fell on to the deck and bridge. The hatches on No. 2 deck were blown up and considerable damage was done to the second cabin and bridge decks. Fortunately none of the boats had been damaged or their fittings injured, and, in spite of the terrifying experience which had suddenly confronted them, the passengers evinced no signs of panic. They must have realised that they were in desperate straits, but nevertheless they remained cool and collected. The boats were filled and got away safely. The torpedo had been discharged at 8.30 p.m., and within an hour the boats were clear of the vessel. After the attack had taken place, Captain Main had ordered an S.O.S. call to be sent out, and within a short time rescuing vessels were on the spot.

The master afterwards mustered those who remained on board the *Hesperian* and found that, including himself, there were thirteen—three officers, three engineers, two Marconi operators, the boatswain, the carpenter, and two seamen. The night was far advanced, and the ship was very much down by the head. There seemed a chance, however, that she might be saved, and continued efforts were made to tow her into Queenstown from the early morning of September 5th onwards by the naval vessels which had responded to the signal. During the afternoon the liner became unmanageable; time and again the towing ropes carried away, and then a southerly gale sprang up and high seas were encountered. Throughout the long day the master and his companions, reinforced by some of the crew who had returned to the *Hesperian's* assistance, strove to save the injured vessel. As night came on the gale increased and the seas rose higher. The



THE LOSS OF A BRITISH MERCHANT SHIP.





vessel was labouring heavily and the list had increased, suggesting that she was gradually sinking. Captain Main at last came to the conclusion that in the interests of the lives in his charge—over thirty officers and men who had stood by him on board in the emergency—it was his duty to order everyone to take to the lifeboats. He himself at last submitted to the inevitable and also took shelter on board H.M.S. VERONICA.

With searchlights playing upon the *Hesperian*, the VERONICA remained close to the doomed ship throughout the night of anxious watching. Early on the succeeding morning, although the gale at sea had not abated, Captain Main and ten of his crew again boarded the *Hesperian*. Their worst fears were confirmed; the ship was rapidly sinking, and nothing could be done to save her. She went down at 7.47 a.m. on September 6th, within twelve minutes of the master passing over the side for the last time. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, with a loss of 1,198 lives, had shocked the conscience of the world; the destruction of the *Arabic* had drawn from the United States a Note of protest to Germany; and now, in defiance of the pledge given by Count Bernsdorff, the Allan liner *Hesperian* had been attacked without warning eighty-five miles from the nearest point of land and thirty-two lives had been sacrificed. It was realised that the comparative smallness of the death-roll was due, not to any consideration on the part of the enemy submarine, but rather to the admirable construction of the ship, the life-saving appliances with which she had been provided by her owners, and the calm way in which officers and men, as well as the passengers, had behaved in the great hour of emergency.

The spirit of desperation with which the Germans were conducting the submarine campaign was again illustrated when the loss of the *Ashmore* (2,519 tons) was reported. This was a well-found vessel of Aberdeen which had been chartered by the Belgian Relief Commission to bring a cargo of maize from Rosario to the distressed population of the country which the enemy had overrun in the early days of the war. Her voyage was uneventful as far as Dover, where the master (Mr. G. A. Noble) received instructions, on resuming his passage to Rotterdam, to keep on a line between Elbow buoy and the Kentish Knock Lightship. Captain Noble, having taken a pilot on board,

put out from Dover at 5 a.m. on September 12th. Three and a half hours later, when the *Ashmore* was steaming between the Kentish Knock and the Galloper Lightship, the boatswain, who was on the after deck, noticed the track of a torpedo approaching the ship. Before he could give the alarm the vessel was struck. Nothing was seen of a submarine, but the naval authorities were satisfied that the ship had not struck a mine, but had been torpedoed without warning.

The stricken *Ashmore* began at once to settle down after the explosion, which apparently had killed four men in the engine-room and stokehold. Captain Noble tried to go below to ascertain the fate of these men, but he found that the water had already risen to a height of about 20 feet, while steam was escaping from the boilers. Everything suggested that the four men had been killed outright. The majority of the crew were ordered away in the two lifeboats, but Captain Noble with the second officer, the carpenter, and steward remained on board. The master went in search of the ship's papers, but his cabin had been completely wrecked. The ship had taken a heavy list by this time, so at last Captain Noble and his companions passed over into one of the lifeboats which had been called alongside, and ten minutes later nothing was to be seen of the *Ashmore*. The crew were fortunate in being almost immediately afterwards rescued by mine-sweepers, and were soon afterwards landed at Chatham by a patrol-steamer to which they had been transferred.

Three days later the *Patagonia* (6,011 tons) was also torpedoed without warning. She was on passage from Odessa to Nicolaieff in ballast, and within an hour and a half after leaving port she was struck aft. The second officer, who was on watch at the time, saw the torpedo approaching and instantly ordered the helm to be put hard aport. If it had not been for this prompt order the ship would have been hit amidships. The master (Mr. D. T. Davies) was well supported by his officers and crew in the emergency, with the result that no lives were lost. A similar immunity from casualties fortunately attended the destruction of three ships on September 23rd off the Fastnet. At 8.30 a.m. the *Anglo-Columbian* (4,792 tons) was nearing the end of her voyage from Montreal to Avonmouth with a large number of horses when

she was shelled by a submarine and eventually sunk. Early on the same afternoon the *Chancellor* (4,586 tons) shared the same fate in this locality, though the master (Mr. R. N. Donald) put on all speed in the attempt to escape. He was carrying a general cargo from Liverpool to New Orleans, and in view of the slowness of his own ship and the speed of the enemy his position from the first was almost hopeless. That evening the master (Mr. R. Steel) of the *Hesione* (3,663 tons) noticed a ship's lifeboat crowded with men evidently in distress. This proved to be a lifeboat of the *Chancellor* in charge of the chief officer (Mr. R. H. Herbert). Captain Steel's natural instinct was to bear down on the boat and rescue the men. This he did. He then reduced speed in order to effect the rescue. Mr. Herbert, warned by the fact that the submarine was still on the surface and conscious of the heavy price which might be exacted of the rescuing vessel, signalled to the *Hesione* to proceed. By this time Captain Steel had also sighted the submarine and realised the danger into which he had run by acting in accordance with the code of the brotherhood of the sea. He called down to the engine-room for all possible speed and thus brought the submarine right astern of him. A strong wind was blowing and the seas were running high, and try as they might the engine-room staff could not obtain more than 7 knots, whereas the *Hesione* was capable, under more favourable conditions, of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  knots. The submarine opened fire, but Captain Steel still held on his course. At length he realised that the contest was hopeless and he ordered the ship to stop. In a short time the crew had taken to the boats, and then the *Hesione* was sunk by gunfire. The firing had attracted patrol-vessels to the spot and both crews were rescued.

With the sinking of the *Urbino* (6,651 tons) off the Bishop Rock on September 24th, the submarine campaign in the waters round the British Isles was suspended for the time being. The American protests which followed the sinking of the *Arabic* and the *Hesperian* were too serious to be ignored, and during the months of October and November not a single merchant ship was either molested or sunk, and it was not until the end of the first quarter of the following year that merchant seamen in these areas were again confronted with this particular form of attack. The enemy had decided to shift the scene of his operations

to other waters which promised to yield good results in association with less chances of becoming embroiled with the United States or of arousing other neutrals to combined action. The submarine campaign was forthwith transferred to the Mediterranean, in which few ships carrying American passengers were likely to be encountered.

This decision represented the triumph, if only temporary triumph, of British merchant seamen. They had refused at Germany's dictation, and in spite of Germany's unprecedented acts, to keep out of that part of the "war zone" which embraced the waters round the British Isles. If they had, cravenly, avoided the manifold perils of which they had had such ample evidence, the enemy would have encountered none of the difficulties which arose with neutrals, and particularly with the United States, and he would have won the war owing to the starvation of the people of the United Kingdom, and the cutting of the communications with the armies engaged in Belgium and France. But, owing to the dogged persistence of British merchant seamen, Germany's diplomatic troubles increased. On June 6th orders had been issued that no large passenger ship, whatever her flag, should be attacked. As we have seen, these instructions were not obeyed. Immediately after the sinking of the *Arabic*, Count Bernsdorff informed the United States Government—to the great indignation of the German naval authorities responsible for the operations at sea, but with the full approval of the Imperial Chancellor—that the submarine commander who had been responsible for that loss would be punished. The differences of opinion between the naval and civil elements in Germany were sharply accentuated by this action. On August 27th instructions were issued that no further submarines were to be sent to sea for attacking merchantmen until the diplomatic position had been cleared up.

Three days later it was decided that until further notice no small passenger ships were to be sunk without warning and without steps being taken to rescue the crew. On the 1st of the following month the Naval Secretary telegraphed to the Chief of the Cabinet, for submission to the Emperor, that "this order could only be carried out at the utmost danger to the submarines, for which he could not be responsible." He asked per-

mission to resign his office, but this was refused. On September 18th the decision was reached that the "general position necessitated that for the next few weeks all risks should be avoided of breaches of regulations laid down for the campaign."<sup>1</sup> Orders were accordingly given to suspend all submarine activities of any sort on the west coast of the British Isles and in the English Channel, and to carry on operations in the North Sea only in accordance with the ordinary prize regulations.

<sup>1</sup> *My Memoirs*, by Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz.

## CHAPTER II

### AUXILIARY CRAFT'S FIGHT AGAINST THE SUBMARINES

BEFORE the German Emperor's decision was reached to limit submarine operations, so as not to arouse further American opposition, the intensity of the enemy's attack on merchant shipping was imposing heavy burdens on the Auxiliary Patrol. During the month of August 1915 shipping was being destroyed off Ushant, off the Norfolk coast, off the Scillies, off the south-west coast of Ireland, off St. Abb's Head, off the Lofoten Islands, and the Old Head of Kinsale, in the Ægean, off the Tuskar, in the Irish Sea and elsewhere. The campaign had assumed a threefold character. First, there was the steady submarine warfare going on in the North Sea and off the western coasts as a matter of almost established routine. Secondly, a concentration was being made on what may be described as the south-western approaches, i.e. the track followed by shipping entering the English or Irish Channel from the Atlantic or Bay of Biscay. Finally, there were the episodic attacks by submarines on their way out from Germany to the Mediterranean, where, as will be seen later, the enemy was concentrating his forces.

Everywhere the Auxiliary Patrol was working at its maximum efficiency. New plans were continually being tested in order to defeat the enemy. In the Irish Sea, for instance, three armed yachts, the *Lady Blanche*, *Sabrina*, and *Bacchante*, were patrolling between the Tuskar and Bardsey Island. Between the Tuskar and the Smalls nets were being towed by a long line of drifters, reinforced by half a dozen armed trawlers. Four other units of six trawlers were patrolling the area between Youghal-Tuskar-Bristol-Channel-Scillies, with the armed yacht *Jeanette* exercising a general supervision and the armed yacht *Sapphire*, patrolling between Minehead and Trevose Head, acting as a wireless link. A new Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, had been appointed

to take charge of the Irish area. This officer, who had had experience both in the Grand Fleet and as President of the War College, went to Queenstown when the south-western approaches were becoming the principal area of the enemy's activity. His was a difficult task, made none the easier by the fact that his forces consisted only of a small flotilla of the newly built sloops (originally intended for mine-sweeping), in addition to trawlers, drifters, armed yachts and motor-boats.

It is impossible to deal at length with every incident of the operations of the Auxiliary Patrol during this period, but it is essential to convey a correct appreciation of the character and extent of the German operations in home waters. The most experienced submarine officers were doing their utmost to support German confidence. U22 left Borkum at the beginning of August and sank the armed merchant cruiser INDIA off Westfjord, Norway, on August 8th. On August 4th U27 left for the Irish coast, but was sunk by the decoy ship *Baralong* on the 19th. U38 also proceeded to the south-west approaches and within five days sank twenty-two cargo vessels, five trawlers, and three sailing-ships, chiefly by gunfire during thick weather. On August 4th U34 and U35 left Heligoland for the Mediterranean with orders to wage war only as far as the latitude of the English Channel and then proceed without delay for Cattaro, which was reached on August 23rd. On August 5th U24 and U25 were also operating, the former proceeding round the north of Scotland and the west and south of Ireland, up the Irish Sea, sinking, as has been stated, the White Star liner *Arabic*. Before the end of the month U33 and U39 were ordered to leave Germany for the Dardanelles, spreading destruction around them on passage. The former passed out of Borkum on August 28th, north about, sank a steamer off Cape Wrath, then came down the west coast of Ireland on September 4th and sank the *Cymbeline* off the Fastnet. On her southerly progress she also sank the *Mimosa*, the *Storesand*, a Norwegian sailing-ship, and finally the *John Hardie*, ninety-eight miles W. by S. of Cape Finisterre on September 6th. She then continued her voyage without further incident, passed through the Gibraltar Straits and, having arrived in the Mediterranean, was sighted and attacked by H.M. Torpedo-

Boat 95 six times on September 9th, when fifty miles west of Alboran island; but she reached Cattaro on September 16th, and then began to carry out the task for which she had been selected—the sinking of enemy shipping in the Mediterranean. Similarly U39 left Germany on August 27th, proceeded north about on September 2nd, attacked the sailing-ship *William T. Lewis* ninety-five miles west of the Fastnet, and then carried on for the Straits of Gibraltar without further adventure. Having entered the Mediterranean, this vessel was sighted on September 8th about 130 miles east of Cartagena going south-east. She sank several more vessels, and reached Cattaro on September 13th. Such, then, was the new position at sea. The solution of the submarine problem had become more difficult than ever, apart from the increasing trouble due to mines; off the south-east coast of England UC 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7 were particularly busy mine-laying.

In these new conditions the trawlers of the Auxiliary Patrol were leading a varied life. Some Portsmouth trawlers had to be used for escort work across the English Channel owing to the scarcity of destroyers; off the Lowestoft coast other trawlers were employed in protecting the “War Channel,” along which sixty merchant ships, on an average, daily passed escorted by these fishing-craft; and wherever submarines were likely to operate, drifters laid their nets. Even when patrol-vessels returned to port, there was frequently no rest for them. On August 10th, just after midnight, a Zeppelin appeared over Dover harbour dropping bombs, one of which exploded on striking the water and damaged the armed trawler *Equinox*, then lying at anchor, hitting her in forty-three places. Three of her crew who were in their bunks asleep were wounded. Another armed trawler, the *Cleon*, not far off, was also damaged.

The alertness of the vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol made the submarine's life more exciting than comfortable. Owing to the enemy's superiority in speed on the surface and his more powerful guns, it often enough happened that the submarine escaped; but if the trawler or yacht could not claim to have sunk the U-boat, at least many a merchant ship was spared from destruction owing to the enemy's attention being distracted. An incident in the summer of 1915 illustrated this fact. On August 14th



the trawler *Amadavat* (Skipper P. P. Glanville), based on Milford, was patrolling about 3.45 p.m. ten miles south-south-east of the Tuskar. She was armed with one 6-pounder. A submarine was seen a mile away on the port bow. The *Amadavat* proceeded at full speed (8 knots) towards her and fired a couple of shots. This made the enemy submerge. The *Amadavat* then headed for the line of drifters and warned them of the danger in which they were standing, and afterwards proceeded north-north-west towards the position where the U-boat had last been seen. The enemy craft was discovered half a mile astern of a big steamer. The trawler again opened fire, and after four shots the submarine disappeared. Skipper Glanville then wisely surmised that the enemy would appear the next time ahead of the steamer, so the gunner of the *Amadavat* was ordered to train his 6-pounder on the bow of the merchantman. The submarine did appear as expected, whereupon the trawler fired two more shots which dropped very close, causing the submarine to alter course away from the trawler. The *Amadavat* continued firing, the third shot smothering the enemy conning-tower with spray. After this narrow escape the submarine disappeared. The trawler forthwith picked up the steamer's boats and resumed the patrol. By persistency and eagerness, combined with courage and common sense, Skipper Glanville had undoubtedly saved this vessel—the *Maxton*. He was afterwards commended for his promptness and foresight, even though the submarine had escaped.

Curiously enough, on the next afternoon a somewhat similar incident occurred in the North Sea. Near Smith's Knoll, off the East Anglian coast, the four Grimsby paddle-steamers, *Brighton Queen*, *Westward Ho!*, *Glen Avon*, and *Cambridge*, were engaged mine-sweeping. Not far away were some Lowestoft smacks, which had become favourite targets for the enemy submarines. Suddenly, at 2.15 p.m., the paddlers sighted a submarine of the UB type. Sweeps were immediately slipped, and the once familiar excursion steamers chased the submarine, opening a brisk fire with their guns. On board the *Brighton Queen* it was thought that the third round hit the enemy's conning-tower. It is amusing to picture an excursion paddle-steamer putting a warship to flight. That is, however, what happened. This prompt action, though it did not lead to the destruc-

tion of the German submarine, certainly saved the fishing-smacks.

But the submarine had not made good her escape, for on that same Saturday night she fell to one of the disguised Lowestoft fishing-smacks to which reference has already been made. This was the ketch *Inverlyon*, which had been armed with a 3-pounder. Her crew comprised her fishing skipper and three hands, all enrolled temporarily in the Royal Naval Reserve (Trawler Section). Her fighting crew consisted of a gunner R.N. (Mr. E. M. Jehan), who had with him four R.N. ratings. At 8.20 p.m. this sailing-smack was trawling three miles north by east of Smith's Knoll spar buoy when she sighted U4. When the enemy had got within thirty yards the German ensign was observed, and an officer was heard shouting something about "boat"—most probably ordering the *Inverlyon* to launch her boat and come alongside. The submarine then stopped. The smack promptly hoisted the White Ensign and Mr. Jehan discharged his revolver at the German officer, this being the signal for the naval ratings to open fire from the 3-pounder. Nine rounds were promptly got off, of which the first and third shots were thought to have pierced the centre of the conning-tower and exploded inside; the second shot cleared away the after part of the conning-tower, as well as the German ensign. The German officer fell overboard on the starboard side, probably dead. The submarine then came round the *Inverlyon's* side with the tide, so that she was distant only about ten yards. At this extremely short range six more shots were fired from the smack, the first striking the conning-tower, the second and fourth going over it, and the third, fifth, and sixth hitting the hull. The submarine went down at a very sharp angle, and it was confidently assumed that she had been fatally injured. The bodies of three men, who were still outside when the U-boat submerged, came to the surface; one of the Germans was still alive and was shouting appealingly to be rescued. Skipper Phillips, in the *Inverlyon*, with instinctive gallantry and humanity, undressed and swam off with a lifebuoy, but the man sank before he could reach him. The Admiralty awarded Mr. Jehan a Distinguished Service Cross for this smart and successful action.

A short, sharp submarine raid off the Irish coast, lasting from December 25th to December 28th, occurred with dramatic suddenness at the end of 1915. Comparative peace had settled down since September, and this outburst was an unpleasant surprise. If enemy craft on their way to the Mediterranean had imagined that the vigilance of the patrol craft would be relaxed during Christmastide, they were mistaken. At 1.35 p.m. on Christmas Day, when about nine miles W. by S. of the Smalls, the *Van Stirum*, used as an Admiralty transport, was attacked. She endeavoured to escape and sent out distress calls. At 2.20 p.m. she wirelesslyed the message: "Done for; pick me up five miles south of the Smalls." One shell had struck her on the starboard quarter and another had brought down her aerals. At 2.35 p.m. she was abandoned and the submarine torpedoed her. The torpedo passed under a partly lowered boat and struck the ship abreast the engine-room, blowing the American boatswain to pieces. At 4.15 p.m. the submarine returned to the ship and shelled her. At this point the enemy noticed three fishing-vessels approaching at high speed, the first vessel being the Belgian trawler *Nadine*, which was fishing out of Milford. Her skipper, on hearing the firing, hauled up his trawl, steamed in the direction of the sound, and was able to take on board the entire crew of the *Van Stirum*, whom he brought into Milford just before midnight. It was pure chance that the Belgian was fishing in that neighbourhood, but it was very fortunate for the men of the merchantman.

The next thing was to find the *Van Stirum*, if still afloat. At 8.30 next morning the trawler *Evangel* (Lieutenant W. A. Peter, R.N.R.) discovered her with a heavy list eighteen miles south-east of the Tuskar, a pathetic derelict. A fine effort was made to save the ship. The *Evangel* launched her boat and put four of her men on board the *Van Stirum* to handle the tow ropes. There was no steam for the steering-wheel or means of putting in the hand-steering gear, so the vessel could not be controlled. At 10 a.m. the drifter *Lupina* arrived, together with her group of Milford drifters. These craft were ordered to act as follows: One was directed to proceed to Rosslare so as to get a report through to Admiral Dare at Milford; one was to cruise towards the Tuskar and one towards Milford

to obtain towing assistance. At 10.20 a.m. the trawler *Loch Awe* came on the scene and took a tow rope from the *Van Stirum's* quarter in order to steer her, but this rope soon parted. The *Loch Awe* then changed positions with the *Evangel*, which had been towing ahead.

The *Evangel* had buoyed the wire tow rope for the *Lupina* to pick up, but the latter in doing so unfortunately fouled her own propeller. This was cut clear and a rope was then taken from the derelict's quarter. About 11.30 a.m. the *Loch Awe* and *Lupina* were towing ahead with the *Evangel* steering astern, the intention being to make the Blackwater, on the Irish coast. At 4 p.m., after repeatedly carrying away wires, the disabled ship fouled her propeller. Two hours later another vessel of the Auxiliary Patrol, the *Osprey*, arrived and managed to get a wire from forward.

At midnight the wind freshened, with rain and increasing sea, and the *Van Stirum* fell into the trough of the sea, while the *Evangel* repeatedly parted her wires in a vain attempt to keep the ship end on to the waves. By 3 a.m. there was a strong south-east wind and rough sea, and by the look of things the conditions were going to get much worse. At 6 a.m. the *Evangel* parted her last wire and informed the *Osprey* of the fact, reporting that the derelict was in a perilous condition. The *Evangel* then returned to the stricken vessel and, finding that she was likely to sink at any moment, endeavoured to go alongside and take the men off from the quarter. Owing to the heavy sea running this was not successful: in fact the *Evangel's* starboard bow collided so heavily with the *Van Stirum's* quarter as to start some of the trawler's rivets. Matters now became critical. The *Evangel* launched her boat and by means of a heaving line was able to pass this boat alongside the derelict. The latter's forward bulkhead had now collapsed, so that she had sunk by the head and remained with her nose on the bottom and her stern in the air for about a minute. She finally disappeared at 7.10 a.m. This incident occurred about eight miles S.E. by S. of South Arklow lightship. The *Evangel* then proceeded to search for the *Van Stirum's* boat and found her half full of water, but she also found that the men had fortunately managed to get into her just in the nick of time. The sea was running so

wildly that it was impossible to pick the boat up, so after getting the men safely on board it was abandoned. The attempt to salve the steamer had failed, but it had been a glorious failure, which only the bad weather had spoiled. A letter of appreciation came from the Admiralty to the officers and men of the Auxiliary Patrol who had so nearly succeeded in their purpose.

Similar misfortune frustrated the efforts farther round the coast to rob the enemy of the fruits of his campaign. At 6.30 a.m. on December 28th an S.O.S. call was received at Queenstown from the oil tanker *El Zorro* off the Old Head of Kinsale. She was full of oil, badly needed for the prosecution of the war. She had safely crossed the Atlantic, but had been torpedoed in sight of port. The armed yacht *Greta* and a couple of obsolete torpedo-boats were at once dispatched to the scene, but by this time the submarine had made off westward. Two tugs were sent out, but could not make much headway owing to the sea. That night it blew a gale. The *El Zorro* anchored and the crew were taken off during the night by the trawler *Freesia*. The gale increased and no further steps could be taken to salve the ship. The *El Zorro* dragged her anchor, and went ashore a little way west of Queenstown. Still pursuing her way westward down the coast, the submarine three hours later was seen by another oiler, the *Viturvia*, but fortunately the enemy did not molest her. At 8 a.m. (December 28th) the light cruiser ADVENTURE, with Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly himself on board, had left Queenstown and proceeded down the coast to hunt the submarine between Kinsale and the Fastnet. At 12.45 p.m. the ADVENTURE picked up an S.O.S. from the Leyland liner *Huronian*, proceeded towards her at 22 knots, closed her about 1 p.m., and found that she had been torpedoed. The ADVENTURE then searched the vicinity and undoubtedly frightened the enemy away, with the result that the *Huronian* was successfully escorted by sloops and the trawler *Bempton* into Berehaven, where she was eventually patched up sufficiently for her to proceed to Liverpool with her valuable cargo of cotton and grain.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FISHERMEN'S ORDEAL

WHILE passenger ships, cargo liners, and tramps were maintaining the country's oversea communications, the hardy seamen engaged in the fishing industry continued to ply their trade round the British coasts and farther afield. In the year 1913 the harvest of the sea had amounted to 1,202,453 tons, exclusive of salmon and shell-fish. The crowded population of the British Isles would have been reduced to sore straits in the matter of food if supplies of fish had been entirely cut off after the outbreak of war. As has been recorded, the Admiralty at an early stage in the contest realised the value of fishing-craft, with their experienced crews, as supports of the Royal Navy, and gradually built up the Auxiliary Patrol. The crews of those vessels which remained free to continue their fishing operations were rendering no mean service to the community in supplying it with good food, as was generally recognised at the time, but there was little appreciation of the fact that the fishing-craft, in pursuing their peaceful functions, were not only running great risks, but were promoting the common cause.

The fine spirit exhibited by the fishermen and the utility of their craft were fully appreciated by the enemy. In the middle of June 1915 a German retired admiral reviewed the situation at sea in the *Vossische Zeitung*, and advocated the indiscriminate destruction of British fishing-vessels on the ground that they formed an important auxiliary arm of the Royal Navy, and he added, with truth, that most of the nation's steam trawlers were already in the service of the Admiralty. But it was not merely the craft of the Auxiliary Patrol which greatly alarmed the U-boats. The unarmed and uncommissioned trawlers, while fishing or on voyage between their fishing-grounds and home ports, proved an increasing embarrassment, often

causing the German submarine officers to break off a fight and even run away on some occasions. It was one of the surprises of the war that, as a rule, U-boats attacked trawlers with a conspicuous lack of determination. There were some outstanding exceptions, but these serve only to accentuate the cautious tactics usually employed. It might have been thought that, since they could sink passenger ships with such ease, they would have made bolder efforts to destroy the small fisher vessels. But it was the mobility of the latter, and the realisation that the trawler's steel forefoot represented an effective weapon for ramming, that made the enemy play for safety and rely on long-distance attack.

The fishing-trawler was otherwise defenceless. If the enemy, by skilful manœuvring, evaded those defensive-offensive tactics, the fishermen had to rely for safety on their own personal skill and seamanship. As the trawler was not a fighting ship, but was at sea solely for the purpose of bringing fish to market, the first duty of the crew in the presence of a submarine was to save the ship. Thus it was with the fishing-trawler *Phæbe*, which had left Fleetwood bound for the Iceland fishing-grounds. On June 18th, while passing Barra Head, she was stopped by a patrol-boat and warned that submarines were about. The *Phæbe's* skipper (Mr. J. W. Golding) therefore doubled the lookout. In the early hours of the next morning he was again stopped by a patrol-boat off St. Kilda, and informed that two vessels had been sunk off the Butt of Lewis. The *Phæbe* continued her voyage, laying a course for Iceland, and after steaming another fifty-five miles by the log a suspicious object was sighted. It was now 8.20 a.m. and the mate was in the wheel-house. He did not waste time in speculation, but promptly called the skipper from his cabin, telling him that he had sighted what he took to be a submarine about a mile and a half to the eastward, with periscope and conning-tower showing and hull awash. The submarine was heading north-north-west and the trawler N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E.

Skipper Golding spoke down the tube to the chief engineer and, directing him to give the trawler all possible steam, he altered course so as to go head-on for the enemy's conning-tower. The submarine then steered more westerly, and away went the *Phæbe* likewise for about twenty

minutes, the U-boat in the meantime gradually rising to the surface. The enemy next hauled off to the southward, stopped, and at a distance of a mile opened fire; the first shell dropped about fifty yards short on the trawler's starboard bow. Skipper Golding's duty now was obvious. His ship was unarmed and, if he remained where he was, she would almost certainly be sunk. Therefore, having failed to ram the enemy, he used his utmost endeavours to save his owner's property. It was a fine clear morning, and he could see the smoke of a couple of vessels to the eastward and another couple to the southward. He accordingly kept his vessel going, blew his steam whistle continuously, showed his stern to the submarine, and zigzagged his course. The second shell dropped into the sea only twenty yards short; the third whizzed close over the wheel-house; the fourth fell just short of the stern. It was a pretty close thing, but by clever handling the skipper brought his vessel safely out of the fray; he succeeded in running the U-boat out of sight, and eventually got to St. Kilda, where he reported his adventure. When the full account of this incident reached the Admiralty, their Lordships sent Skipper Golding an expression of their appreciation of his courageous action in attempting to ram, and in his success in avoiding the loss of his ship. They also awarded the sum of £55 to be divided between owners, skipper, mate, and crew.

The sinkings of ordinary fishing-vessels became numerous as the summer of 1915 advanced. Ten were sunk in April, twenty-two in May, and fifty-eight in June, this month marking the "peak" of the curve; there were thirty-six sinkings in July and August respectively, and only six in September. No such incidents occurred again until January 1916, when seven were sunk, the greatest number attained that year being thirty-eight in the month of September. In July U3 succeeded in destroying a number of fishing-trawlers belonging to Hull, Grimsby, Aberdeen, and North Shields. To combat these tactics of the enemy in attacking ordinary fishing-vessels, disguised trawlers were being used with the fishing-fleets, but enough patrol-trawlers were not available to provide complete protection. The Fishing Vessels' Owners' Associations at both Hull and Grimsby were protesting at this period against the Admiralty requisitioning any more



trawlers for the naval service. For a time some East Coast fishing-craft were allowed to carry pigeons for sending information ashore of enemy activities, but this method of passing in intelligence was found slow and unreliable. The two armed yachts *Eileen* and *Mekong* were charged with the duty of keeping an eye on East Coast fishing-fleets and used to go out to about long.  $2^{\circ} 25' E.$ , where the Hull fishing-fleet of trawlers was at work in September. Three armed trawlers fitted with wireless were also dispatched patrolling off the Dogger Bank.

About 350 fishing-trawlers continued, in spite of the war, to fish in the North Sea; the steam fish-carriers went out to meet them as in normal times and conveyed the catches to London. In spite of the losses sustained, the fishermen continued to go to sea with complete disregard of all danger. Some of the "yarns" current during the war concerning the casual regard which the North Sea fisherman had for mines must be dismissed as apocryphal. But in the late summer of 1915 two cases did occur which support the adage that fact is stranger than fiction. One day, for instance, a fisherman came into Grimsby towing a German mine which had all its horns knocked off. He explained that as he had heard that the horns were the dangerous parts he had knocked them off with a boat-hook! Another fisherman one night made fast to what he thought was a buoy; but at daylight it turned out to be a mine! Fortunately, efficient as undoubtedly the German mines usually were, in many instances they failed to act; otherwise neither of these fishermen would have seen his home port again.

The mastering of the submarine menace now needed something else besides seamanship and gallantry. British seamen were opposed to the best brains of the German Navy and the most enterprising of its personnel. It was obvious, therefore, that to bravery had to be added subtlety and to daring cunning. If it is impossible to catch a pest by ordinary means, a trap for him must be baited; in other words, he must be taken off his guard. That is precisely what now had to be done in the North Sea. The best form of trap was to disguise the armament of a patrol-trawler, leaving her paint and fishing numbers and the deck appointments, her masts and funnels, just as they were in peace-time, and send her to sea among the fishing-

fleets, on the pretence of fishing, in the hope that the enemy would appear and attack her. The armed trawlers would then cease pretending and open fire at the enemy. This stratagem was being tried in the early months of 1915, for instance, by Humber armed trawlers among the Dogger Bank fishing-craft, but so far no submarine had been sunk.

But a more ingenious device was subsequently evolved, which was as successful as it was clever. The idea was to send an apparently innocent fishing-trawler in those waters off the north-east Scottish coast where fishing-craft had actually been sunk. Attack was invited. This was the bait. Astern of the trawler was one of the C-class of submarines, submerged, but towed by the trawler. This was the trap. An elastic cable and telephones were installed in order to keep up communication, and thus the trawler could keep the submarine informed of the enemy's movements, so that, at the precise moment, the British submarine could cast off tow rope and cable, and attack her "opposite number," the U-boat. This scheme was first suggested by Acting-Paymaster F. T. Spickernell, R.N., Admiral Beatty's secretary, but the details were worked out by Captain V. H. S. Haggard, R.N., who was in command of H.M.S. VULCAN, the submarine depot ship, lying in Leith docks, where a flotilla of submarines was stationed for the defence of the Firth of Forth.

The senior officer of these submarines was Lieutenant-Commander H. O. Edwards, R.N., afterwards killed, and he, together with the other submarine officers, exercised their crews for a whole month, going out to sea and inviting attack. No success was achieved until June 8th. C27 was operating in the manner indicated with the disguised armed trawler *Taranaki*, and the submarine was just about to fire her torpedo when it was realised that the U-boat was too near. It was feared at the time that the enemy had seen C27 and that thus Germany would learn of this new ruse. The greatest care was therefore necessary in any future attempt.

At 1 a.m. on June 23rd H.M. Submarine C24, under the command of Lieutenant F. H. Taylor, R.N., stole out of Aberdeen in company with the armed trawler *Taranaki* and shaped a south-easterly course. Five hours later the trawler (Lieutenant-Commander Edwards) took the submarine in tow. The latter then submerged to

thirty feet. At 9.30 a.m. a U-boat rose to the surface fifty miles S.E. by S. of Girdleness and fired a gun across the trawler's bows at a distance of about 2,000 yards, the shell bursting about twenty yards ahead. Three minutes later C24 was informed by telephone that the enemy was 1,000 yards astern. Thereupon Lieutenant Taylor gave orders to slip the tow, but unfortunately, by the worst of luck, the tow rope jammed and could not be slipped. Finally, at 9.45 a.m. the trawler slipped her end of the rope and stopped. The enemy also stopped, being on the trawler's starboard beam, about a thousand yards off; she was trimmed ready for instant diving. Clearly the German scented the trap, so in order to entice him Lieutenant-Commander Edwards ordered out the trawler's boat as if he were abandoning ship. Meanwhile C24 had gone ahead with helm a-starboard to attack the U-boat. Again, by bad luck, the British submarine became unhandy and immediately sank to thirty-eight feet, and it took some time to get her trim right again.

The cause of this mishap was presently discovered. One hundred fathoms of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch towing wire and some 8-inch coir hawser, in addition to a hundred fathoms of telephone cable, were still fast to the bows. In spite of this, the two coxswains of C24 steered and trimmed her so ably that she never broke surface. Meanwhile Lieutenant Taylor, using his periscope little and seldom, eventually sighted the enemy's conning-tower and gun, and closed to 500 yards. He then manœuvred to get in a beam shot, and at 9.55 a.m. fired at the conning-tower. To the joy of the *Taranaki's* crew, the torpedo was seen to explode under the conning-tower and the U-boat instantly sank, never again to rise. C24 then came to the surface and picked up the German commanding officer, while the *Taranaki* rescued another officer and one petty officer. Nothing else remained of this enemy craft—U40—except a lifebuoy and a bucket. When C24 tried to go astern it was discovered that the propeller refused to move, having twenty turns of telephone cable round the shaft. However, having transferred the German prisoners to the trawler, C24 was taken in tow again and safely reached Aberdeen. Everyone had done well in the *Taranaki* and C24, in spite of difficulties, and one of the latest and most successful U-boats had been accounted for. For this service Lieutenant-Commander Edwards received the D.S.O., and Lieutenant Taylor the

D.S.C., and each coxswain a D.S.M. It is interesting to note that the captain of U40 admitted that he had been watching the *Taranaki* all the morning and had been completely deceived, so excellent was the disguise.

On the same morning that this incident occurred, another trawler engagement was being fought off the Hebrides far from the scene of the *Phæbe's* encounter. It was eleven o'clock, and the armed trawler *Bush* (Skipper G. King) was on patrol about eight miles north-north-west of the Butt of Lewis. Two drifters with their nets down were three miles inside of her at the time, and it was blowing hard from east-north-east with considerable sea. Suddenly from windward a shell fell about fifty yards short of the wheel-house of the *Bush*, which was heading about south-east. Skipper King went full speed ahead, altered course, and saw a submarine travelling about north-north-west. Whilst in the act of turning, a second shot was fired and this also missed. The *Bush* now used her rocket distress signal, hoisted the signal "Submarine in sight," and fired her 12-pounder. This first shot from the trawler fell short; the second shot was very close, but also short. The third shot was so close that the enemy made a smoke screen and under cover of this dived and disappeared. For two hours search was made in the heavy sea, but the enemy was not seen again. Shortly afterwards the *Bush* met the Norwegian s.s. *Bianca*, bound from Archangel, and directed her down the Minch, thus saving her from the submarine. The *Bush* was only slightly damaged by the six shots fired at her. Of these the last three were hits, the fourth having passed between the gunlayer and breechworker. Two large pieces of shell were picked up which indicated that the enemy's gun—the equivalent of 3¼-inch—was decidedly superior to that of the trawler's. The submarine was not sunk, but a trawler had shown the enemy that fishermen were fighters. The incident pleased both Admiral Jellicoe and the Admiralty, and from the latter came an expression of appreciation and the sum of £60 for the crew of the *Bush*.

About a month later there followed yet another trawler-submarine engagement off the Hebrides, but this time it was at the southern end, in the neighbourhood of Barra Head. If it be matter for surprise that German submarines

at this time should have hovered about the Hebrides, the reason is not far to seek. The Grand Fleet in Scapa Flow required an enormous amount of coal and other stores. These supplies had to be brought in merchant ships which came up the West Coast so as to avoid the submarines operating in the North Sea. In addition, there was a good deal of other traffic by merchant ships, especially to Archangel, through which we were supplying war material to the Russians. Moreover, both Barra Head in the south, the Butt of Lewis in the north, and the island of St. Kilda in the west were landmarks, navigationally most useful to the U-boats proceeding to and from the coast of Ireland. It followed, then, that the craft of the Auxiliary Patrol based on Stornoway had no easy time.

On July 27th, at 4 a.m.—just that time when nature is at its lowest and when, therefore, the best lookout is not always maintained—the armed trawler *Pearl* was patrolling off Barra Head. The weather was not pleasant, for the wind was freshening from the south-east and it was thick; there was a moderate south-west swell coming in from the Atlantic; almost certainly a gale was brewing. At 4.15 a.m. a small object was sighted four points on the starboard bow, about 5,280 yards away. Course was altered towards it, and five minutes afterwards, as it appeared to be a submarine on the surface, heading south, the trawler cleared for action. The *Pearl* was commanded by Sub-Lieutenant A. C. Allman, R.N.R., and carried also a skipper in addition to her crew.

With all hands at their stations, the skipper at the wheel, and full speed on the engine-room telegraph, the *Pearl* made for the enemy vessel, which altered course to south-south-west. The trawler had nothing better than a little 3-pounder gun, so Sub-Lieutenant Allman instructed his petty officer not to open fire until the range was down to 1,000 yards. At 4.25 a.m. the submarine was only 500 yards off, but travelling at high speed and firing across the trawler's bows. The *Pearl* altered course and prepared to ram, at the same time bringing her gun to bear. The first two shots dropped very close to the submarine's stern; the fifth and sixth seemed to hit. It was a short range; the gun's crew were working quickly and the shooting was good, but within five minutes the gun no longer bore. The submarine was

compelled hurriedly to dive, crossing close to the trawler's bows. Sub-Lieutenant Allman put his helm hard a-starboard and made a great effort to ram, but missed the enemy by about forty feet. In a short time the periscope was seen, so the petty officer at the gun took careful aim and with his second shot hit and broke off the periscope, after which the U-boat submerged completely, leaving on the surface a thick oily wake.

This was to prove an exceptionally long duel, one of the very longest in the whole of the submarine war, and it speaks well for the dogged determination of the officer in charge and his crew that with such inferior armament they were able to dominate an enemy equipped with a more powerful gun, as well as torpedoes, and possessing the ability to choose his own range. It is known now that the submarine was U41 and that her captain was one of the most efficient officers of his service. At 4.35 a.m. she was heading south-west, doing about 7 knots, so the *Pearl* took a position on her opponent's starboard bow, kept a parallel course, and, with her gun bearing, was ready to ram should the U-boat come to the surface. This went on until an hour later, when the enemy altered course to north-east, with speed unchanged. At 6.15 a.m. the U-boat again altered course, this time to north-west, and eased to 4 knots. It was obvious that the *Pearl*, by keeping up the chase, was causing the enemy's batteries to run down and all the while the trawler kept closing in, alert for the first chance of ramming. Unfortunately, a quarter of an hour later the weather came on thick, rain falling, but at 9.15 a.m. the submarine came close to the surface, though without showing herself. Still refusing to lose any possible chance, the trawler carried on, and at 11 a.m. endeavoured to fire her explosive sweep about 500 feet ahead of the oily wave, but by a piece of bad luck the electric cable was so injured in getting it over the side that it would not fire. Troubles did not come singly, for, after chasing for another hour, the chief engineer reported that one of his pumps was out of order and that it would be necessary to stop in an hour's time for a repairing job which would take three hours.

It was a most disappointing incident, yet there was no possible alternative but to give up the chase, which had now brought the *Pearl* to a position thirty-eight miles

S.W. by W. of St. Kilda. The *Pearl* managed to get into St. Kilda that same afternoon, but with scarcely any water in her boiler. She had maintained a spirited hunt after the submarine over a period of nearly eight hours, during which the trawler had exercised her will-power over the enemy simply by sheer blunt determination. Had the *Pearl* really damaged U41? At the time it was thought that the enemy had been holed in an oil-tank in his outer skin and that this accounted for the oily wake. Four shots had been fired by the submarine and thirty-four by the trawler, so at short range some could not have failed to hit. It was afterwards ascertained that U41 was seriously injured in the conning-tower, so that, although she was outward bound, she was compelled to break off her voyage and return home.

This was to be no pleasure cruise for the U-boat, for, having arrived at St. Kilda, the *Pearl* made her report, and later on in the day a wireless message informing the patrols was picked up by the armed yacht *Vanessa*, which immediately altered course to cut off the retreating enemy. At 9.10 p.m. she actually sighted her and chased her till after ten o'clock, but then the enemy got away and was seen no more that day. At four the next morning she was sighted still farther north by the armed trawler *Stanley Weyman*, by the armed yacht *Maid of Honour*, and by the armed trawler *Swan*, and chased for the best part of two hours, but U41 evaded them and got safely back to Germany. This submarine was in charge of Lieutenant-Commander Hansen, who had already had experience of the offensive-defensive value of the ram. For U41 was just out from the dockyard after repairs caused by being rammed on July 16th by the mine-sweeping gunboat *SPEEDWELL*, which on this day had sighted U41 only 250 yards away, and had gone for her with full speed on both engines and struck her with such force as to cause the *SPEEDWELL* to heel over, her bottom plating being damaged. The incident had occurred north of the Shetlands and had damaged both periscopes of the submarine, so that she had to make her way back across the North Sea, reaching Germany on July 19th. The moral effect on the crew of the *Pearl's* success in sending her home for repairs a second time within the same month can well be imagined. U41 was sent to her grave by a British man-of-war a few weeks later. As to the *Pearl's* exploit, the

Admiralty praised her commanding officer and crew, awarding them the sum of £150 and promoting Sub-Lieutenant Allman to Lieutenant, with seniority dating from the day on which he had engaged the submarine.

On the southern side of the Firth of Forth is the port of Granton, which by the spring of 1915 had developed into a most important naval base, crowded with all kinds of vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol. The senior naval officer was Admiral James Startin, who, having ended his time on the active list before the war opened, had come back to serve as a R.N.R. officer. To his infectious enthusiasm and powers as an organiser were due in large measure the successes which were achieved by the vessels using this base. He had been struck during the early summer by the number of molestations by submarines of neutral merchant traffic in the North Sea. On July 9th a U-boat had held up four steamers about forty miles east of Fifeness, but had bolted as soon as the armed yacht *Minona* had come into sight. The Admiral therefore resolved to carry out a stratagem. Among his vessels were two fine trawlers, the *Quickly* and the *Gunner*. The former had already been disguised so cleverly that she had been taken by one of our own destroyers for a Danish cargo steamer. He now improved her disguise, replaced her 3-pounder by a 12-pounder, mounted a 6-pounder aft, and sent her off to St. Andrew's Bay. The trawler *Gunner* he also disguised, giving her a deck cargo made up of an empty hawser reel, a hundred bags of sawdust, some empty crates, and some timber. The *Gunner* joined the *Quickly* in St. Andrew's Bay and to her transferred the cargo. Four naval ratings as guns' crew had been put on board these two ships, and on July 19th the vessels left the bay, Admiral Startin himself being in the *Quickly*, and steamed towards Bell Rock, where target practice was carried out until the Admiral was satisfied that both vessels could make good shooting.

They then proceeded to their rendezvous where submarines had recently been at work, and during the afternoon the *Quickly* completed her disguise as a Norwegian cargo boat, Norwegian colours being hoisted at the mizzen masthead and also painted on prepared slips of canvas which were placed on each side amidships. To make the disguise perfect, a couple of derricks were placed on the



foremast. She thus resembled one of those numerous Norse traders which could be seen any day in the North Sea. At 9 a.m. on July 20th the *Quickly* arrived at the rendezvous, and just one hour later a large submarine was sighted on the surface with two masts and two guns. Ten minutes afterwards both the "Norwegian" vessel and the U-boat were steering parallel courses, the intervening distance being about four miles. For a short period the U-boat scrutinised the *Quickly*, then altered course to cut her off, lowering both masts. At 10.24 the enemy had closed to about 1,500 yards and hoisted the international signal to stop. Five minutes later she fired the first shot at the trawler; but already the latter's gun crew had been preparing for action under cover. The Norwegian flag was now hauled down, the White Ensign run up, the strips of canvas taken off, and at 10.32 the *Quickly* returned the fire from her 12-pounder with a shot that struck the enemy's hull abaft the conning-tower, much smoke being seen to issue from her. The 6-pounder then opened fire, and the enemy returned it, but her shots fell either short or over. Admiral Startin himself stated:

"The 6-pounder claims to have put her foremost gun out of action. The third shot from the 12-pounder struck the submarine right forward, and flames were seen by myself and everybody coming from her bows."

At 10.50 a.m. the U-boat submerged until her conning-tower was awash, but came to the surface again and began to steam away in that condition. By this time the *Gunner*, which had been following astern, arrived on the scene and also opened fire. The German craft steamed away very slowly, being at times enveloped in smoke. Another shot from the *Quickly's* 12-pounder shattered the conning-tower and the *Gunner* also hit her. The two ships then closed the enemy with a view to ramming her, but she submerged and at first could be clearly seen by them. There was much oil and there were many bubbles; so a depth charge was exploded. Nothing came to the surface to suggest that it was effective. After remaining in the neighbourhood for another couple of hours, the two British craft left the scene. It was afterwards learnt that the submarine was not sunk; she had managed to get home in a wounded condition. There are on record other equally amaz-

ingly narrow escapes where U-boats, after being quite as severely punished, managed to make really long voyages safely back to Germany. No one, however, will begrudge the commendation which the Admiralty bestowed on Admiral Startin, the officers and crews of these two ships, nor the sum of £500 which was awarded to be divided among the crews. To Lieutenant T. E. Price, R.N.R., the commanding officer of the *Quickly*, was given the D.S.C., and a similar decoration was conferred on Sub-Lieutenant C. H. Hudson, R.N.R., who was in command of the *Gunner*. The D.S.M. was conferred on the captains of the 12-pounder and the 6-pounder guns respectively, and also on the Admiral's coxswain, who spotted for the 6-inch gun in the *Quickly*.

Whilst such engagements as these were going on, the fishermen, who were still pursuing their calling, showed that they were ready for any emergency with which the fate of war might confront them. At the end of June the Norwegian barque *Kotka*, an iron-built vessel of just under a thousand tons, had the misfortune to fall in with a submarine in the Atlantic off the south-west Irish coast. But for the Hull fishing-trawler *Rambler* she could never have been saved; and in order rightly to appreciate the circumstances it is necessary first to realise what were the hazards which sailing-ships were at this time compelled to support.

Owing to the scarcity of tonnage, the demand for such sailing-ships as could carry oversea cargoes was now very great. The Government had taken up a large number of steamships as war auxiliaries, transports, supply ships, colliers. At the same time there was greater need for tonnage in which to bring across the ocean food, timber, and other commodities to meet national and military needs. In these circumstances, the despised sailing-ship, even though old, entered on a fresh lease of life. The British register was swelled by many German sailing-ships which had been captured and sold to British or neutral firms and were now engaged in carrying grain. But the U-boat was no longer confined to the North Sea: she too was an ocean-going craft which could go round the north of Scotland, into the Atlantic, down the Irish coast, and operate off the western approaches of the British Isles. No easier prey could be afforded the sub-

marine than the home-coming sailing-ship; she was in the nature almost of a gift to any U-boat that might come along. Thus, during the first half of June in the south-west approaches to the British Isles, no fewer than five British, three Allied, and two neutral sailing-ships were sunk, most of them carrying valuable cargoes of raw materials. A spell of easterly winds, such as is usual during this month, exposed these craft to considerable risks, and therefore the Mercantile Marine Service Association of Liverpool suggested to the Admiralty the desirability of providing free towage into port of such sailing-ships as arrived off our coasts. Tugs, it was urged, should be stationed at Queenstown and Falmouth to assist them into port.

It was whilst the Admiralty were considering this matter that the fine four-masted barque *Dumfriesshire* of Glasgow (2,622 tons) was torpedoed and sunk on June 28th, twenty-five miles south-west of the Smalls. She had left San Francisco with 4,100 tons of barley and had reached Falmouth on June 25th. From there she had been ordered to Dublin, and on her way was destroyed. In July Lloyd's also wrote to the Admiralty giving a list of sailing-vessels sunk by submarines since March 31st, and made the suggestion that sailing-vessels should be warned, when approaching the United Kingdom, of the safest routes. From March 31st to July 2nd, it was pointed out, forty-three of these craft had been sunk by U-boats off the British Isles, and on July 6th there were at sea bound from American ports for the United Kingdom no fewer than 138 sailing-ships with such valuable cargoes as grain, timber, and nitrate.

The difficulty was that there were no such things as safe routes: wherever a sailing-ship went she was in grave danger. A conference was therefore held, presided over by the Fourth Sea Lord, with representatives of the Board of Trade, the Sailing-Ship Association, and the Trade Division of the Admiralty. This took place on July 16th, and it was decided that the Admiralty should be asked to send a cruiser to meet all in-coming ships and indicate to them a port of discharge, whence they might be convoyed; that the Admiralty should be requested to telegraph to the various Consuls directing them to advise the masters of sailing-ships to stop outside the 100-fathom

line and there await a westerly wind, then running straight to their port of discharge: that westerly ports should, where possible, be used for discharge: that the Admiralty should locally provide the necessary tugs subject to the exigencies of the naval service. The outcome of this was the issue of an order that when towage was urgently needed for sailing-ships it should be provided; and Intelligence Officers were advised by telegraph all over the world to warn British and Allied sailing-ships to keep west of the 100-fathom line until a favourable wind should enable them to lay a direct course for their destination.

Such, then, was the degree of risk which awaited the home-coming sailing-ship. The Hull steam-trawler *Rambler* had left Liverpool for her fishing-grounds off the south-west of Ireland, and in the early hours of the morning was engaged in fishing when she sighted the *Kotka* about seven miles off. Something in her appearance was evidently wrong, so at 6 a.m. the trawler hove up her gear and steamed towards her. It was at once obvious that there was not a soul on board: it was equally evident that she had been holed. What actually had happened was that, when thirty miles south-west of the Bull Rock, a submarine had shelled her and then the crew had abandoned ship. She was an iron ship, bound from Maine to Cork, and it was pathetic that, after safely crossing the Atlantic, she should have fallen a victim so near to her port of destination. Skipper Richmond launched the *Rambler's* boat, and sent the mate, second engineer, boatswain, and cook to investigate, but on account of the heavy sea they were unable to get on board. However, five hours later the boat was again launched and Skipper Richmond went himself, together with the second engineer and a deck hand, to see what could be done. He found the barque was under water forward and the only part of her hull that was clear was her poop. He decided to try and take her in tow as the weather was moderating, and in the meantime returned to his trawler. At six o'clock that evening the wind had died down, though there was a big ocean swell, and the operation began.

The position of the two ships was now about thirty or thirty-five miles south-south-west of Galley Head. It was quite possible that a submarine might suddenly appear from nowhere and sink both trawler and barque. The

salving of the latter was, therefore, no ordinary hazard. Fishermen, as a class, are not distinguished navigators, but they do number among them some of the finest exponents of seamanship, and this latter art was well exhibited on this occasion. The mate, chief engineer, and deck hand boarded the *Kotka*, and got a wire hawser off a reel which was on the barque's after deck-house. This wire they floated down to the *Rambler* by supporting the wire with the *Kotka's* buoys and lifebelts, one end of it being secured to the barque. The trawler then steamed as near as possible to the floats, and a wire from the *Rambler* was made fast to the end of the *Kotka's* wire; the former then shackled her trawl warps on to it. By this time it was 7.30 p.m. and towing commenced, the barque being towed stern first because of the damage she had sustained forward. All went well during the night, and at four the following morning the trawler signalled the Old Head of Kinsale asking that an Admiralty tug should be sent from Queenstown. At 10 a.m. the armed trawler *Heron* arrived from that port. She made fast to the *Kotka's* port quarter, but her warps parted twice. The *Rambler* then shortened her warp, but this caused it to part also, after which it was decided to tow the barque bow first. Some of the *Heron's* and *Rambler's* crew were put aboard her, and from 11 a.m. the *Heron* towed ahead, with the *Rambler* astern steering. An hour later the Admiralty tug *Warrior* from Queenstown arrived and took the *Heron's* place, and in the evening a second Admiralty tug came on the scene and lashed alongside. In a short time the barque was got safely into Queenstown Harbour, and beached after a fifty-mile tow.

Thus once more trawlers, manned by men of stubborn purpose, had defeated the machinations of the enemy's submarine warfare. The sea is the strictest of schools, and the fisherman spends most of his life learning its lessons. If the fishing industry of the British Isles had not existed in a flourishing state, it would have been impossible to deal with the submarine menace: the U-boats would have acted almost as they pleased. More food-carrying steamers would have been sunk, greater hardships would have had to be endured ashore, and the armies would have lacked adequate supplies. Gales of wind, thick weather, dark nights, intricate pilotage, ship-salving

on the high seas, ship-handling in narrow waters—these are the common experiences of fishermen and keep alive that spirit which has meant, and will continue to mean, so much to an island people. The liner, the tramp, the trawler and drifter are all part of the nation's essential sea services.

But the work of the trawlers was not confined merely to the thwarting of submarines: the insidious mine throughout the war remained a standing menace to the ships of the Grand Fleet and Merchant Navy alike. In April the Swarte Bank mine-field had been laid; about the end of next month or the beginning of June the Outer Silver Pit mine-field had been laid; and on the night of May 17th–18th the Dogger Bank mine-field came into existence, the enemy's hope being to entrap the Grand Fleet on its periodical sweeps towards the Heligoland Bight. Most wisely the Admiralty policy had been to allow the fishing-trawlers the widest possible freedom in fishing, realising that so long as the fishermen were permitted to go about their work unfettered, the country had the advantage of an improvised sweeping-fleet scouting, as it were, for these hidden mines. The fishermen wanted nothing but their freedom, and this was conceded to them in large measure. The Swarte Bank mine-field had been discovered by fishing-trawlers, so had the Outer Silver Pit mine-field; so, too, was the Dogger Bank mine-field in the month of May. In effect, fishing-trawlers, dragging their gear along the bed of the sea, proved to be the outposts of the mine-sweeping fleet. When once these mine-fields had been discovered, there followed months of wearisome work for the paddlers and trawlers engaged in sweeping up the laid mines. As to the Tory Island mine-field, laid as far back as the autumn of 1914, the clearance continued to be made under difficult circumstances. During the comparatively fine weather of June much progress was made, and by the first week of July it was comparatively clear, though not till the following March was it definitely swept up completely for all ships.

By the summer of 1915 two facts had been grasped. Up to June 1st all the enemy mines off our coasts had been laid by surface ships; but from that date onwards the position was complicated by the advent of the UC-boats, based on Flanders, which laid their mines off pro-

minent headlands and lightships in the southern portion of the North Sea. Off such places as the Thames Estuary, Lowestoft, and the Kentish coast, they endeavoured to block up well-used channels. The result was, obviously, to put a good deal of increased work on the trawlers and paddlers. This new phase of the enemy's policy emphasised still more the high value of the Auxiliary Patrol, which enabled shipping to pursue its way with the minimum of risk. It is inconceivable that the port of London, for instance, could have received and dispatched so much shipping—and therefore goods—had it not been for the reliance placed on the mine-sweeping force to seaward. It is unnecessary to refer to the increased strain on material and personnel which this work involved, because that is obvious. The arrangements had to be adjusted, as well as might be, to the new conditions. Neither destroyers nor torpedo craft could be spared. Engines can be run only for a certain length of time; ships need a refit every half-year: in like manner, the human machine, tuned up to the maximum of efficiency, can do only a limited amount of work and then it, too, must have a rest or break down utterly. All the time, however, cargoes of mines were being brought across from Bruges by way of Zeebrugge, dumped down off the south-east coast lightships, headlands, buoys, and landmarks in such a manner that special sweeping had to be constantly carried out. Men “groused,” and officers complained, of this ceaseless nerve-wracking turmoil; but each and all realised that the job had to be done and they alone could do it. Let these facts stand on record.

But that was not all. Russia was still our Ally and had to be supplied with many important munitions of war. All this traffic depended on the Russian approaches being kept clear of mines. The Germans were not slow to appreciate this fact also, and in June sent up the auxiliary cruiser *Meteor* (of which we shall have something to say later) on a mining enterprise to the White Sea. This vessel left Germany escorted by a submarine and laid 285 mines on the track to Archangel, about the beginning of June. The first intimation of this new mine-field was the blowing up of the steamer *Arndale* on June 11th, causing the loss of three lives. Between that date and the end of September nine other merchant

ships, of British, Russian, Norwegian, and American nationality, were either damaged or lost. The enemy's intention was obvious : he realised the value of the Russian offensive, and the importance of the sea lane by which military supplies were being sent into Russia through Archangel.

In another area far to the north the battle between the mine and the sweeper had, therefore, been joined. The enemy had laid the mines, would probably lay more, and it was the duty of British auxiliary vessels to assist the Russians in sweeping them up and keeping open a clear channel as long as the ice allowed. Therefore once more the much-wanted, hard-worked trawler was called in to bear the brunt of warfare. At Lowestoft an expedition was fitted out consisting of half a dozen trawlers and a couple of supply ships, each trawler being armed with a 12-pounder gun, and the supply ships carrying stores for three months. These trawlers were the *Bombardier*, *Sir Mark Sykes*, *T. R. Ferens*, *Granton*, *Lord Denman*, and *St. Cyr*, the first-mentioned being fitted with wireless telegraphy. Commander L. A. Bernays, R.N., was placed in charge of the force. He was unfortunately afterwards killed when in command of a different type of ship ; he had left the Navy and emigrated to Canada, where he was living after the war had broken out. He returned to the Navy, and had from the first succeeded in infusing something of his own enthusiasm into the Grimsby trawlermen, who were sent with him to sweep up the Scarborough mine-field, laid in December 1914. Commander Bernays had a curious manner of maintaining discipline, and his naval outlook had been tempered by long residence in Canada, but his rough crews understood and respected him. After sweeping in the North Sea, he had been employed clearing up the Tory Island mine-field, whither he had insisted on taking his Grimsby trawlermen, rugged like himself in speech and character. When the Admiralty ordered Commander Bernays to undertake this Russian mine-sweeping expedition, they were well inspired.

It was on June 22nd that the vessels left Lowestoft bound first for Lerwick, whence they crossed the North Sea, reaching Alexandrovsk on July 6th. They began immediately their mine-sweeping operations. By July



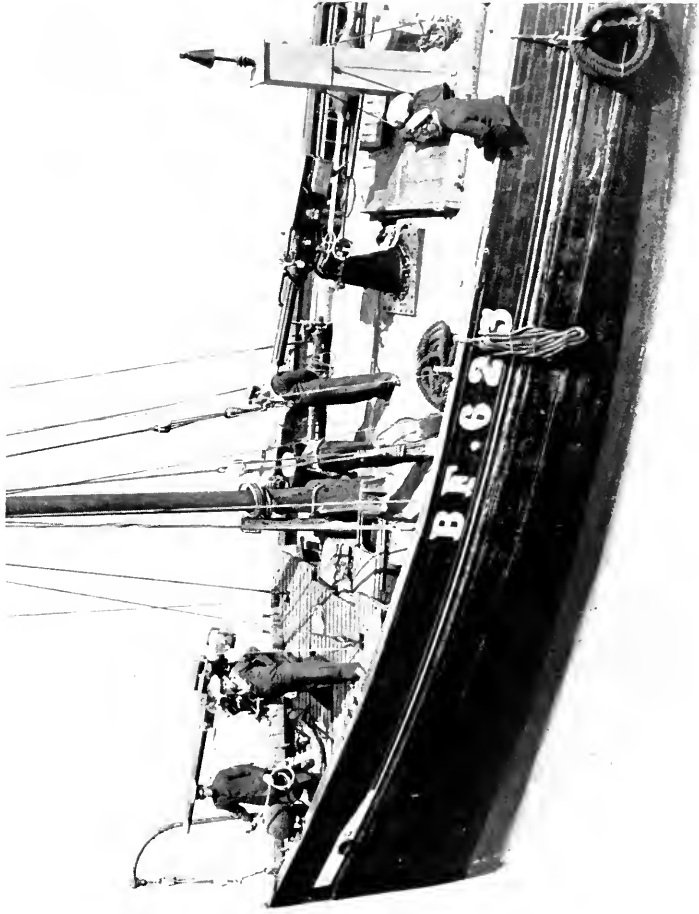
9th several mines had been destroyed; four days later the trawler *T. R. Ferens* struck a mine herself; but by the eighteenth of July this expedition had done such good work that fifty mines had been destroyed. By August 10th the force had been increased by the arrival of two more trawlers from Lowestoft, besides a collier. By the middle of August there were still no Russian patrol-vessels, for there was, at Archangel, no fishing industry on which they could draw, and only one weak little steamer was engaged in stopping ships off Svyatoi Nos. The enemy had laid his mines cunningly off headlands and athwart the course which would be taken by shipping between these headlands. In September Commander Bernays was recalled to be employed in home waters.

On October 2nd the armed yacht *Ægusa* (afterwards lost in the Mediterranean) arrived at Yukanskie from Aberdeen with Rear-Admiral Phillimore, who reported that by the middle of October 150 mines had been destroyed by our White Sea trawlers and a few by the Russians, but it would be impossible to destroy all the remaining mines before the ice set in. In November the ice set in and put an end to that year's campaign. It happened to be a very severe and early winter.

In home waters there was so much work for the fishermen and their craft that the dispatch of additional vessels to the Baltic could not be justified. The attack on our fishing-fleets by August had become serious, and the fine weather was all in favour of the smaller submarines which came over the North Sea from Flanders. Especially was this the case in the vicinity of Lowestoft, where the fishing-fleet was scattered from Smith's Knoll all round the banks to the northward. Again, therefore, subtlety had to be allied with courage. The Senior Naval Officer at Lowestoft decided to commission four fishing-smacks, arm them with a 3-pounder each and send them off to the fishing-grounds so that it was impossible for even a friend, let alone a foe, to discriminate between armed decoy smacks and those unarmed. The following incident, the first of its kind, well illustrates the class of work which these sailing-vessels carried out. Incidentally it is pertinent to remark that a year previously no one would have dared to have suggested that a fore and aft rigged sailing-vessel could ever again become a man-of-war.

By August 8th four of these sailing fishing-smacks had been commissioned. They left Lowestoft with their crews dressed in all respects like fishermen, and with nothing on deck or as to their rig suggesting that they were other than peaceful craft, meet victims for the first enemy submarine which might come along. Thus on the 11th of August the Lowestoft smack *G. and E.* put to sea. Her crew consisted of Lieutenant C. E. Hamond, R.N., her real skipper (F. W. Moxey) temporarily enrolled as second hand R.N.R. (T.), Petty Officer Ellis, R.N., Second-hand Page, temporarily enrolled as deck hand R.N.R. (T.), Leading Scaman J. Warman, R.N., as gun-layer, Third-hand H. Alexander, temporarily enrolled as deck hand R.N.R. (T.), and Able Seaman K. Hammond, R.N. There was thus an admixture of her original crew with experienced naval fighting men. At 1 p.m. this smack was about five miles south of Smith's Knoll Buoy when a submarine came to the surface three miles south-east of the smack *Leader*, which was a mile south of the *G. and E.* First of all the enemy closed the *Leader* and ordered the crew to launch their boat and go alongside the submarine. The enemy then made use of this boat to place a bomb in the *Leader*, which blew up, after which the fishermen were again placed in their boat and east adrift. "So far so good," thought the Germans; "we shall now deal with the smack *G. and E.* in the same manner." As the submarine was seen approaching this smack, the crew of the *G. and E.* pretended to be getting out their rowing-boat, and this business was kept up until the enemy had closed to some forty yards and had slewed to a position parallel with her intended victim.

This was the smack's opportunity. Lieutenant Hamond issued a short sharp order, up went the White Ensign, and off went the gun. There was not a moment's delay. No one could afford to make a mistake; they were at too close quarters for that; and one of the two was certain to perish speedily. The duel, in fact, was so short that the smack fired only five rounds from her little 3-pounder. Three of these shots penetrated the conning-tower—for it was impossible at that point-blank range to miss—but the gun had to be depressed so much that the fourth and fifth shots actually struck the smack's rail, though one afterwards penetrated the base of the



AN ARMED DRIFTER.



conning-tower. Petty Officer Ellis also succeeded in killing with his rifle one man who was in the conning-tower. With great rapidity the submarine dived at a very high angle, nose first, having been taken completely by surprise. So great was her hurry to submerge that she left the body of this man on the conning-tower. She never came up again. There was great joy among the Lowestoft fishermen that this small but dangerous German warship from the Flemish coast had been got rid of so neatly.

There were other instances of this successful armed smack warfare, and they certainly taught the invaders of Belgium that British seamen were skilful in stratagem as well as brave. A well-deserved D.S.C. was awarded to Lieutenant Hamond. This engagement furnished an admirable example of the way in which the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy co-operated during the war with the sole object of defeating the Germans. To the plain, blunt seamanship of the latter came the aid of the former's fighting skill. Such was the peculiar temperament of the German, however, that he became very angry when he learned of the way mere sailing-smacks were destroying his ingeniously built craft, and threats were sent in to Lowestoft by other submarines through the medium of the crews of our fishing-vessels which were sunk later on. But not even these threats prevented the hardy North Sea-men from going about their work. Nelson himself was an East Anglian. In years to come descendants of the men of the twentieth century who confronted the enemy by sea will be moved to wonder and admiration when they realise that, in spite of the progress of physical science, little sailing-ships of wood, without mechanical power, met in close combat and destroyed steel vessels which could alike go ahead or astern, and make themselves invisible.

The problem of the fisherman from the beginning to the end of the war was no easy one. If the naval authorities had stopped all fishing a most important industry would have been killed, causing distress and unemployment, besides depriving the nation of one of its principal articles of food. On the other hand, if they allowed fishing to continue, losses from mines, torpedoes, and gunfire and bombs could not be avoided. There is a tendency to minimise the value of the fishing trade.

At the beginning of the war it employed in England and Wales alone 44,000 men and about 216,000 tons of sea-going craft. In addition, there must be reckoned many thousands of persons engaged in the distribution and curing of fish. The fish supply was the equivalent, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, of nearly half the total amount of meat annually consumed in the British Isles, and of this supply about seven-eighths were landed at coast ports. It came to this then, that these fishermen were, after the declaration of war, pursuing their calling in what a soldier would designate "no man's land." After the first few months of hostilities most of the best ships and the most active personnel had joined the Navy. Approximately 50 per cent. of the fishermen were serving under the White Ensign, and the rest had to carry on their work among mines and submarines as best they could. The ordinary dangers of the sea were, of course, present as before; but owing to the removal of the lightships, and the dowsing of innumerable shore lights, the absence of buoys, and the introduction of new channels and routes, their lot was not made any the easier.

Inasmuch as the North Sea was the main naval theatre of the war, until the submarines started operating off the western side of the British Isles, from a strictly naval point of view there would have been advantages in forbidding any fishing-craft from working in that area. It would have certainly made matters easier for the Grand Fleet in its periodical sweeps down the North Sea, and it would have lightened the duties of the patrols. It must be admitted that at the beginning of the war the Navy looked upon these craft rather as a nuisance; but when it was found that these trawlers were the means of discovering unsuspected mine-fields, they were regarded in a very different light.

Once definite conclusions had been reached as to the usefulness of the fishermen, the craft had to be protected in some way. It was the Navy's duty to see that this was done, but that meant detaching vessels from purely offensive operations. During the summer of the year 1915 the losses of both steam and sailing fishing-craft were very heavy, and insurance rates soared up. In August the question was again raised as to whether, from the naval point of view, it was desirable to allow these

vessels to continue their fishing. The whole matter was carefully investigated by the Admiralty afresh. Admiral Ballard, who was commanding most of the East Coast area, stated very truly that fishing-trawlers were keenly on the lookout for anything suspicious and offered considerable obstacles to the free navigation of enemy submarines. Every trawl, warp, or drift net was a potential source of trouble, and in at least one case a U-boat got her periscope foul of a trawler's wire and was thrown on her beam ends. The Dutch fishing-fleets were still allowed to work in the North Sea, and if British fishing-fleets were withdrawn, it would mean that we should require at least 150 more armed patrols.

At this time the total number of trawlers fishing off the East Coast was about 350, most of which belonged to the Humber. The Hull fleet was under the control of a fishing "Admiral," and every morning fish-carriers met the vessels at sea and took the fish to London; otherwise trawlers fished independently. The obvious solution of the difficulty was some sort of control over these fleets under Admiralty organisation. This Admiral Jellicoe advocated. Both he and Commodore Tyrwhitt were in favour of allowing the trawlers to continue fishing. But the regulation and control of their movements were not easy, though eventually the difficulties were surmounted. For the present it was clear that the advantages of maintaining fishing-fleets at sea were sufficient to warrant the insurance of these vessels at a premium lower than what would be justified from the purely financial point of view, and this was the decision to which the Admiralty came in the middle of October. In the year 1917 a really satisfactory system was introduced, by which these vessels fished together in groups under Naval control, a sufficient number in each group being armed at least to enable some sort of fight to be put up with any submarine that came along; one of the trawlers was also fitted with wireless. This meant commissioning the trawlers and placing them under the command of the Senior Naval Officers of their respective ports and they thus became, in fact though not in name, part of the Auxiliary Patrol. But this evolution took time, and it was only as the result of many hardly learned lessons that it came about.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SEA TRANSPORT OF THE FIRST MILLION TROOPS

IF an adequate conception is to be formed of the manner in which the Mercantile Marine supported the national effort by sea and by land in the early days of the war, some account must be given of the movement of troops oversea. The transport of war is the merchant ship of peace, usually a passenger vessel when the change of status occurs; the crew of merchant officers and men remains. It was not the policy of this country to support a separate and distinct transport service, though it could use its army, apart from the needs of home defence, only if it had facilities for moving it by sea. Reliance was placed on the authority of the Admiralty to requisition whatever tonnage was required for the movement of troops when the emergency arose.

The army of an island Power, the axis of a maritime Empire embracing nearly one-quarter of the land surface of the globe, is dependent for movement upon merchant shipping, and for protection while afloat the heavily laden transports must rely upon the Navy confronted with many other duties. As events were to show, the enemy conducted his operations below the surface as well as on the surface. In that respect, as well as in others, the transport movement, which began in August 1914, differed from anything which had been attempted before.

The mobilisation of the military forces on August 4th brought into operation, under conditions which it had been impossible to foresee in anything approaching completeness, the plans for transport oversea, which had been prepared by the Admiralty in consultation with the War Office. The interdependence of naval and military policy was speedily demonstrated in a manner of which the public generally had no knowledge at the time, for, after the British ultimatum had been dispatched to Germany,



complete secrecy was observed as to the naval and military arrangements which were speedily carried out in order to put the British Empire on a war footing. The silence suggested that the country had been caught unprepared ; but behind the fog of war a transport movement was inaugurated, unparalleled in character and extent in the history of any country. The reorganisation of the British Army, which had been in progress from 1902 down to the opening of the war, suddenly, though not unexpectedly to the departments concerned, reacted on naval conditions, and within a few weeks a large number of merchant ships were engaged in a great transport movement, world-wide in its extent, in face of the undefeated naval forces of the second greatest sea Power in the world.

The oversea transport of large military forces calls for the closest co-operation between naval and military departments, and demands, perhaps, a higher degree of technical efficiency in all the elements concerned than any other operation of war, particularly if the movement is carried out in face of an enemy fleet which has not revealed its intentions. The operation is facilitated when the soldiers can be disembarked on a friendly shore, but even in that case there remain the perils of the oversea passage, the imminence of which so impressed many British seamen that, down to the summer of 1914, it was an axiom, accepted by many high authorities, that troops should not be moved by sea until the enemy's naval forces had been either defeated or definitely thrown back on the defensive. In the early days of August 1914 the strategic policy to be adopted at sea by the enemy was undisclosed, but British merchant seamen, placing complete reliance on the sufficiency and efficiency of the British Fleet, co-operated in the great transport movement with singleness of purpose, confidence in the adequacy of the arrangements for their safe passage, and complete subordination of their own interests to the interests of the State.

Many expeditions across the sea had been carried out since the close of the Napoleonic struggle, but, down to the South African War, in only four instances had the number of troops been considerable. The French dispatched on the short voyage to Algeria in 1830 37,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, and a proportionate number of guns ; for the invasion of the Crimea in 1854 the forces

of the Allies numbered about 53,000 men ; the army of the Potomac, which was transported from Washington to Fort Monroe in 1861, was relatively a small one ; and for the British expedition to Egypt in 1882 35,720 officers and men were landed at Alexandria, Ismailia, and Suez. During the South African War, 1899–1902, 396,021 officers and men were carried to South Africa from the British Isles, India, and the Colonies, but that movement was spread over a period of two years and eight months. The first orders for the reinforcements were on a small scale, and were carried out slowly.

“The decision to reinforce the British troops in Natal was arrived at by the Cabinet on the 8th of September. More than a month later, October 12th, the first shot was fired ; but not till six weeks after the decision to reinforce did units from home begin to leave the country, and these troops had to travel more than 7,000 miles before they could affect the situation at the front. At this crisis the whole force available at home was dispatched. It consisted of two battalions of infantry and a brigade division (three batteries) of field artillery.”<sup>1</sup>

At the close of the South African War, steps were taken to remodel the army, and these measures reacted on the transport arrangements. It was originally proposed to provide a “striking force” of 80,000 men, and plans were considered for organising the necessary sea transport on that basis. After Lord Haldane became Secretary of State for War, an Imperial General Staff was developed, the oversea force was further expanded to 164,000 officers and men, and the watchword of the new military régime was “quick mobilisation.” It was realised that the value of the Expeditionary Force would depend largely on the rapidity with which it could be mobilised and embarked for oversea passage. The plans of the military authorities having been prepared and tested, as far as that was possible, it rested with the Transport Department of the Admiralty to complete the scheme by providing adequate and suitable transport for the troops as soon as they reached the water side, thus avoiding delay.

<sup>1</sup> *The Army in 1906*, by the Rt. Hon. H. O. Arnold Foster, late Secretary of State for War.

A country which embarks upon an aggressive war can fix the date for the declaration of the opening of hostilities, and lay its plans many months ahead, drawing up a schedule for the mobilisation and transport of troops. A Power which acts on the defensive is necessarily at a disadvantage. But, apart from the uncertainty as to when the ships, ordinary merchant ships engaged in peaceful trading, would be required, the difficulties associated with British military transport in 1914 were not lessened by the necessary absence of full knowledge in preceding months of the part which the British Army might have to take in war, whether in defending oversea portions of the Empire or in supporting the French Army on the Continent.

In the years before the opening of the war, the Government had definitely refrained from giving a pledge of military support to France. But on August 3rd, 1914, the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated, in the course of a speech in the House of Commons, that for many months previously "conversations had taken place between the chief naval and military experts of Great Britain and France with a view to joint action if the necessity should arise." On this occasion the Foreign Minister read a letter which he had addressed to the French Ambassador on November 22nd, 1912, in proof that "these conversations were not binding on the freedom of either Government." In that letter, in the terms of which the French Government concurred, the Foreign Minister stated: "I agree that if either Government have grave reasons to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power or something which threatens the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should not act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common."

That, as the Foreign Minister pointed out, was the starting-point for the Government when the crisis developed in the summer of 1914. "The Government," he declared, "remain perfectly free." He added that "the Triple Entente was not an alliance but a diplomatic group," and "we do not construe anything which has previously taken place in our diplomatic relations with other Powers in this matter as restricting the freedom of the Government

to decide what action it should take now or restricting the freedom of the House of Commons to decide what their action shall be." It was in these political circumstances that the plans for the transport of British military forces in the event of war had to be prepared. The point is of some importance, since it illustrates the embarrassments which an uncertain outlook in the diplomatic field, in association with a defensive policy, may throw upon public departments, which in case of failure must be prepared to accept censure.

The transport of the British Army must always be of a complicated character, owing to the responsibility for garrisoning oversea bases, and the necessity of keeping a large force of British troops in India. The Army Estimates for the financial year 1914-15 made provision for 727,232 officers and men, besides 75,987 British troops on the Indian establishment. That aggregate included the Regular Forces, the Army Reserve, the Special Reserves, the Militia, and the Territorial Force. The Regular Army was distributed between Home and Foreign stations as follows :

	At Home.	Abroad.	Total.
Cavalry Regiments . . . . .	19	12	31
R.H.A. Batteries . . . . .	13	12	25
R.F.A. Batteries . . . . .	99	48	147
Mountain Batteries . . . . .	—	9	9
Garrison Artillery Companies . . . . .	43	56	99
R.E. Companies . . . . .	56	21	77
Guards Battalions . . . . .	9	—	9
Infantry Battalions . . . . .	74	74	148

The Indian Army establishments consisted of 2,751 officers and 161,081 other ranks, with 35,700 Reservists. In addition, there were an Indian Volunteer Force, consisting of Europeans and Anglo-Indians, of about 1,500 officers and 37,000 other ranks, and about 20,000 Imperial Service Troops. Each of the British Dominions also possessed the nucleus of a military force.

Immediately war was declared, the predominant problem was how the varied and not inconsiderable, if, in some respects, untrained, military resources of the Empire could be best utilised for the defence of the world-wide Empire

itself against possible dangers and for the promotion of the Allied cause. The impression, current at the outbreak of war, that the Merchant Navy became responsible only for the movement of the Expeditionary Force to France was based upon a misapprehension, both of the preparations which had been made by the Transport Department of the Admiralty, and of the plans which Lord Kitchener drew up on taking office as Secretary of State for War on August 5th for the redistribution of the military forces of the Empire. The Secretary of State for War accepted the transport arrangements which had already been made for carrying the Expeditionary Force across the Channel, and he conceived a further plan of imperial mobilisation which threw upon the Merchant Navy a greatly increased and unexpected burden. Finally, after consultation between the Mother Country and the Dominions, the Dominion authorities prepared plans for bringing considerable bodies of newly raised troops from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, further increasing the responsibilities of the Mercantile Marine as well as the Royal Navy. In effect, Lord Kitchener determined, while throwing the Expeditionary Force on the Continent, to carry out a "general post" of the military forces of the Empire, involving a widespread movement of transports crowded with officers and men in all the seas and oceans of the world at a time when the enemy fleets were still undefeated.

The power of moving armies across the sea was a deciding factor in the victory of the Allied and Associated Powers in the Great War. The problem presented two difficulties: (1) ensuring the security of the troops in transit against danger from enemy surface craft, submarines, and submarine mines, and (2) the provision and handling of shipping to accommodate the military personnel, animals, vehicles, and stores of all kinds required for military use. The first problem was one for the Navy, and this important phase of naval strategy is dealt with elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> It is proposed to deal here with the part taken by the British Mercantile Marine in overcoming the second difficulty, the provision and handling of shipping and the essential auxiliary services.

By the last month of the war about 520 British vessels, ranging from ships of 500 tons gross to the largest passenger

<sup>1</sup> *Naval Operations*, by Sir Julian Corbett.

liners, were being employed on British military services. Their tonnage was about 1,750,000 gross, and that represented approximately the average amount of tonnage continuously devoted to this service throughout the war, excepting in the very early stages when the armies operating overseas were smaller, and less tonnage sufficed to meet their requirements. A very important principle to be borne in mind when deciding upon an oversea military operation is that it is not only a question of providing tonnage once for all for the actual troop movements; there must always be an aftermath of demands for transport of stores, ammunition, and reinforcing drafts in one direction, and of sick and wounded, and maybe prisoners of war, in the other. The proportion of tonnage required for these purposes depends upon the nature of the military forces employed, of the character of the operations upon which they are engaged, and upon the nature of the theatre of war in which they are to operate. There is much to be learned from the numbers of men and weights of stores transported from a land base to and from an army in the field by railways, motor lorries, horsed wagons, and other forms of land transport. This information, which has an important bearing upon land strategy, does not, however, come within the scope of this history. We are, however, concerned with another aspect of the matter. After an army has been landed at an oversea base, the responsibility for maintaining this constant stream of traffic across the sea falls upon the Mercantile Marine, which links up the oversea army with the home country. In such circumstances the commanders of an insular army are as dependent upon shipping for their strategy as they are upon railways and other forms of land transport.

The military strategist handling an army in a peninsula or other theatre of war with a large proportion of coast-line can sometimes take advantage of sea command to change his base of operations; he can thus shorten his lines of communications and alter their direction. Acting on these principles in the Peninsular War, Wellington, commanding a comparatively small military force, changed his base from Lisbon to Santander and other ports on the north coast of Spain. In the Egyptian War of 1882 the British base was changed suddenly from Alexandria to Ismailia. Kuroki, in the Russo-Japanese War, would

have been unable to advance through Korea from Chemulpo to the Yalu had it not been for constant changes of base to other more northerly places on the coast, and history affords many similar examples. It is doubtful whether the British Army could have intervened in the first battle of the Marne had it not been for the help of the Mercantile Marine in the change of base from Havre to St. Nazaire and Nantes on the River Loire, to which important operation special reference must be made later.

A just appreciation of the services which the Mercantile Marine rendered in the transport of troops can be formed only in the knowledge that by land and sea, lines of communication for armies reveal the same principle; the longer the line, the greater the amount of transport required in proportion to the strength of the army. Although the actual amount of tonnage per man and horse may be the same for the troops actually transported, the number of ships required for subsequent services increases enormously with the distance of the oversea theatre of war from the home base. The operations in France and Flanders were vastly more economical in shipping and protective measures than the operations in distant theatres.

#### (a) THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO FRANCE (B.E.F.)

As has been indicated, the only operation for which it had been possible to make preparations, and those of a tentative character, was the transport of the original British Expeditionary Force across the Channel. When the emergency occurred, it was only necessary to bring the scheme up-to-date, to ascertain the names of vessels available in home waters at the time, and to introduce a few amendments necessitated by original over-estimates of the capacity of the French harbours for handling the traffic with sufficient speed. Orders were issued on August 5th, 1914, for the scheme to be put into execution. It was at first intended that August 7th should be the first day of embarkation, but ultimately the date was fixed as August 9th. The original plan provided for the embarkation of six divisions, cavalry and line of communication troops, but two divisions (the 4th and 6th) were taken out of the scheme when the order to

embark was issued. The 4th Division was subsequently reinstated on the list and began to embark on August 22nd, and fought at Le Cateau on the 26th; and the 6th Division, from Ireland, was transported to England and conveyed to France on September 8th and 9th. The Merchant Service rose to the occasion so well that the necessary transports were ready, as a rule, the day before they were required, although in some cases the necessary refitting of vessels for the carriage of men and horses occupied from two to six days. As the embarkation proceeded, it was found to be possible to expedite the programme. The moves originally fixed for the 13th day were carried out on the 12th day, and those for the 14th on the 13th day. In other respects the embarkation followed exactly the lines originally laid down. In actual experience the military were in charge of the troops, equipment, etc., until the wharves were reached. The Navy's responsibility began when the troops were on board and ended when they had been landed on the overseas wharves.

Up to August 23rd the troops and military resources were landed at Boulogne, Le Havre, and Rouen. From that date until August 31st at Le Havre and Rouen. Then came the change of base, of vital importance to the British war strategy, to which reference has already been made. Between August 31st and September 16th the disembarkation ports were St. Nazaire and Nantes on the River Loire. From September 16th, owing to the more favourable situation resulting from the first battle of the Marne, the service to Le Havre and Rouen was partially resumed.

Southampton was the principal port of embarkation for troops. The following table shows the numbers embarked at English and Irish ports between August 9th and September 21st :

Port.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Horses.	Nursing Sisters and Civilians.
Southampton . . .	5,028	171,708	51,434	1,389
Newhaven . . . . .	66	409	—	9
Avonmouth . . . . .	58	4,547	—	—
Liverpool . . . . .	16	1,741	—	—
Devonport . . . . .	30	844	421	—
Dublin . . . . .	826	25,921	10,184	—
Belfast . . . . .				
Queenstown . . . . .				
Totals . . . . .	6,024	205,040	62,039	1,398



These figures give some idea of the strain brought upon the British Mercantile Marine to meet the demand for transference of the Expeditionary Force to France. In addition to personnel and horses, 93,364 tons is a minimum estimate of the amount of ammunition, stores, vehicles, etc., carried to the same destination for the Army, distributed as follows: Ammunition for guns: 3,984 tons, for small arms 2,185 tons; food: 31,509 tons; forage: 21,364 tons; petrol: 1,006,462 gallons; vehicles: 12,162 tons; stores: 25,080 tons. These figures were dwarfed by the vast amount of tonnage occupied for military purposes when the large new armies took the field on the Western Front and in other theatres of war; when expenditure of ammunition was on a scale undreamed of, and trench stores, new weapons, and tanks were introduced; but the figures serve as a useful corrective to the prevalent idea that sea transport of armies is a simple matter of embarking and disembarking personnel and horses.

The general allocation to various ports of embarkation had been arranged as follows:—Southampton, Dublin, Glasgow, Queenstown, Belfast, and Jersey: troops and horses; Newhaven: stores; Liverpool: mechanical transport and frozen meat; Avonmouth: mechanical transport and petrol; London: stevedores; Devonport; Siege Brigade; Dover: Naval Brigade.

On the first day (August 9th) six transports, with a total of 5,361 tons gross, left. The numbers varied during the period, the maximum number being reached on August 14th (forty-four vessels, gross tonnage 154,361), and the maximum tonnage on August 16th (thirty-nine vessels, gross tonnage 171,188). On the last day of the period, September 20th, six transports, of a total gross tonnage of 43,409, left. The movements were worked on the ferry system, the same vessels doing from a single voyage up to nine voyages during the period; the whole movement was completed in 570 trips, and the ship-tonnage clearing from the ports totalled 2,241,389 tons gross. The daily average of sailings was thirteen vessels, of 52,125 gross tonnage.

As typical of the zeal with which the personnel of the Merchant Service worked to keep the programme up to time, and so contribute to the success of our army in the

field, one incident may be mentioned. When sudden orders were received to evacuate Le Havre, two Leyland liners were at Southampton at No. 47 berth, coaling. In the middle of the night orders were given to stop coaling and to sail at once to Le Havre. The coaling was stopped, but a difficulty occurred in closing the coaling ports, which had to be secured by bolts from the outside. The ships' officers and engineers went over the side on stages to effect this, and, as the ships steamed away into the darkness, these men could be seen hanging on the ships' sides, only a few feet from the water, putting in a few bolts to ensure the safety of their ships; by their action much time was saved.

This leads us to the rapid evacuation of Le Havre, upon which the speedy recuperation of our army after the retreat from Mons so largely depended. The need to make provision for the ordered movements hitherto described had, as we have noticed, been foreseen. Owing to the adverse military situation, first Boulogne had to be abandoned as a port of disembarkation, then Le Havre, the main base of the British Army. The order for the evacuation of the latter port was received on August 30th. On that day about 60,000 tons of military stores were lying on the wharves. This immense amount of stores, 21,000 troops, and 7,000 horses were conveyed by sea from Le Havre to the River Loire by the Mercantile Marine, and as a result the British Army, reinforced and re-equipped, was able to cross the Marne on September 9th, and continue its advance subsequently. By the 16th the transfer had been completed.

It is not easy to find any historic precedent which applies to this successful effort. The official history of the Egyptian War of 1882 mentions the transfer of a base of a much smaller British army from Alexandria to Ismailia. The comparison is hardly a fair one, because Alexandria was not evacuated, but retained as the main base of the army, Ismailia being used as the forward base. Moreover, the scale of army equipment was not so lavish in those days, and the army itself had not lost heavily in guns and stores in a rapid retreat. The official history tells us that, although the plans for the change of base were completed by August 16th, 1882, and the necessary orders issued, matters had not progressed sufficiently for

operations from Ismailia to commence until September 9th, twenty-four days, compared with eighteen days when the emergency occurred at the beginning of the Great War, a result of which a large share of the credit falls upon the efforts of the Merchant Service to cope with the emergency. It is claimed that over 7,500 tons of stores were cleared daily from Le Havre, in addition to 10,000 tons taken from Rouen in two days; 2,000 Belgian troops, with guns and 2,000 horses, were also cleared from Rouen. An idea of the comparative magnitude of the effort can be gleaned from the figures for Richborough, a model port of embarkation, after twenty-eight months of work and about £1,750,000 in money had been expended upon facilities there for loading war-like stores. A report of Lieutenant-General Sir H. Lawson, dated October 24th, 1918, stated that the average daily shipment of stores at Richborough amounted to about 3,000 tons; the maximum had been 6,000 tons.

The navigational difficulties, which were very serious, were on the whole successfully surmounted. The ships were not in all cases suitable for the ports of the Loire, which were not as capable as Le Havre of accommodating vessels of large displacements. One vessel, the *Inventor*, described as the most important storeship of all, was the largest that had ever reached Nantes. Such heavy ships could only come up on the top of the tide, and they had to be berthed against an island where the water was deepest; even there they settled and heeled over at low tide. The carrying capacity of the *Inventor* was 10,800 tons, and her holds were 40 feet deep. She was berthed at Nantes late on September 7th and, owing to the poor local facilities which existed, it took over ten days to clear her holds, in spite of the utmost exertions. Her case is referred to in some detail because of an incident during her unloading. The incident furnishes an illustration of the great complication of the question of sea transport of military stores, and its influence upon the fighting efficiency of armies.

A small consignment, of about a quarter of a ton, on board this vessel, contained the boxes and belts of machine-guns urgently required by the fighting troops in replacement of losses. This consignment was buried under about 10,000 tons of other stores of all kinds. Whether

this was due to an order given to load the most important stores first at Le Havre to avoid capture, or to the original stowage of the hold at Southampton, is a matter on which no light can be shed. As soon as the change of base from Le Havre was ordered, the machine-guns to replace losses in the Mons retreat were sent by rail as urgent stores to the new advanced base, but they were useless without the belts and boxes. These were not found, near the bottom of the *Inventor's* cargo, until September 17th, and the urgent demands by the Army for machine-guns were consequently not satisfied until after long delay. At that period no vouchers accompanied ordnance stores to France, and there were no supercargoes in charge of them. The incident in no way reflects upon the Merchant Service, and is quoted in order to place on record for future guidance that the issue of an action may depend upon the receipt in the right sequence at the front of a quarter of a ton of technical stores out of the hold of a storeship containing nearly 11,000 tons, and difficulties multiply when all packages are not clearly marked with the nature of their contents. At a later date "convoy-men" accompanied cargoes, and vouchers came through with the military stores.

This account of the work done by the Mercantile Marine in connection with the transport of the original Expeditionary Force to France would not be complete without a reference to the sudden strain caused unexpectedly by the decision to attempt the relief of Antwerp. The movement of the Royal Marine Brigade to and from Ostend in August 1914 was carried out by war-vessels, so is outside the scope of this chapter. We need not pause to deal in detail with the transport of the Royal Naval Brigade to Dunkirk in September 1914, of the Royal Naval Artillery to the same destination in October, and of the 7th Division and Naval Division to Belgium, but the complication of the service subsequently undertaken cannot be over-emphasised. The 7th Division was landed at Ostend and Zeebrugge. Transports arrived at Ostend on October 7th and 8th, and the landing of troops and stores was at once proceeded with. On Saturday, October 10th, when most of the stores had been landed, orders were given to evacuate Ostend in forty-eight hours' time, to re-embark all stores, and to make every effort to get

the ships away to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. About twenty-four transports were in the port, many of them in the tidal basin, which only about six ships could leave on one tide.

Then the Naval Division, the Marine Brigade, the refugees, and Belgian troops began to pour in, and owed a deep debt of gratitude to the masters and crews of the transports who gave them shelter, hot cocoa, and sorely needed food. Refugees and troops blocked all approaches. Only comparatively few stevedores could be obtained, twenty-eight on one day and seven on another. Practically the whole of the loading of British army stores was done by the officers and crews of the transports, who put in extraordinarily long hours of work, and by British soldiers; the Belgian cranemen and men on the lock-gates also worked continuously without reliefs. Amongst the loads were heavy guns, a 9·2-inch weighing thirty-eight tons, two 6-inch, and six 4·7-inch, besides two steam tractors and a good deal of ammunition. There were no suitable slings, but the transport *Artist* had a spare new wire hawser of which the master (Mr. Mills) and his chief officer made use and personally slung the steam tractors, thus saving these valuable stores from capture, a most noteworthy performance.

Between October 10th and 13th, 6,000 Naval Division, 1,000 Belgian wounded, and one shipload of horses, carriages, and other things belonging to the King of the Belgians, were transported from Ostend to England; 440 British troops and two shiploads of Belgian stores were moved from Ostend to Boulogne; 1,500 Belgian troops from Ostend to Cherbourg; 2,000 Belgian refugees from Zeebrugge to Calais and Cherbourg, 1,200 Royal Naval forces and 6,000 Belgian wounded from Dunkirk to England, 11,000 Belgian troops from Dunkirk to Cherbourg. Between October 17th and 18th 17,900 Belgian troops were transported from Dunkirk to Calais, and 3,000 from Boulogne to Dunkirk. In addition, about 1,000 Russian refugees from Belgium and England were carried to Archangel, and a number of emergency coast moves were carried out. Thirty thousand French troops were also moved from Le Havre to La Pallice, and 10,000 from Calais to Cherbourg, in British ships.

The scene at Ostend, at the time when the troop move-

ments were taking place, may be gathered from the following account :

“ On October 14th it was announced that the vessels sent to Ostend were evacuating refugees at the rate of 5,000 a day ; a previous report had stated that the roads leading to the port were black with refugees flocking towards it. The number of these unfortunate people awaiting embarkation on October 13th was 20,000, and a destroyer escort was requisitioned to protect the crowded transports. The Belgian packet-boat helped materially in the work of transference across the Channel, assisted by the English passenger ships *Invicta*, *Queen*, and *Victoria*.”

Zeebrugge port was closed down on October 10th, and Ostend on the 14th. Speed had to take precedence of organisation, as may be gathered from a report from the Naval Transport Officer at Dover on October 15th, that “ half the refugees that had arrived there were wounded soldiers, etc., all mixed up hopelessly.” There was unavoidable overcrowding, and the varied personnel was taken to Dover faster than it could be handled there ; but the matter was urgent, and the way in which the British Merchant Service rose to the occasion and dealt with the difficult situation without disaster from marine risks or overcrowding earned the highest praise of the naval and military authorities.

At first Belgian pilots were employed to pilot the vessels as far as Dunkirk, but owing to the congestion they could not get back to Ostend. The navigation of these waters is always difficult, and the prevailing foggy weather increased the difficulties and risk. Luckily some of the transports had Trinity House pilots on board. Any master who did not elect to sail without a pilot was given one of these, and his ship led a string of three or four transports until open waters were reached. The whole operation was conducted without mishap, and only one vessel, the *Coath*, an ammunition ship, was delayed near Malo-les-Bains, where she was ordered to anchor by a French patrol-boat and apparently forgotten. She reached Dunkirk two days later.

(b) THE EMPIRE MILITARY MOBILISATION <sup>1</sup>

Having dealt briefly with the sea transport of the British Expeditionary Force to France, for which preparations had been made in pre-war days, and with the variation in the plans which occurred, we can now pass to the unexpected and unprepared movements of troops which threw such a heavy strain upon the Merchant Service in the early days of the war. Owing to the doubt which prevailed as to whether troops from the self-governing Dominions and India would participate with the British Army in a great war, no detailed preparations had been made for their sea transport, and there had been no study of the influence of the withdrawal of British merchant shipping for this purpose upon the economic position in Great Britain. The point is mentioned to emphasise the serious nature of the strain brought to bear upon the Merchant Service in meeting the sudden demand for tonnage for troop transport, while at the same time making every effort to maintain the supply to the British Isles of the food and raw material needed by the population. The transports for the short cross-Channel movement were worked, as we have seen, on the ferry system, and one vessel did as many as nine voyages in about three weeks. This conveys some measure of the difference in the number of vessels required for long voyages occupying several weeks, or even months.

Lord Kitchener determined to concentrate all the highly trained forces of the Empire in France, replacing them by less well trained units. It was a bold stroke of policy, and its success depended on the efficiency of the transport arrangements and the devotion of officers and men of the Merchant Service. When the great military mobilisation began to take effect, the chief movements were, in sequence of the orders received for their execution: (1) *August 19th*: the removal of part of the garrisons of Egypt, Malta, and Gibraltar to the United Kingdom; (2) *August 25th*: the movement of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force; (3) *August 29th*: the transfer of Territorial troops to Egypt, Malta, and Gibraltar; (4) *September 4th*: the movement of the first contingent of the Australian Expeditionary Force; (5) *September 9th*: the movement of the First Canadian Expeditionary Force; (6) *September 13th*: the

<sup>1</sup> Direct movements to enemy territory are not included in this section.

dispatch of transports from Egypt to India, and conveyance of Egyptian garrison to England; (7) *September 23rd*: the transfer of Wessex Territorial Division to India; (8) *October 10th*: the movement of British troops to India; (9) *October 14th*: the transfer of Home Counties Territorial Division to India; (10) *November 3rd*: the movement of the second contingents, Australia and New Zealand Expeditionary Forces; (11) *November 11th*: the transfer of Wessex (Reserve) Territorial Division to India.

We will take these movements in succession in order to reflect the character and extent of the burden which was thrown on the Mercantile Marine, for they involved the use of a great volume of shipping.

(1) *Removal to the United Kingdom of Troops from Egypt, Malta, and Gibraltar.*—The grand total of these movements amounted to 7,355 officers and men, 711 horses, and 278 mules. The troops moved from Egypt included 1 cavalry regiment, 3 battalions of infantry, 1 battery of R.H.A., 1 Field Company R.E., and details of the Army Service Corps, Veterinary Department, and Ordnance Corps; from Malta 3 battalions of infantry, and details; from Gibraltar 1 battalion of infantry, and details. There were also large numbers of women and children at all those Mediterranean garrisons. The movement was foreshadowed on August 19th. It was carried out between September 13th and October 16th by nine transports, with a total gross tonnage of about 80,000. On August 28th further information was received through the General Officer commanding in Egypt that the whole Egyptian garrison would eventually be removed excepting a few minor details, its place being taken by a Territorial division. Indian troops would require transport from Egypt to Marseilles.

(2) *Movement of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.*—On August 25th notice was received of the approaching movement of the original New Zealand Expeditionary Force. On August 31st the New Zealand Minister of Defence announced that the force was ready to embark, and on September 12th that the reinforcements for this main force would be ready to follow about six weeks after its departure. The first convoy, containing nine transports (72,800 tons gross), left Wellington on October 16th, 1914, and arrived in Egypt on December 1st. On November



11th provisional arrangements for the dispatch of the reinforcements were forwarded to New Zealand. On December 12th the Admiralty gave permission for the three transports carrying them to steam without escort as far as Aden, although enemy cruisers were known to be at large. They left on December 14th and arrived in Egypt on January 31st, 1915. The strength of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force was 7,670 officers and men with 3,467 animals, and the reinforcements numbered 1,971 officers and men with 959 animals, and were carried in three transports, of about 20,350 tons gross. In addition to these troops, 200 Maoris, offered by New Zealand and accepted by the Army Council, were transported to Egypt, and 147 British Army Reservists were conveyed without escort round the Horn, arriving in England on December 20th.

(3) *Transfer of Territorial Troops from England to Gibraltar, Malta, and Egypt.*—On August 29th a demand was received from the War Office for the dispatch of a Territorial division and 2 regiments of Yeomanry to Egypt, an infantry brigade to Malta, and 2 battalions to Gibraltar, the estimated total numbers amounting to 490 officers, 14,372 other ranks, and 363 horses. Thirteen merchant vessels were selected to carry the troops, and seven were requisitioned for the horses, etc. It was understood that the existing garrison of Egypt would be brought to England in these transports, when it was relieved. By September 4th nineteen vessels (155,500 tons gross) had been appropriated. The first of these left Southampton on that day, and the last arrived at Alexandria on September 25th. One vessel, the *Grantully Castle*, proceeded through the Canal to Port Sudan, carrying about 1,900 troops.

(4) *Movement of the First Contingent of the Australian Expeditionary Force.*—On September 4th, 1914, the Australian Government sanctioned the requisition of detained enemy ships for use as transports, and on September 5th announced that all the units of the first Australian contingent would be ready to embark within six weeks, at the same time representing to the Board of Trade that it was important, so far as practicable, that the transports should also carry cargo on the voyage to England. On September 8th the Admiralty announced

that by October 7th an escort for the convoy would be ready at Fremantle, and that the New Zealand reinforcements would join the convoy. The Australian Navy Office reported on September 9th that twenty-seven transports would assemble at St. George's Sound by October 5th. The *Miltiades*, conveying British Army reservists, left Australia on October 23rd. On November 1st thirty-six transports left for Colombo. It had been decided on October 26th that the Australian and New Zealand convoy should come to England by the Cape of Good Hope route, but on November 21st the decision was reached to land the contingents in Egypt to complete their training and for defence of the country, then threatened by an invasion by Turkish troops, Turkey having by this time joined the Central Powers. The British Army reservists were to be sent on to England. This change in the arrangements threw an extra strain upon the Merchant Service, and much correspondence ensued about the destination of the various vessels unexpectedly liberated by the new scheme of disembarkation. The convoys arrived in Egypt on December 1st, 1914, without mishap or delay. The only adverse incident which occurred was that one transport, the *Anglo-Egyptian*, touched the breakwater at Colombo, but the damage was not sufficient to delay the vessel. Throughout the course of these unprepared troop movements, it is noticeable that, although so many merchant ships, liners and cargo-vessels were diverted from their usual routes, they were handled safely by good seamanship in harbours with which the captains and crews were not familiar. Twenty-eight vessels for troops (gross tonnage 244,500) and fifteen for details, stores, etc., were employed to transfer the Australian contingent to Egypt. The total military personnel carried numbered 21,429 officers and men, with 8,000 animals.

(5) *Movement of the First Canadian Expeditionary Force across the Atlantic.*—This movement of large numbers of valuable transports loaded with troops into the war area infested with submarines and mines, while sea command was in dispute, threw a great strain upon the seamanship and resourcefulness of the Merchant Service. The first papers on the subject in the transport department are dated September 9th, 1914. The arrangements for the organisation of the convoys and provision for their safety

by the Navy are beyond the scope of this history. Secrecy was all-important. Quebec was the port of embarkation, and subsequently assembly took place in Gaspé Bay. The movements of 18,000-ton vessels of 17-knot speed had to be synchronised with those of 3,000-ton vessels with a speed of 10 knots. Southampton was first selected as the port of disembarkation, and Liverpool was also suggested. The transport of the First Canadian Division was rendered more difficult by its inflated numbers, which amounted to 31,200 officers and men and 7,300 horses. The convoys left on October 3rd. During the voyage many changes were made in the proposed ports of disembarkation, but finally Devonport was selected. By October 15th all the transports, excepting one, the *Manhattan*, which sailed separately, had reached Plymouth Sound, and they had been unloaded on October 22nd. In view of the want of previous practice in station-keeping between merchant ships of such widely divergent speed and size, the safe transport of this heterogeneous convoy reflected great credit upon the masters and watch-keeping officers of the merchant ships. Thirty-one vessels (total gross tonnage 321,000) carried the Canadian troops; two more, with the Newfoundland contingent and a British infantry battalion (2nd Lincolnshire) accompanied the convoys on October 3rd, and four cargo vessels left independently between October 7th and November 7th. There were only a few minor claims for damage to transports, and only one adverse incident; some rifles were carried on to Glasgow by one of the transports after the disembarkation at Devonport.

(6) *Dispatch of Transports from Egypt to India, and Conveyance of Egyptian Garrison to England.*—On September 12th the Viceroy of India made representations to the War Office on the subject of requirements in transports, and it was suggested that the twenty then on their way to Egypt with Territorial troops should go on to India for use of the military authorities. Between September 26th and 28th nine transports were sent on to India from Egypt, and one vessel from Marseilles. Four transports (gross tonnage 38,240) left Alexandria for England with the original Egyptian garrison (strength 78 officers, 3,074 other ranks, including 220 natives with 625 animals), on September 30th, and one transport left Port Sudan, carrying a

British battalion (1st Suffolk), on October 3rd, arriving at Southampton on October 11th.

(7) *Transfer of Wessex Territorial Division to India.*—On September 23rd a demand was received to move this division to India, the numbers being estimated at 490 officers, 14,372 other ranks, and 363 horses. Four transports were detained at Southampton for the purpose. The troops embarked on October 9th in nine transports, total gross tonnage 73,000. Two hundred and twenty naval ratings were sent to Malta in one of the transports, the *Ingonia*, which would otherwise have proceeded empty to India. The convoy arrived at Bombay and Karachi on November 9th–11th.

(8) *Movement of British Troops from India.*—This movement was initiated on October 10th, 1914. The first group, consisting of 5 battalions of infantry, 11 R.F.A. batteries, 3 R.G.A. heavy batteries, details, and women and children (the troops totalling 227 officers and 11,500 men), left Bombay on October 16th in seven transports (total gross tonnage 62,000) and arrived safely at Plymouth on November 16th with the exception of the *Dunera*, which put into Southampton the same day, having run considerable risk of being torpedoed by submarines on her way up-Channel. She was the only transport in the convoy not fitted with wireless telegraphy. This need was supplied before her next voyage.

The second group, of 9 battalions of infantry and 2 R.H.A. and 2 R.F.A. batteries, 3 companies of R.G.A., women, children, and horses (the troops totalling 332 officers and 11,887 men), left Bombay and Karachi on November 19th and 20th in nine transports (total gross tonnage 79,700) and arrived at Devonport on December 22nd. The handling of these loads while on board by the Merchant Service engaged in the transport work may be judged from the smooth disembarkation of the whole in forty hours, which elicited from the admiral of the port the expression “ admirably carried out.”

The third group of 5 battalions, accompanied by details and by very large numbers of women and children, besides the personnel of 2 Indian hospital ships and an Indian general hospital (the troops totalling 182 officers and 5,412 men), left Bombay and Karachi on December 9th and 10th in seven transports (total gross tonnage

63,700) and arrived at Avonmouth on January 10th, 1915.

The fourth group, of 1 battalion, with women and children (the troops totalling 52 officers and 1,420 men), left Bombay in one transport of 8,092 tons gross and arrived at Avonmouth on February 1st.

The fifth group, with details of numerous regiments left behind, women, children, and ordnance stores (the troops totalling 33 officers and 651 men), left India on February 23rd in four transports, of 34,000 tons gross; two were detained in Egyptian waters, one of these, the *Ionian*, being requisitioned for the General Officer Commanding. The two sent on, the *Caledonia* and *Aragon*, after detention at Gibraltar owing to the danger attending upon the full moon and possibility of enemy attack, arrived at Avonmouth on March 12th. There was an outbreak of measles amongst the children in these ships to add to the worries of mothers and officers. Nearly 100 cases occurred, of which 75 were in the *Caledonia*. The remaining transport, the *Saturnia*, ultimately came on to Avonmouth via Marseilles.

(9) *Transfer of Home Counties Territorial Division to India.*—The first intimation of this move was contained in a letter from the War Office dated October 14th, 1914, in which the hope was expressed that the division could be moved on October 25th. Three days later the number of troops was given as 457 officers and 12,112 men, of which number 36 officers and 800 men would be dropped at Aden. There was serious congestion of shipping at Plymouth at the time, causing delay in unloading shipping, so the port of Southampton was chosen and October 29th was the date selected for the convoy to leave. In spite of delays due to one transport, the *Dilwara*, developing a fire in her bunkers, and to another, the *Corsican*, grounding in Southampton Water, the convoy of ten transports (gross tonnage 90,500) left Southampton on September 29th and 30th. Owing to the political situation in Egypt, it was detained there to enable the convoy from India, due at Suez on November 18th, to be nearer Egypt. This enabled the *Dilwara* to join up, and the whole convoy arrived at Bombay between December 1st and 3rd. The revised numbers carried were 444 officers and 11,838 men.

(10) *Movement of New Zealand Reinforcements, and the*

*Second Australian Contingent and Reinforcements.*—On November 3rd, 1914, transports were requisitioned. On November 6th the date of departure was fixed provisionally for the middle of December. A hospital ship, the *Kyarra*, sailed on December 14th and the convoy left Albany on December 31st, consisting of nineteen transports, of which three (gross tonnage 20,350) carried the New Zealand reinforcements (strength 1,971), and sixteen (gross tonnage 149,700) the Australian second contingent and reinforcements (strength 9,453 officers and men and 4,609 animals). The convoy arrived at Suez on January 30th, 1915, at which time the attack by the Turks upon the Suez Canal was developing. One of the transports, the *Themistocles*, came on to England, calling at Malta to bring 184 details to England and at Gibraltar to take on board 392 details.

(11) *Transport of Wessex Reserve Territorial Division to India, etc.*—On November 11th, 1914, the War Office asked for transport to India for the Welsh Territorial Division, but the Wessex Reserve Territorial Division was afterwards substituted, and the date of dispatch fixed as December 12th. Five transports (total gross tonnage 47,000) were employed. The numbers of troops were 338 officers and 10,057 other ranks. The vessels arrived at Bombay and Karachi between January 4th and 8th, 1915. The Scottish Women's Hospital, destined for Serbia, was dropped at Malta.

This movement may be said to have completed the original military mobilisation of the Empire.

### (c) THE DARDANELLES EXPEDITION

The transfer of the British Army to France was, as we have seen, an operation for which preparations had previously been made. The extemporised arrangements in connection with the relief of Antwerp followed. The character of the work thrown on the Mercantile Marine in these operations can be gathered from the brief details which have been given, and some estimate can also be formed of the stupendous effort involved in carrying out the sea movements required to mobilise and to distribute, in the first instance, the military forces and resources of the Empire. Details of the tonnage of transports have been added as a guide for estimates of the amount of

shipping required to move military units and drafts respectively for long or short voyages, a question of considerable importance to an island Power, from the point of view both of defence and of attack. In order to complete the detailed account of the movement of the "first million," it is necessary to give some account of the initial movements entailed by the decision to send troops from the United Kingdom to the Mediterranean with an ultimate destination in hostile territory, the Gallipoli Peninsula, together with some preliminary events leading up to that operation.

On February 11th, 1915, three transports were requisitioned to move 2,800 Royal Marines and details from Southampton to Mombasa, starting on February 17th. Eight hundred men were subsequently deducted from this number, and about 220 Artillery and Engineers were added. The requisitioning of two of the transports, the *Alnwick Castle* and *Dunluce Castle*, was cancelled, and another—the *Grantully Castle*—substituted. A further demand for one ship to be fitted partly as a hospital ship led to the requisitioning of the *Grantully Castle* being cancelled and the *Somali* and *Alnwick Castle* (again) being taken up, the *Somali's* hospital fittings to be erected on the voyage out. Some horse-boats and guns were to be taken. As an example of the uncertainties with which the movement of troops was attended owing to changes in the political and military situations, on February 16th all these arrangements were cancelled, and it was decided to send the Royal Naval Division and the 29th Division to the Mediterranean. On February 20th a requisition was received for the transport of 7 battalions of the Naval Division, and about 8,000 officers and men, to leave Avonmouth on February 27th for Lemnos. Thirteen transports were employed in this convoy, one of them carrying mule transport, one a Naval Air Force unit, and four of them stores. Four ships were ordered to leave on February 27th, and four on the 28th.

In connection with this rapid embarkation (which led to subsequent delay owing to the packing of the holds of the transports), it may be noted that it was not realised that the troops embarked were likely to take part at once in an opposed landing on a hostile coast. The complication of the needs of troops in action or who were likely to be in

action, as affecting the packing of holds, has already been touched upon when dealing with the transfer of base of the British Army in France from Le Havre to St. Nazaire and Nantes. While the rapid embarkation of the troops and stores reflected great credit upon those concerned, it may be put on record that extra time spent in packing the holds of transports, under expert military supervision, if proceeding to a destination in hostile territory, may cause delay at the time, but such delay at the outset is well repaid subsequently by the saving of time and losses in carrying out such a delicate operation as landing troops in face of opposition.

The numbers in the 29th Division were at first estimated at 717 officers, 21,971 other ranks, and 6,391 horses; the numbers actually carried were 705 officers, 20,533 men, and 6,522 animals. Nineteen transports were employed, and five store transports, one, the *Inkonka*, carrying an Air Force unit. The vessels sailed, separately, for Alexandria at intervals between February 27th and March 15th, 1915, arriving on various dates from March 14th onwards.

The 2nd Mounted Division was directed to follow as soon as possible after the 29th Division. The approximate numbers were 525 officers, 9,470 men, and 9,585 horses. No remount ships were available. Nineteen transports were appropriated, and the vessels sailed in groups between April 8th and 13th, calling at Malta for orders. Three transports were kept for subsequent embarkations on April 15th, and one transport, with the G.H.Q. signal company, was ordered direct to Lemnos. The transports began to arrive at Alexandria on April 20th.

In the meantime twelve transports containing horse-boats, fittings, and crews for them, with their rations, had been dispatched from Portsmouth singly by coastwise route for Alexandria, where they were urgently needed, a demand for the transport of 10,000 men of the Australian and New Zealand forces from that port on February 27th having been received.

By midnight on March 21st/22nd, 1915, the numbers of British Dominion, Colonial, and Indian troops which had been transported by sea by the British Mercantile Marine amounted to about 1,039,300. This figure represents effectives. 137,169 sick and wounded had also been



carried. Within six months of the declaration of war, therefore, well over a million armed combatants of the British Empire, with their equipment and stores, had been transported across the world's oceans and seas, an achievement without precedent in history. Out of the first million there were no casualties amongst the troops, either from marine risk or from enemy action. When the constant transfer of shipping from familiar to unfamiliar voyages is considered, and account is taken of the navigational and the other difficulties, there is no need to emphasise the enterprise and organising power of British shipowners, or the seamanship, resourcefulness, and zeal of the masters and crews. One and all, they served the nation well in the hour when it was confronted with a situation the gravity of which, in view of many unknown factors, it had been impossible fully to foresee.

Apart from the tentative plans for the transport of the Expeditionary Force, the movements by sea of the military forces in accordance with the wishes of the War Office had to be provided for at a few days' notice. Arrangements had to be improvised as each emergency arose, and every call which was made on the shipping firms or the crews of the ships concerned was met promptly and efficiently. No contract, written or implied, existed between the State and the Mercantile Marine, but nevertheless the whole of its resources, material and personnel, were instantly and ungrudgingly placed at the service of the nation. The success achieved in face of constantly changing conditions by sea and by land was in no small measure due to the Naval Transport Department, which requisitioned and loaded the ships. And, as has been indicated, the Navy, on which devolved the responsibility of protecting the transports while on passage in face of undeveloped enemy forces, fulfilled its mission. The pride in the transportation of the first million troops without the loss of a single life is shared by the men who served under the Red and White Ensigns.

## CHAPTER V

### MERCHANT SEAMEN AND THE BLOCKADE

THE blockade of Germany, which was instituted immediately after the declaration of war, differed in many important respects from the blockade maintained during the long struggle with France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the result that from 1914 onwards merchant ships and merchant seamen were required to bear no mean share of the burden. Students are familiar with the strain which was imposed upon blockaders in the past owing to the uncertainties of wind and sea. In the sailing-ship era, although the blockade was maintained as close to the enemy's shores as possible, there was no guarantee that enemy ships would not escape from port, and that incoming ships, favoured by the fortune of wind, would not succeed in eluding the vigilance of the blockaders. On three occasions the French fleet at Toulon managed to escape in spite of Nelson's vigilance, and frigates and privateers frequently broke out singly, inflicting heavy losses on British merchant vessels.

During the period which intervened between the close of the Napoleonic Wars and the opening of the Great War in 1914, it had come to be recognised that the advent of the steam engine, the increased range of the high-power gun mounted on shore, and the evolution of the torpedo in destroyer and submarine had radically affected the whole problem of maintaining a blockade. Whereas the sailing man-of-war, moreover, was a self-contained unit of power, with water and provisions sufficient for the needs of the officers and men for a period ranging from three to six months, the modern man-of-war had become dependent on auxiliaries for food and stores, and radius of action was restricted by limited capacity for carrying fuel. In these circumstances the blockade of Germany was maintained at long range; the ships of the



ON WATCH IN THE ARCTIC.



Grand Fleet were based on Scapa Flow, Cromarty, and the Firth of Forth, and from time to time they left harbour to carry out what were known as "sweeps" in the North Sea.

Before hostilities opened, the naval authorities had realised that forces would be necessary to keep the seas in all weathers, acting as the antennæ of the Grand Fleet and maintaining a constant patrol in order to prevent contraband being conveyed into Germany. At first this arduous duty was confided to groups of the older cruisers of the Navy, but eventually, owing to the unseaworthiness of these vessels and their restricted fuel capacity and to their being required for other services, it devolved upon armed merchant ships, which, though commanded by naval officers, were manned by seamen of the Mercantile Marine. Long before the war came to its close the active blockade of Germany was being maintained by the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, consisting of twenty-five large merchant ships, and it may always be a source of pride to shipowners, and in particular to the officers and men of the Mercantile Marine, that merchant ships bore the responsibility which in former days had been discharged by frigates of the Navy, and that the character of the ships, in association with the high standard of seamanship of the crews, enabled a more successful blockade to be sustained in conditions of great difficulty than had been known in any previous war. The significance of that success can be appreciated only in knowledge of the conditions in which it was achieved.

There were two channels by which goods might enter Germany either direct or by way of the northern countries of Europe: one was through the Straits of Dover and the other round the north of Scotland. The laying of a large mine-field in the extreme southern portion of the North Sea compelled all vessels to go through the Downs, and thus it was possible to intercept and examine every ship which passed up and down the English Channel. The problem presented by the northern route was far more difficult of solution. The distance from the north of Scotland to Iceland is 450 miles, and from Iceland to Greenland another 160 miles. Once vessels had passed this line and made the coast of Norway inward bound, they could proceed to their destinations inside territorial

waters where they could not be stopped and examined. Ships which were outward bound could also take advantage of the territorial waters of Norway, and then, favoured by darkness, mist, or fog, could make a dash for the Atlantic with some confidence of escaping observation unless the patrols were numerous and vigilant. The problem set to the Northern Patrol, consisting of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, became, therefore, one of watching an area of over 200,000 square miles, the size of which was somewhat reduced during the winter months by ice. The patrol was maintained under many difficulties, since the vessels had necessarily to work at great distances from their bases and, owing to their limited number, were a long way out of sight of each other. During the winter, gales are almost incessant in this northern latitude, and when the wind falls fogs of varying density often shroud the sea. Finally, long before the submarine campaign on merchant shipping was embarked upon by the enemy systematically, submersible craft were engaged in searching for and attacking the ships which were maintaining the blockade. In these circumstances of danger from the forces of nature as well as from the stratagems of the enemy, a relentless economic constriction was imposed on Germany. The service involved officers and men in hardships with which British seamen had for many years been unfamiliar, many of the blockading vessels remaining at sea in spite of gales, fogs, and submarines for as long as a month or more at a stretch.

On the Saturday before the outbreak of war Rear-Admiral Dudley de Chair received orders from the Admiralty to mobilise the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, hoisting his flag on board the *CRESCENT* at Portsmouth. The other cruisers chosen to form the Squadron consisted of the sister ships *EDGAR* and *GRAFTON*, which were also at Portsmouth, the *ENDYMION*, *THESEUS*, and *GIBALTAR*, which were at Devonport, and the *ROYAL ARTHUR*, which was at Chatham; the *HAWKE*, which was also to join the Squadron, was refitting at Queenstown. The gunboat *DRYAD* was included in the command. The eight cruisers were old ships; they had been laid down under the Naval Defence Act of 1889. All of them, except the *GIBALTAR*, which was of 7,700 tons, displaced 7,350 tons. When new, they had attained speeds somewhat exceeding 19

knots ; they had a normal coal capacity of 850 tons, with a full load of 1,200 tons. The vessels, owing to their age, had been relegated to the Third Fleet of the Home Fleets before the opening of the war and were provided with nucleus crews on the lowest category, provision being made to complete the complement mainly from the Royal Naval Reserve. The Rear-Admiral commanding, on reaching Portsmouth, had without delay to mobilise this homogeneous and obsolete group of cruisers and take his force to sea in face of the enemy with officers and men drawn in the main from the Royal Naval Reserve, and therefore consisting mainly of merchant seamen.

As a result of extraordinary efforts the CRESCENT, GRAFTON, and EDGAR were ready by August 3rd, and Admiral de Chair proceeded at once, hoping to be joined off Plymouth by the ENDYMION, THESEUS, and GIBRALTAR. In this he was disappointed, as these three ships were delayed, but, signalling to them to follow with all dispatch, he pressed on, passing up the West Coast of England on August 4th to Scapa Flow.

At midnight orders were received to commence hostilities against Germany, and early on the following morning, when off the Mull of Cantire, the first blow against the enemy was struck when the GRAFTON, in accordance with the Admiral's orders, chased and captured the German s.s. *Wilhelm Behrens* (750 tons) and sent her into Greenock with a prize crew. The German steamer *Marie Glaeser* was also captured by the Tenth Cruiser Squadron later in the same day off the Isle of Man. On the following day the ENDYMION and THESEUS joined the flag at Scapa Flow, and late in the same day the CRESCENT and EDGAR put to sea, where the Admiral was joined later on by the other ships of his command. In accordance with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, the Rear-Admiral proceeded, by way of the westward of the Orkneys, to the area allotted to him in his war orders ; and thus began the work of patrol which was to be maintained without intermission until January 1918, in face of difficulties and hardships which no one at that period could have foreseen.

Throughout the period of hostilities the embarrassments which would in any circumstances have arisen in maintaining the patrol were increased owing to the decision

of the British Government that it was undesirable to declare a blockade in accordance with the generally recognised tenets of international law. It was determined to act under Orders in Council, the provisions of which were naturally criticised in neutral countries and particularly in the United States. For in endeavouring to cut off all Germany's supplies, it followed inevitably that the neutral States bordering on the enemy's territory suffered inconvenience through their traders, who under normal conditions carried on an active commerce with the United States and other countries on the American continent. Though the officers commanding the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, and the senior officers of the other naval forces which co-operated with them during the early period of the war, had no concern with questions of international politics or law, the existence in the background of controversies with other countries demanded that the utmost discretion and tact should be exercised in applying economic pressure upon Germany.

In the unparalleled circumstances in which the blockade of Germany was instituted, novel forms of procedure were evolved as a result of experience, and it soon became the established practice to send suspicious vessels into a neighbouring port for examination. This procedure was the subject of a good many protests on the part of neutrals, but it was an inevitable feature of a blockade under modern conditions, as it was difficult to open hatches in heavy weather without wetting the cargo, and an order to sift the cargo to the bottom meant hoisting it all on deck and keeping the ship in submarine waters many days—a source of danger the neutral ships did not care to accept.

Experience proved that it was safer and more humane in view of the dangers of fog and of storm, apart from the activities of the enemy, to take neutral ships into a protected port for examination even if the difficulties of examination by sea had not been insuperable. Moreover, the British method contrasted favourably with that adopted by the Germans, who seldom, even in the North Sea, attempted to take a suspicious ship, neutral or allied, into port, but made it an almost invariable practice to sink her at sight, leaving the crew to fare as best they might in small boats. The enemy's actions were in striking contrast with the orders issued at the beginning of the



war by the Admiralty. These directed that officers and men engaged in blockade work were to treat the captains and crews of suspected neutral ships with the utmost courtesy and consideration, and to place them and their vessel in as little danger or inconvenience as was consistent with the efficient maintenance of the blockade.

At first the work of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was carried out under conditions of peculiar difficulty. The Rear-Admiral commanding had been provided with a number of old cruisers with newly mobilised crews; the force had to be transformed into an efficient and well-disciplined unit, and provision had to be made for keeping the vessels supplied with coal and stores. The Admiral had also to consider the problem of securing convenient and suitable bases. Over and above all this, the work of the Squadron was subject to interruption owing to the demands which were made upon it. Early in the month of August it was, for instance, required to act as the advance screen of the Grand Fleet during a sweep in the North Sea; it steamed four miles ahead of the Grand Fleet, the whole force proceeding in the direction of the Skagerrak on the lookout for the enemy's fleet. At this period, moreover, reports were repeatedly reaching the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet of the proposed movement of German men-of-war and armed merchantmen, of suspicious happenings in the islands to the north of Scotland, as well as of floating mines which often proved to be merely fishing-buoys. For these and other reasons ships had to be repeatedly detached from the patrol, and it proved no easy matter in the circumstances to carry out the duties assigned to the Squadron, which, owing to the absence of vessels coaling or undergoing repairs, was never at its full strength. The Admiral had also to improvise a defensive system at Lerwick, guns being landed from his squadron to enable the harbour to resist an enemy raid. Great anxiety prevailed lest the enemy should land a large force on the Shetlands, and on several occasions rumours of German transports full of troops having passed out of the Baltic were received. Provision had also to be made for protecting the supplies of coal which were being dispatched to the White Sea for the use of the Russians.

By the middle of August the Tenth Cruiser Squadron

began to undergo a gradual change in its composition, which was eventually to lead to its reconstruction. On the 18th the armed merchant cruiser *Alsatian*, one of the liners of the Allan Line, joined the flag, and about a week later the *Mantua* reported to the Rear-Admiral for patrol duty, and she, again, was joined by the *Oceanic* before the end of the month. The arduous and dangerous character of the work which had been assigned the Squadron was soon made apparent by a series of untoward incidents. On September 8th the Admiral commanding received information that the *Oceanic* was ashore at Hœvdi Grund in a dense fog, two and a half miles E. by S. from South Ness, Foula Island, in the Shetlands. This liner unfortunately became a total wreck, the crew being rescued by the *Alsatian* and landed at Liverpool.

The arrival of the armed merchant cruiser *Teutonic* on September 20th was a welcome accession to the strength of the Squadron, but the anxieties of Admiral de Chair were not lessening, for from day to day reports reached him of the increasing activity of enemy submarines. That the menace to his ships, in spite of the fact that zigzagging had become a matter of daily routine, was a real one was soon to be proved by an event which robbed the patrol of one of its units and resulted in the loss of 560 lives. On the afternoon of October 15th the THESEUS reported the presence of submarines on the patrol line on which she was operating in company with the EDGAR, THESEUS, and HAWKE. A torpedo had been fired at her, passing astern without doing any damage. The senior officer promptly ordered all the cruisers to proceed north-west at full speed.

At that time the HAWKE was not in sight. Earlier in the morning she had been observed steaming to the south-west to examine a steamer, and that proved to be the last that was seen of the ship. At 4.30 that afternoon Admiral de Chair endeavoured to get into touch with the HAWKE by wireless, but without result. He immediately reported the ominous silence to the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, and the SWIFT was directed to proceed from Scapa at high speed to search for the HAWKE in the position from which she had last been reported. Two divisions of destroyers were afterwards dispatched from Scapa to search for the vessel. On the following day the SWIFT picked up a raft with an officer and twenty men—

the sole survivors of the HAWKE, which, it was then learnt, had been sunk by a submarine.

Within a short time of the raft being sighted, the SWIFT herself was attacked by one or more submarines while engaged in her work of rescue, several torpedoes being fired at her. It was only with great difficulty that the SWIFT, manœuvring at high speed amid the wreckage, with destroyers screening her, succeeded in rescuing these survivors. In spite of the danger in which he stood, Captain Charles T. Wintour remained on the scene of the disaster until he was satisfied that there was no one else to be picked up.

The loss of the HAWKE convinced the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet that these large and old cruisers were being risked unduly by employment without destroyers in the central part of the North Sea. It was decided, therefore, to withdraw the ships to a better strategic position to the northward and eastward of the Shetland Islands, the smaller craft being directed to watch the Fair Island Channel and the Pentland Firth approaches to the North Sea. At the same time it was arranged that the Battle Fleet, when possible, should be kept to the westward of the Orkneys, forming at once a support for the cruisers and a second blockade line, or that it should cruise to the north and east of the Shetland Islands with its destroyer screen, the cruisers patrolling farther south.

As the winter closed in reports from the patrols indicated that the cruisers of the EDGAR class were ill-fitted for the arduous sea work that had been assigned to them, particularly as in chasing suspicious merchant vessels it was often necessary that their old boilers and engines should be hard pressed. Frequent gales with high seas running also contributed to the conviction that the vessels were unsuited for patrol duties in these latitudes. On October 29th the GRAFTON reported that her main condenser was leaking, that her funnels were showing signs of weakness, and that it was feared that the copper expansion ring at the back of the port high-pressure slide was fractured. On the same day, during a combined movement to cut off a suspicious steamer, the THESEUS signalled that she had broken down and had had to ease steam owing to engine defects. In spite of these misfortunes this steamer, which proved to be the *Bergensfiord*, was captured by the

ENDYMION. She had on board the German Consul-General from Seoul, Korea, together with six German stowaways. She was on passage from New York to Bergen with mails and passengers and general cargo, and a quantity of crude rubber and copper. The ship was sent into Kirkwall for examination. On the following day the troubles of the Squadron were increased, when the ENDYMION reported serious defects, and the CRESCENT also was experiencing mechanical troubles. Early in November the GRAFTON, which had already developed engine defects, had to leave the patrol for five days, owing to a number of rivets connecting the furnace and combustion chamber in one of her boilers becoming loose. She was followed the next day into port by the ENDYMION, with several perforations in the inner bottom over the feed tank.

Confronted with these difficulties, Admiral de Chair, in spite of heavy seas and strong wind, struggled to maintain the patrol as best he could. On November 11th, the EDGAR having developed engine defects, the Admiral proceeded with his depleted force to take up the work of the northern patrol once more, when he encountered a storm to the west of the Shetlands which led eventually to the decision to withdraw all these old cruisers from this arduous work. The sea conditions were such that the Squadron had to heave to owing to the fierceness of the gale. During the forenoon heavy seas swept over the fore part of the CRESCENT (flag-ship), wrecking the fore bridge, sweeping overboard the Admiral's sea cabin, carrying away the ventilating cowls of the foremost stokeholds—a considerable amount of water passing downwards and putting the fires out—breaking hammock nettings, seriously damaging the port cutters, besides removing bodily a whaler, and tearing away hawser reels and deck fittings owing to the rotten state of the woodwork. The EDGAR lost an able seaman, who was swept overboard, and a cutter was damaged. She also sustained other injuries. The THESEUS, which was nearer under the lee of the Shetland Islands, suffered less seriously. After temporary repairs had been effected to the CRESCENT at Swarbacks Minn, Rear-Admiral de Chair proceeded to Scapa Flow.

On arrival he was informed by the Commander-in-

Chief that it had been decided to send half the ships of his squadron to the Clyde Yard for refit. A few days later conferences were held with the Admiralty officials as to the amount of work which was to be done in the *CRESCENT*, *ROYAL ARTHUR*, and *GRAFTON*. The whole work was to be completed by December 7th. In the meantime, however, the future of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was reviewed by the Admiralty, and on November 20th it was decided that the seven *EDGAR* cruisers, whose unfitness for the work of the patrol had been fully demonstrated, should return at once to their home port and pay off. The experiment of utilising these old ships had not succeeded, and in light of the experience which had already been gained with armed merchant cruisers, possessing good sea-keeping qualities, it was determined to reconstitute the Tenth Cruiser Squadron.

Rear-Admiral de Chair hoisted his flag in the *Alsatian*, at Liverpool, on December 4th, in command of his new force, which it was arranged should consist of the following twenty-four armed merchant cruisers:

<i>Alsatian</i> (Flag)	.	Re-arming with 6-inch guns at Liverpool.
<i>Eskimo</i>	.	} Fitting out at Liverpool.
<i>Caribbean</i>	.	
<i>Ambrose</i>	.	
<i>Oropesa</i>	.	
<i>Hilary</i>	.	
<i>Hildebrand</i>	.	
<i>Virginian</i>	.	
<i>Cedric</i>	.	} Fitting out at London.
<i>Orotava</i>	.	
<i>Clan Macnaughton</i>	.	
<i>Digby</i>	.	
<i>Otway</i>	.	} Fitting out at Avonmouth.
<i>Patia</i>	.	
<i>Patuca</i>	.	
<i>Bayano</i>	.	} Fitting out at Hull.
<i>Motagua</i>	.	
<i>Changuinola</i>	.	} Fitting out on the Tyne.
<i>Calyx</i>	.	
<i>Viknor</i>	.	} Fitting out on the Clyde.
<i>Columbella</i>	.	
<i>Teutonic</i>	.	} On the Northern Patrol.
<i>Mantua</i>	.	
<i>Laurentic</i>	.	Was employed on special service proceeding to west coast of Africa, with orders to join Admiral de Chair's flag on her return.

For the time being, though other naval forces were being temporarily pressed into the service, the blockade of the

enemy was somewhat relaxed. The presence at sea of the reconstituted Tenth Cruiser Squadron was urgently necessary, but unfortunately the work of fitting out was subject to repeated delays, partially due to recurrent labour troubles. At Liverpool, as well as at London and Avonmouth, constant pressure had to be exerted by the commanding officers and the officers superintending the work on board. The first ship to be completed was the *Cedric*, which was finished on December 11th, but it was not until January 16th that the *Motagua* was ready for sea.

The change in the character of the Squadron also involved a great many alterations in the administration. One of the most difficult problems was connected with coaling, and a roster had to be established to enable the ships to proceed in proper rotation to Liverpool or Glasgow for this purpose. On passage to the Mersey and Clyde, it was recognised that they were exposed to the considerable risk of being torpedoed. This disadvantage had to be accepted. Owing to the many demands which were then being made upon the light craft of the Navy, it was impossible to provide an escort at any stage of the voyage. That losses were not incurred was due largely to the fine spirit exhibited by officers and men, and to the sense of discipline and *esprit de corps* which was rapidly developed under very unusual conditions. For the personnel of the Squadron consisted only of a leavening of naval officers and men accustomed to the naval routine, and for the rest the crews consisted of ratings of the Royal Naval Reserve and the Mercantile Marine, in addition to the small number of men of the Royal Fleet Reserve. The higher signal ratings were drawn from the Navy, and these were assisted by Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve men. The wireless installations were in charge of naval ratings, largely reinforced by Marconi operators. The ships were under the command of naval officers, but for navigational purposes the masters, accustomed to handling them, were in most cases retained, together with a large proportion of the other mercantile officers. Among the crews were a large number of men who had served in the ships under peace conditions, and the commanding officers, realising the ordeal to which these merchant seamen were submitting with splendid devotion, adopted every possible measure to ameliorate the conditions in which they lived.

In such large passenger ships as had been requisitioned for patrol duty, the provision of ample cabin space is generally recognised as of the first importance if the vessels are to be run at a profit, and consequently the quarters of the crew are often cramped and uncomfortable. The men under peace conditions are at sea only for a comparatively short period, and find compensations for the discomforts experienced afloat during their frequent periods of relaxation ashore. The patrol service on which these ships were engaged involved, on the other hand, lengthy periods at sea under exceptionally arduous conditions, and it was found feasible to increase the accommodation of the men and to improve the amenities of life. A special effort was made to minister to the comfort of the firemen. Under ordinary conditions of service, the fireman of the Mercantile Marine seldom troubled to change his clothes, although the Board of Trade regulations require that washing facilities shall be provided. During a cross-Atlantic trip many of these men are content to sleep in the clothes in which they work, and owing to the state of their bedding at the end of the voyage, it is frequently burnt. The captains of the ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron saw to it that every facility was provided to encourage the men to wash and to shift into clean rig as soon as their work was done. It became the aim of the officers, in short, to introduce naval routine, which meant that the men were shifted into clean rig after each spell of work, and were encouraged to make the most of their leisure time. In addition to improved living-quarters, they were given an airy smoking-room in each vessel. In the *Alsation* this smoking-room became one of the "show places" in the ship, and the men exhibited great pride in its cleanliness and decoration.

The conditions under which patrol was maintained at the turn of the years 1914-15 is reflected in the diary of the Admiral commanding:

"*Tuesday, December 29th.*—Left 'A' Patrol in *Alsation* and proceeded south of Faeroe Islands to 'B' Patrol in order to get into touch with *Cedric* and *Hildebrand*. *Calyx* searched for mine (probably one of those laid off Tory Island) reported west of Hebrides. Information

was received of arrival of *Teutonic* at Liverpool and sailing of *Viknor* from Tyne.

“ *Wednesday, December 30th.*—Wind from S.S.W. backing to S.S.E., force 7 and squally, heavy sea, but several neutral steamers were intercepted by Squadron. It was too rough to board, but ships were taken under lee of the land and prize crews put on board. They were then sent in to Kirkwall. *Calyx* was ordered to Liverpool to coal.

“ *Thursday, December 31st.*—Wind still southerly, blowing hard, hail and snow squalls, heavy sea. Eleven ships on patrol; five coaling and four not yet joined. Ships at Tilbury and Avonmouth still delayed by labour disputes and strikes.

“ *Friday, January 1st, 1915.*—Heavy gale from south, backing to south-east. Glass fell to 28·50°; very heavy sea. Detached *Virginian* to patrol north of Iceland to see if shipping were passing that way, and also to report if passage were blocked with ice. *Mantua* patrolling passage between Iceland and Faeroes. *Alsatian* reinforced ‘C’ Patrol as *Otway* was escorting ships to Kirkwall. *Hilary* was ordered to stand by dismantled Norwegian sailing-ship till gale moderated.

“ *Viknor* joined ‘B’ Patrol, but owing to damage sustained in gale, had to take shelter in Burra Sound.

“ Impressed the importance of armed merchant cruisers of not interfering with neutral ships’ colours, and also of treating them with courtesy.

“ *Saturday, January 2nd.*—Wind in south-east, force 9, heavy sea. Glass fell to 28·10°. *Hilary* reported that at 1.15 a.m., while towing Norwegian barque *Marietta*, which had been dismasted, the vessel sprang a leak and foundered. Her crew took to the boats, but one boat capsized and only six men were saved. Among those drowned were Sub-Lieutenant Oswald E. Miles, R.N.R., and Frank Scott, Signalman, O.N.D.J. 5747, of *Hilary*.

“ *Cedric* was lying to with prize, weather being too bad to board. *Hilary* proceeded to Kirkwall to land survivors of Norwegian barque.

“ *Sunday, January 3rd.*—Gale moderating, glass rising, weather clearing. Each ship of ‘D’ Patrol having two prize crews away, also several prize crews being away from ships of ‘B’ and ‘C’ Patrols, arranged for *Hilary* to bring them out and distribute them. Was informed





A BEARDING-BOAT ON DUTY.



by the Admiral at Queenstown that *Orotava* had left that port to join my flag. This armed merchant cruiser had left London about December 24th, but, owing to incomplete state and defects developed, she had put into Queenstown for necessary repairs, etc.

“*Monday, January 4th.*—*Bayano* arrived and was placed under orders of *Otway* on ‘C’ Patrol.

“*Virginian* was detached to Liverpool to coal, with orders to return as soon as possible in readiness to join special patrol with *Teutonic* and *Mantua* off Norway, ordered by Commander-in-Chief for January 10th.

“*Digby* reported sailing from Thames to join my flag.

“*Tuesday, January 5th.*—*Mantua* was detached to Liverpool to coal, with orders similar to those given to *Virginian*.

“Directed the senior officers of ‘B’ and ‘C’ Patrols to shift their respective base-lines twenty miles to the westward at 8 a.m., at the same time warning them of the reported presence of submarines off the Shetlands.

“*Hildebrand* reported that in consequence of the submarine menace she was unable to go to Kirkwall, and that destroyers were being sent to bring in the steamer *Denver*, which she was escorting. I therefore directed *Hilary*, which was still at Kirkwall, to bring out all prize crews and distribute them to their own ships, leaving the harbour after dark.

“*Wednesday, January 6th.*—*Orotava* joined ‘B’ Patrol and *Oropesa* returned to ‘C’ Patrol.

“*Patia* was reported leaving Avonmouth and *Virginian* arrived at Liverpool. Detached *Caribbean* to Liverpool to coal. *Hilary* proceeded to St. Kilda, where she transferred ‘D’ Patrol prize crews to *Hildebrand*.

“*Alsatian* was working to westward of ‘C’ Patrol on a track approximating to the Atlantic route used by vessels passing north of Shetlands.

“*Thursday, January 7th.*—*Changuinola* was reported leaving Avonmouth, and *Mantua* arrived at Liverpool.

“*Alsatian* proceeded to westward as far as St. Kilda to communicate with ‘D’ Patrol and returned towards ‘B’ Patrol at night.

“*Cedric* reported an accident which occurred when hoisting in her motor-boat after boarding; four seamen

were injured and the boat had to be abandoned as a total wreck.

“*Friday, January 8th.*—Directed the senior officer of ‘C’ Patrol (*Otway* temporarily) to extend his patrol from lat.  $59^{\circ} 30' N.$  to lat.  $61^{\circ} 10' N.$

“During the forenoon I communicated by boat with *Cedric* and gave her the necessary directions for carrying out her patrol.

“*Saturday, January 9th.*—With the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, I remained south of the Faeroe Islands in order to direct patrol, and with the special purpose of insuring the interception of the Norwegian mail steamer *Bergensfjord*, which was expected to pass through patrol areas between January 9th and 13th, and was reported to have German reservists on board, travelling under neutral passports.

“*Hildebrand* reported that all prize crews had been distributed to their ships.

“*Clan Macnaughton* was reported to be unable to attain a speed of more than  $11\frac{1}{2}$  knots.

“*Mantua* at Liverpool informed me that she had developed a leak which necessitated docking her; she would not be ready to sail till about 19th.

“*Digby* arrived from London and joined ‘B’ Patrol.

“Find it very difficult to keep touch with other patrols when north of the Faeroes, due to the short range and small power of the Marconi W/T apparatus with which the armed merchant cruisers are fitted.”

On the day on which the Admiral commanding the Tenth Cruiser Squadron learnt that the *Motagua*, the last of the armed merchant cruisers to be completed, was leaving Avonmouth to join his flag, news was received that the *Viknor* had not reached Liverpool with the prisoners taken out of the Norwegian steamer *Bergensfjord*. The *Viknor* had intercepted this vessel in lat.  $62^{\circ} 10' N.$ , long.  $2^{\circ} 24' W.$  On learning of this success, the Rear-Admiral, in the *Alsatian*, at once proceeded to this position in company with the *Patia* and the *Teutonic*. He found the *Viknor* standing by the Norwegian ship, having arrested a passenger on board who was travelling under the name of Spero with a neutral passport. This passenger admitted that his real name was Baron Hans

Adam von Wedel, who was wanted by the British Government on suspicion of being a German secret agent. He claimed American citizenship. Six stowaways and a passenger who were believed to be German reservists were also arrested and removed to the *Viknor*. The circumstances in which the *Bergensfjord* had been intercepted had aroused suspicion. She had passed north of the Faeroes by night, evidently with the purpose of avoiding the patrol, and had no intention of calling at Kirkwall for examination in accordance with the now established routine. A prize crew was put on board, and the *Viknor* was directed to escort the *Bergensfjord* to Kirkwall, afterwards proceeding herself to Liverpool to land her prisoners and complete with coal. The *Alsatian* took up a position on the other beam, and in this fashion the Norwegian ship was taken towards the Scottish port.

On the following day the *Viknor* made her position through Malin Head signal station. Three days later Rear-Admiral Henry Stileman, senior officer at Liverpool, reported that the *Viknor* had not arrived at that port. A report subsequently received from Port Rush suggested that she had struck a mine off the north coast of Scotland and had been lost with all hands. At this period, in addition to the menace of the submarine, the ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron had to face a determined attempt by the enemy to mine the waters in which the Northern Patrol was being maintained. Day after day mines were being reported in the North Sea, as well as on the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland, and it was assumed that many of them were mines which had broken adrift from their moorings during the gales which had recently been experienced. As they were not provided with safety appliances, as provided for under the Hague Convention, they were a constant source of danger to shipping, naval and mercantile, especially at night. In spite, however, of all the difficulties with which it was faced the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was maintaining the blockade in greater efficiency than ever; between December 26th and January 18th no fewer than eighty ships were intercepted, of which fifty-two had been eastward bound. It was a source of encouragement to officers and men that the Admiralty was seized with a due appreciation of the work that was done. They placed on record at

this time their high opinion of the manner in which the operation was being carried out, stating that "the work of the vessels of the Northern Patrol is an extremely arduous one. Winter gales are incessant; four vessels have gone down—two with all hands and the others with heavy loss of life." It was added that "the approach of long summer days increases enormously the submarine risk. No blockade in history has ever been so effective from a naval point of view, or so full of unexpected dangers."

At the end of January the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was disposed on the following lines:

" A " PATROL.	" B " PATROL.
NORTH OF THE FAEROES.	NORTH OF SHETLANDS.
<i>Alsatian</i> (Flag).	<i>Teutonic</i> (Senior Officer).
<i>Otway.</i>	<i>Cedrie.</i>
<i>Columbella.</i>	<i>Patia.</i>
<i>Mantua.</i>	<i>Caribbean.</i>
<i>Virginian.</i>	<i>Orotava.</i>
	<i>Viknor.</i>
" C " PATROL.	" D " PATROL.
SOUTH OF SYDERO.	WEST OF HEBRIDES.
<i>Motagua</i> (Senior Officer).	<i>Hildebrand</i> (Senior Officer).
<i>Bayano.</i>	<i>Patuca.</i>
<i>Oropesa.</i>	<i>Eskimo.</i>
<i>Changuinola.</i>	<i>Calyx.</i>
<i>Hilary.</i>	<i>Ambrose.</i>
<i>Digby.</i>	<i>Clan Macnaughton.</i>

This disposition had been found the most effective for intercepting blockade-runners attempting to break through going east or enemy raiders and mine-layers going west. The principle on which this new organisation was based was that the actual lines of patrols were sufficiently far apart to ensure that those ships which passed one line by night were almost certain to be intercepted by the other during daylight. The ships on each line of patrol were, as a rule, thirty miles apart and kept a uniform speed of 13 knots in the same direction, altering course 16 points every three hours; by this means it was impos-

sible for any blockade-runner to get through a line in clear weather during the hours of daylight, the end ships of the patrol being in sight of land for the required time.

The following form of signal made to any group of ships was quite sufficient to place them on any patrol in the shortest possible time.

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	
S.O. 10th C.S.	<i>Cedric.</i>	"C" Patrol cross line 34° from lat. 58° 35' N., long. 9° W., at 10 a.m. and 2 a.m. daily, steering 240° and 60° respectively 25 miles apart from the south, <i>Cedric</i> , <i>Victorian</i> , <i>Patia</i> , <i>Orotava</i> , <i>Teutonic</i> , <i>Alcantara</i> ; speed 14 knots. Assume this order at 6 p.m. to-night, Monday.
	<i>Victorian.</i>	
	<i>Patia.</i>	
	<i>Orotava.</i>	
	<i>Teutonic.</i>	
	<i>Alcantara.</i>	

The reconstruction of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron tended to render the blockade far more efficient, owing to the better seaworthy qualities of the armed merchant cruisers as compared with the ships of the EDGAR class. But the boarding of steamers in stormy weather still imposed upon officers and men arduous and perilous duties. It was often a matter of considerable danger to place a prize crew on board a ship which had been intercepted and which it was thought advisable to send into port for examination. In the third week in February 1915 it was indeed a matter of great difficulty to maintain the efficiency of the patrol. On the 17th a heavy gale from the south-east, backing to E. by N., was experienced in the northern latitudes in which the squadron was working. The glass fell rapidly from 29·80° to 28·56° and snow and hail in heavy showers descended. A number of the ships had to lie to owing to the force of the storm. The *Columbella* was unable to steer the course assigned to her, and the *Calyx* had to run to the west of Loch Tarbert for shelter. To add to the troubles of these merchant seamen on war duty, it was reported that five submarines had been seen not far from Cape Wrath making west, apparently in order to harass British shipping. The gale continued throughout the following day, the wind coming from the east-south-east; from time to time there were snow squalls, and it was too rough to lower boats.

The conditions confronting the Admiral commanding constituted a nice problem in seamanship and exercised his judgment to the utmost. As an illustration we have the

case of the *Cæsarea* when she was about to leave Scapa with thirteen prize crews, which eight vessels of the squadron had placed on board neutral ships which had been sent into port. Owing to weather conditions, the speed of the squadron having been reduced, and in several cases ships having been compelled to lie to, he signalled to the *Cæsarea* postponing her departure as there was no possibility of transferring the men to their ships. The *Cæsarea* had, however, already sailed. In due course she reached the arranged rendezvous with her prize crews, but owing to the state of the sea it was impossible to launch a boat and consequently she had to return to Scapa. By the close of the week, in spite of all the difficulties experienced, no fewer than fifty-one ships, an average of over seven a day, had been intercepted, of which twelve had been sent into port with prize crews. By the week-end, indeed, the Rear-Admiral found that fifteen prize crews were away from their ships, and that owing to the weather there was no immediate hope of their return.

The arduous conditions of service began to tell on some of the men. A number of mercantile ratings who had signed on for three months expressed themselves unwilling to re-engage, thus raising a new problem which had not been foreseen. It was one, however, for which a remedy was found. An idea of the lives these men were leading can be obtained not only from what has been stated as to weather conditions, but is typified in the experience of the *Caribbean*. This vessel, on February 24th, was proving unsuitable for patrol work, as she was old and slow, and rolled badly in the heavy weather generally experienced in these latitudes. On February 24th she reported that one dynamo was completely disabled, and that her foremost funnel had shifted owing to heavy rolling; the roll in each direction sometimes exceeded 40°, and occasionally reached 50°, and not infrequently a gunwale was submerged. Towards the end of the month another heavy southerly gale with big seas was experienced. Once again it proved impossible to distribute prize crews among the ships to which they belonged, and the vessels of the patrol had to lie to.

The problems with which the captains of the ships of the squadron had sometimes to deal may be gathered



from an incident which occurred on February 27th. At 2.25 a.m. the *Patuca* had intercepted the American s.s. *Navahoe*, from Bremen bound for Norfolk (U.S.A.), steering west with side lights, but no steaming lights. When she was sighted, she altered course 16 points. On being overhauled she stopped, but as it was too rough to board she was signalled to follow the *Patuca* under the lee of the land, where examination of papers might be carried out. On this the captain reported his condenser broken, and added that it would take three hours to repair it. Later he made the following signal: "Condenser ready; no contraband; refuse to follow you." The *Patuca* was ordered to retain her until the weather moderated, and to board and examine her when possible. At 5 p.m. the *Patuca* reported that the *Navahoe* signalled "Lead," and was following her towards St. Kilda. On the following morning, at 3.50 the *Patuca* boarded the *Navahoe* under the lee of St. Kilda. In a very heavy squall the boarding boat was swamped alongside and had to be cut adrift, but the officers and crew managed to get on board the steamer. The *Patuca* then proceeded with the *Navahoe* and hove to thirty-three miles north of the island. As the state of the weather—a gale was blowing from the north-west—prevented hatches being lifted for examination, and the captain said he would require drinking and boiler water shortly, the Admiral directed the *Patuca* to take the *Navahoe* to Stornoway, the nearest port, and carry out the examination there. It was reported later that no mines or oil fuel were discovered at this examination, and the ship appeared to be in ballast, so all ended well. This incident followed closely upon the untimely death from exposure of the commanding officer of the *Patuca*, Commander France-Hayhurst, R.N. He died at Glasgow on the 24th.

Soon after March opened, intelligence was received of the sinking of one of the ships of the squadron—the *Bayano*. On the 10th there were no fewer than five armed merchant cruisers in the Clyde, a port that had for some time been utilised by a portion of the squadron for coaling and repairs. That night, which was very dark, the *Bayano* put to sea without lights to rejoin the flag. At 5.15 a.m. she was attacked by a submarine ten miles S.E. by E. from Corsewall Point off the Galway coast and sunk with

a heavy loss of life. On the same day the *Ambrose*, on reaching Liverpool, reported that she had been attacked off Oversay Island by a submarine on three separate occasions. Two torpedoes were fired, one in the first and one in the second attack, but on the third occasion the conning-tower of the submarine was seen about 400 yards on the port quarter. Fire was at once opened, and a hit was apparently scored after eight or nine rounds. The first successful shot threw up a thick water mist, and on two subsequent projectiles striking the water in the same place, a thick oily-looking spray appeared. Nothing more was seen of the enemy craft. The *Ambrose* was of slow speed and her escape was undoubtedly due to the skilful manner in which Commander Bruton manœuvred the vessel, and to the accuracy of the fire of the gunners. Three days later, while proceeding north from the Clyde, the *Digby* was also chased by a submarine off Skerryvore. She took refuge in Tobermory Harbour, but on the following day, having obtained a destroyer escort, she proceeded in safety to her patrol area.

On February 2nd the squadron suffered a serious loss. The *Clan Macnaughton*, on the extreme end of the Western Patrol, foundered in lat. 58° 47' N., long. 9° 27' W. with all hands. She was unable to signal any call for help. Such a call, however, would have been of little use, as all the ships that night on patrol were doing their best to look after themselves. They were having a most trying experience, as all lights sighted, even in the worst weather, had to be investigated and kept in sight till the weather moderated sufficiently to enable signals to be made. This was often difficult, especially in the case of sailing-ships driving before the gale under bare poles, and it is feared that in some such endeavour the *Clan Macnaughton* may have gone down. Two ships searched for three days in the vicinity, but no trace of life or wreckage was found.

About this time the Admiralty withdrew the *Calyx* and *Esquimo* from the squadron owing to the unfavourable reports which had been made upon them by the Rear-Admiral commanding. They were old boats of slow speed. The Admiralty were requested to requisition six more large ships for duty with the squadron in view of the stream of traffic through the patrol areas. On March 26th no fewer than eleven steamers were intercepted, of which

it was considered necessary to send seven into Kirkwall with prize crews. Day by day incidents proved that the eighteen ships which now constituted the squadron were inadequate for the work which had to be done. The bad weather at this period added to the difficulties. "The weather became very bad and prevented boarding in the open sea," Admiral de Chair reported on April 3rd, "but by taking ships under the lee of the nearest land, prize crews were put on board where required, and all vessels intercepted were dealt with. In some cases it was necessary to turn an intercepted vessel over from one ship to another of the patrol, as no more prize crews could be spared from the first ship's company. The *Patia* had six prize crews away. In all twenty-one prize crews were away from the squadron."

On rejoining the squadron after recoaling, the *Columbella* reported that the heavy seas experienced on the previous night had carried away her gun-shelter, and had put out of action the ammunition supply and communications on the fore-castle. The *Ambrose*, which had left Liverpool to rejoin the patrol, was for a time the cause of considerable anxiety at this time, but it was afterwards found that she had had to put into Belfast on account of heavy weather. These conditions led to a collision between the *Patia* and a Norwegian steamer during boarding operations, a plate of the British ship being started and a frame bent. To add to the troubles of the Admiral, news was received on April 17th that the *Virginian* had run ashore in the Clyde, opposite Govan Ferry, blocking the river and delaying the *Oropesa* on her way back to the patrol. While the squadron was contending with fierce gales in the more southerly waters in which the patrol was being maintained, farther north the ships were seriously embarrassed by the drift ice; as late as the end of May floes about one square mile in extent separated from the pack, suggesting that the ice was about to break up, and simultaneously the temperature of the water rose an average of 4° F.

In the meantime, however, the squadron had been strengthened by the six additional ships which the Admiralty had agreed to allot to the patrol service. These vessels were the *Alcantara*, the *Orcoma*, the *Andes*, the *Arlanza*, the *India*, and the *Ebro*. These measures

resulted in the squadron being at last brought up to the strength which it had originally been intended should be attained.

By the spring of 1915—before the loss of the *Viknor*, *Bayano*, and *Clan Macnaughton*—the Tenth Cruiser Squadron consisted of the following vessels, particulars being given of the owners, the naval officers in command, and the masters who were retained after the vessels had been requisitioned by the Admiralty :

Ship.	Owners.	Captain (R.N.) (in Command).	Masters (R.N.R.).
<i>Alcantara</i>	Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.	Cdr. T. E. Wardle	Lt.-Cdr. F. M. Main
<i>Alsatian</i>	Allan Line Steamship Co.	Capt. G. Trowby	Cdr. Edmund Outram
<i>Ambrose</i>	Booth Steamship Co.	Cdr. C. W. Brunton (after May 1915 Cdr. V. L. Bowring)	Lt. Bernard H. Symms
<i>Andes</i>	Pacific Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.	Cdr. C. W. Trousdale (after Jan. 1916 Cdr. C. B. Young)	Lt. Richard L. Fortier
<i>Arlanza</i>	Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.	Capt. D. T. Norris	Lt. C. J. Goble
<i>Bayano</i>	Elders & Fyffes, Ltd.	Cdr. H. C. Carr	Lt. Bernard Dunphy
<i>Caribbean</i>	Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.	Cdr. F. H. Walter	Lt.-Cdr. Chas. H. M. Woods
<i>Cedric</i>	Oceanic Steam Navigation Co.	Capt. R. Benson	Cdr. James O. Carter
<i>Changuinola</i>	Elders & Fyffes, Ltd.	Cdr. H. Brocklebank	Lt.-Cdr. Arthur H. Reade
<i>Clan Macnaughton</i>	Clan Line (Irvine, Cayzer & Co.)	Cdr. R. Jeffreys	Lt. George J. Welldrick
<i>Columbella</i>	Anchor Line (Henderson Bros.)	Capt. H. Heard (after July 1915 Capt. A. Bromley)	Lt. Raymond H. A. Dunn
<i>Digby</i>	Furness, Withy & Co.	Capt. R. F. Mahon (after Oct. 1915 Cdr. A. Warren and after Dec. 1915 French officers and crew)	Lt. Hamilton M. Hely
<i>Ebro</i>	Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.	Cdr. E. V. Dugmore	Lt. Leopold G. P. Vereker
<i>Hilary</i>	Booth Steamship Co.	Cdr. Bather	Lt. Chas M. Wray.
<i>Hildebrand</i>	Booth Steamship Co.	Capt. H. Edwards (after Dec. 1915 Capt. J. Grant Dalton)	Lt. Henry P. B. Smith

Ship.	Owners.	Captain (R.N.). (in command).	Masters (R.N.R.).
<i>India</i>	P. & O. Steam Navigation Co.	Cdr. W. G. Kennedy	Lt. Richard G. Groundwater
<i>Mantua</i>	P. & O. Steam Navigation Co.	Capt. C. Tibbetts	Capt. Frederick W. Vibert
<i>Motagua</i>	Elders & Fyffes, Ltd.	Capt. V. Phillimore (after Feb. 1915 Capt. J. Webster)	Lt.-Cdr. Robert Wallace
<i>Oceanic</i>	Oceanic Steam Navigation Co.	Capt. W. F. Slater	Cdr. H. Smith
<i>Orcoma</i>	Pacific Steam Navigation Co.	Cdr. C. W. Bruton (after May 1915)	Lt.-Cdr. John A. Holland
<i>Oropesa</i>	Pacific Steam Navigation Co.	Cdr. N. L. Stanley (after Dec. 1915 French officers and crew)	Lt. Frederick W. Robinson
<i>Orotava</i>	Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.	Cdr. G. E. Corbett	Lt. Reginald S. Ward
<i>Otway</i>	Orient Steam Navigation Co.	Capt. E. L. Booty	Cdr. Hugh G. Staunton
<i>Patia</i>	Elders & Fyffes, Ltd.	Capt. G. W. Vivian (after 1914 Cdr. V. L. Bowring)	Lt.-Cdr. Chas. H. Oxlade
<i>Patuca</i>	Elders & Fyffes, Ltd.	Cdr. C. H. France Hayhurst (after May 1915 Cdr. P. G. Brown and after Sept. 1915 Cdr. T. Dannreuther)	Lt.-Cdr. Sidney K. Bacon
<i>Teutonic</i>	Oceanic Steam Navigation Co.	Capt. H. Chatterton (after Oct. 1915 Cdr. A. H. Snyth)	Cdr. Hugh F. David
<i>Victorian</i>	Allan Line Steamship Co.	Cdr. F. H. Walter	Cdr. E. Cook
<i>Viknor</i>	The Viking Cruising Co.	Cdr. E. C. Ballantyne	Lt. W. C. M. Johnson
<i>Virginian</i>	Allan Line Steamship Co.	Cdr. H. H. Smith	Cdr. Alexander Rennie

A far more efficient patrol became possible as a result of the allocation of these additional ships to the squadron. The improvement threw into prominence the divergence of policy between the naval forces, intent only upon putting constriction upon the enemy, and the Foreign Office, anxious so to regulate the blockade as not to give neutral states justifiable cause of dissatisfaction. There was something to be said from both points of view. The action of the Foreign Office was the subject of not a little

criticism on the part of the naval authorities at Whitehall, as well as by officers who were submitting to service of unparalleled hardship only to see diplomatic action robbing them of the fruits of their vigilance. In the early months of the year 1915 two instances occurred which suggested that undue leniency was being exhibited to neutral vessels. In the first instance, the American s.s. *Greenbriar*, which had been taken into Kirkwall and then released by superior orders, reached Bremen, where fourteen Germans were taken out of her and the chief engineer, an Englishman, promptly imprisoned. The American papers at first expressed indignation at the capture of this ship, but they speedily changed their tone when they learnt that she had Germans on board and was full of contraband cargo. For the fourth time the steamer *Bergensfjord* was intercepted, and, to the chagrin of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, was again released.

On May 10th Rear-Admiral de Chair steamed towards Denmark Strait to investigate the icefield which had been reported in that vicinity. He found a large field of closely packed ice drifting south-east. The edge was traced from lat.  $66^{\circ} 48' N.$ , long.  $16^{\circ} 12' W.$ , to lat.  $68^{\circ} N.$ , long.  $13^{\circ} 2' W.$  No passage could be discovered, and the captain of a steamer stated that no vessels were passing to the north of Iceland, news which was not unwelcome to the crews of the ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron.

As the summer opened the menace of German submarines steadily increased, and from time to time the Admiral commanding had considerably to vary the areas patrolled in order to reduce the chances of his ships, offering large targets for attack, being sunk. Conclusive evidence of the dangers which had to be incurred was supplied by incidents which occurred in the month of June. Submarines, while on the look-out for vessels of the patrol themselves, stopped two steamers near St. Kilda. On June 14th the *Motagua*, while boarding the British steamer *Goathland* in lat.  $58^{\circ} 22' N.$ , long.  $8^{\circ} 15' W.$ , had a narrow escape. She observed an unknown steamer being sunk by a large submarine. She at once proceeded towards the distressed vessel, driving the submarine off by gunfire. Her arrival was too late, however, to save the ship, the identity of which was then unknown. On the same day the *India* was attacked in lat.  $59^{\circ} 20' N.$ ,



ON THE FORECASTLE OF MERCHANT CRUISER





long.  $7^{\circ} 52'$  W. The periscope of an enemy submarine was sighted right aft of the port quarter. After discharging a torpedo, which just missed the ship, the submarine dived, and the *India* completed her voyage to the Clyde to coal in safety. At this period submarines were also reported three miles west of Rathlin O'Beirne Island, off Barra Head, and to the westward of Flannan Island. An illustration of the services which patrols were rendering to neutral shipping was furnished by the action of the *Orotava*. On June 15th she sighted a submarine close to the Danish steamer *Russ*. That ship was stopped, and had her boats half lowered, as if she were about to abandon ship. The *Orotava* promptly went to her rescue, and opening fire on the submarine, drove the enemy away. The Danish vessel was then escorted to a place of safety, the *Orotava* screening her from the possibility of further attack. In consequence of the activity of submarines, a change had to be made at this period in the routes given for British and Allied vessels bound for Archangel from British ports, it being considered unsafe for them to pass south of Holyhead.

As the summer drew on, it became more than ever evident that large sums of money were being offered to enterprising skippers to go through the blockade. It was rightly assumed that some would endeavour to pass well north of Iceland into the Arctic Circle, making the extreme north of Norway and getting south inside territorial waters, and consequently the Admiral had to send ships to watch these waters. As a further complication a captured ship stated that submarines were using Jan Mayen Island (500 miles north of Iceland) as a base for attacking the ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, and so the *Alcantara* went round the island and landed a party of seamen to investigate. Nothing, however, was found except some German huts and three black fox cubs, which were promptly captured and brought on board to become ships' pets; but they did not live long.

On June 17th the flagship proceeded to the eastward, in order to get into touch with one of the patrols and incidentally to intercept the Norwegian steamer *Kristianiafjord*, which was reported to have left Bergen on the previous day. The *Kristianiafjord* was heard signalling with Bergen early in the morning and at frequent intervals afterwards,

so orders were given from the *Alsatian* to the Tenth Cruiser Squadron to stop signalling by wireless. It was noticed that the Norwegian vessel's replies to Bergen were very short and made quickly; this rendered it difficult to obtain a reading by the direction-finder which had been fitted in the *Alsatian*. It was also observed that the strength of the *Kristianiafjord's* signals did not alter appreciably throughout the day, and it was assumed that this stratagem was adopted in order to prevent an estimate of her movements being formed. After about five hours, during which the *Kristianiafjord* was also working with the wireless of another Norwegian ship, the line on which she was steaming was roughly located by means of the direction-finder, but not her exact position. At 9.45 p.m., however, a message from her was intercepted stating that she was 370 miles from Bergen. The *Alsatian* then recommenced signalling on full power, and the ships on patrol in the vicinity were directed to make no wireless signals. The Norwegian vessel was thus given no opportunity of locating these vessels by means of her direction-finders, and in trying to avoid the *Alsatian* she ran into the other ships of the patrol. As a result of this skilful handling of the situation, the *Kristianiafjord*, with 544 passengers on board, was intercepted by the *Mantua* in lat.  $60^{\circ} 42' N.$ , long.  $11^{\circ} 37' W.$ , at 10.30 a.m. of June 18th, and was sent into Stornoway with an armed guard. This incident furnished an interesting illustration of the efficiency of the patrol, since within a short time of the Admiralty telegram being received to stop her, the suspected vessel had been rounded up and was on her way to port for examination.

By this time it became apparent that the squadron was in need of a more convenient base, so in compliance with a signal from the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, the Admiral proceeded to Swarbacks Minn, in the Shetlands, to examine that anchorage in order that he might judge its suitability as a northern base. Sir Dudley found there was room for seven of his cruisers to lie at single anchor, and while there he was able to carry out a practical demonstration of the value of its central position. At noon on May 6th he received a report that an oil-tank steamer had been sighted in lat.  $60^{\circ} 30' N.$ , long.  $4^{\circ} 20' W.$ , steering north-east, having apparently

evaded the patrols. Hastening from the harbour at 18 knots, the *Alsatian* captured the tanker at 3.30 p.m. on the same day, and sent her into Kirkwall with a prize crew. A plan was drawn up for the defence of Swarbacks Minn, and arrangements were made with representatives of the Works and Stores Department, who joined in the conference, for coaling and watering twenty-four ships. It was considered necessary, in view of the large coal consumption of the squadron (1,600 tons per diem), that four colliers should always be available for immediate use, besides a moored coal-hulk for supplying the yachts and drifters which had been associated with the squadron, as well as for the harbour craft.

The question of water supply was one of considerable difficulty. It was estimated that 150 tons a day would be necessary for refilling the boilers of the visiting ships. A loch above the whaling station in Olna Firth was eventually selected, since it yielded a fair drinking water of peaty character free from contamination, and arrangements were made for laying a pipe-line to the shore, whence lighters would convey it to the ships. The old cruiser GIBRALTAR had been fitted as a depot and repair ship and orders were given that she should be stationed at the base, moored so that her guns could defend the boom from attack. The Admiralty was requested to dispatch from 200 to 300 firemen, in addition to her reduced complement, so that personnel might be available to assist in coaling ships. At the same time it was reported that a hospital ship and a frozen-meat ship would be required at the base, and it was urged that, as a precaution against the enemy laying mines off Swarbacks Minn, a couple of sweeping trawlers should be sent northward to keep the channel open.

As the month of June drew to a close, two incidents occurred marking the difficulties under which the patrol was carrying out its duties. On June 21st the *Alsatian* intercepted the Norwegian sailing-ship *Bessfield*, with wheat from South America for Norway. The master reported that when about thirty miles from Mizzen Head, U34 stopped the ship by exploding a shell above her deck, pieces of the shell falling on board. The German officer ordered the *Bessfield* not to call at any British port, and the master, before being released, was given written orders

not to call at any British port but to proceed direct to Bergen, it being added that if he was found off his course he would be shot. The *Alsatian* nevertheless sent the vessel into Lerwick.

On the following day, when the *Teutonic* was off the Norwegian coast, she sighted the German steamer *Konsul Schultze*, at a distance of thirteen miles. The vessel was off Kya Island. The *Teutonic* immediately gave chase and drew in to eight miles, still outside gun range. The German vessel then altered course and ran for territorial waters to the north-east of the island. On learning what had happened, Admiral de Chair directed the *Teutonic* to keep the German ship in sight, and to call up the *Victorian* to watch the other side of the island. Later the *Teutonic* reported to the Admiral that the *Konsul Schultze* had proceeded in a north-easterly direction towards Folden Fjord. A report was at once made to the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, and the *Teutonic* was ordered to patrol about lat.  $64^{\circ} 22' N.$ , long.  $9^{\circ} 34' E.$ , with the *Victorian* in support of her to try and get the steamer to come out. If a submarine had been available this German ship would probably have been captured. The watch was maintained throughout the following day, but the German vessel was not again sighted, and it was afterwards ascertained she had gone into Trondhjem.

German submarines in the meantime were actively engaged intercepting ships off the Butt of Lewis, sinking many of them without warning. The enemy's success did not pass unnoticed, and on June 25th Admiral de Chair learnt that an "E" class submarine had been directed to cruise off Stadlandet, thus supplying a long-felt want. At this period a number of German steamers were being sighted in territorial waters, to the chagrin of the officers and men of the patrolling ships. Whatever the patrol lacked in efficient construction on the enemy was certainly not due to want of vigilance on the part of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron. During the six months which had intervened since December 1914, the distance covered by the flagship had been 35,738 miles, the expenditure of coal and water amounting to 20,796 tons and 13,382 tons respectively. The figures of the flagship were typical of all the other ships of the squadron, and a

current estimate put the annual consumption of coal of the twenty-four ships at 598,000 tons. During the week ending June 26th no fewer than seventy-one vessels were intercepted and examined, fourteen of them being sent into port with armed guards.

The month of July opened with an accident to the *Patuca*, which served as a reminder of the hazardous character of the work which the vessels of the patrol were carrying out. Orders had been received from the Admiralty that the Swedish steamer *Oscar II*, on passage from Buenos Aires to Christiania with a cargo of coffee, hides, etc., should be sent into port if she was met with. The *Patuca* fell in with this vessel early on the morning of July 1st, with disastrous results. The *Oscar II* struck the *Patuca* on the starboard bow, crushing her own bow, and then, rubbing alongside, she was holed in the engine-room by the patrol ship's propeller. Some plates of the *Patuca* were injured, and the flange of her propeller was badly bent, but collision mats were requisitioned, and by shoring up her side and filling in the spaces between the damaged plates with cement, she was made sufficiently seaworthy to proceed to the Clyde at 14 knots.

The damage sustained by the Swedish ship was more serious, and she started making water badly. The engine-room filled, putting out the fires, and the crew abandoned her and went on board the *Patuca*. The Admiral commanding immediately ordered the *Columbella* and *Digby* to the scene of the accident, and the *Royal Scot* was detached to tow the *Oscar II* to Stornoway. The Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, on receiving intelligence of the mishap, announced that destroyers would be in readiness off the Butt of Lewis. The *Royal Scot* took the injured vessel in tow, the *Digby* acting as escort. At 1 p.m. the *Digby* reported that the upper deck of the Swedish vessel was awash, and that the tow had parted. Three hours later the *Royal Scot* had the steamer again in tow, but the voyage promised to be a long lone, as no higher speed than 4 knots could be made.

Early the following morning the *Digby* reported that another towing hawser had given out and that the wind and sea were rising. The tug *Plover* was forthwith dispatched from Stornoway to go to the assistance of the *Oscar II*, but failed to locate her. Shortly before noon

the *Royal Scot* was still struggling with her burden, making about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  knots. Subsequently, owing to the condition of the damaged ship, all hands had to leave her. At 1.30 p.m. the tow again parted, but was once more picked up by the *Royal Scot*. By this time the destroyers STAUNCH and FURY had joined the escort. At 5 o'clock that afternoon the towing operations had to be suspended, and an hour later the tow once more parted. At 8.35 p.m. the *Digby* reported that she was experiencing great difficulty in towing as all the wires had gone except that attached to the cable of the derelict, adding that there was no steam or hand gear on her capstan. Early the following morning the *Oscar II*, though completely water-logged, was still in tow of the *Royal Scot*. At 6 a.m. the ships reached lat.  $59^{\circ} 11' N.$ , long.  $7^{\circ} 42' W.$ , when steering became difficult through the yawing of the derelict. At 9 a.m. the tow again parted, the bollards having drawn and the wires gone, and as further towing by the *Royal Scot* was impracticable, that ship was sent to Stornoway to fill up with water. The *Digby*, assisted by the FURY, then attempted to pick up the tow, but unsuccessfully. By this time the *Oscar II* had developed a list of 40 degrees and the seas were sweeping over her. At 7 p.m. she sank, and the *Digby* then returned to her patrol and the *Royal Scot* went to Scapa Flow.

The incident is of interest as a reflection of the devotion to duty exhibited by the officers and men of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron in carrying out the patrol with a determination to inflict as little inconvenience and loss on neutrals as possible. They were tireless in adapting their procedure to circumstances. In contrast with the efforts made to save the *Oscar II* is the record of the prompt measures adopted on July 8th in the case of the German *Friedrich Arp*. The *Tenby Castle*, one of the armed trawlers attached to the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, sighted the enemy ship, outward bound from Stettin to Narvik with a cargo of magnetic ore, off the Norwegian coast. The *Tenby Castle* fired a shot across her bow and ordered her to steer S.W. by W. The master refused to obey and steamed towards the land. The trawler then fired a shot into the steamer's stern. She stopped, but still refused to steer as directed. The trawler then gave warning that she would be sunk unless she obeyed orders.

Again she made for the shore. Realising that decisive measures were necessary, the *Tenby Castle* fired sixteen rounds into her starboard quarter, and she sank in lat.  $67^{\circ} 47' N.$ , long.  $14^{\circ} 15' E.$  The crew, as well as the pilot, were rescued and transferred to the *India*. At this period there was a further marked recrudescence of submarine activity, but nevertheless in the week ending July 24th 115 vessels were intercepted, of which 17 were sent into port with armed guards.

The closing days of the month provided an incident which proved at once the activity of the enemy and the stratagem to which resort was had in defeating him. On July 29th information was received of the sinking of the Norwegian steamer *Trondhjemsfjord* in lat.  $61^{\circ} 30' N.$ , long.  $3^{\circ} 42' W.$ , by a German submarine on July 26th. This vessel was proceeding to Kirkwall in charge of an armed guard from the *Hildebrand*, when she was fired at by the submarine, the shot passing over the bows. The master altered course to bring the submarine astern and proceeded at full speed. After a chase of half an hour, the submarine fired a second shot and the *Trondhjemsfjord*, which was being rapidly overhauled, stopped. The master was ordered on board the submarine with the ship's papers, but before leaving he arranged for the disguise of the armed guard, his wife, who was on board, providing the officer (Lieutenant Crawford, R.N.R.) with some of her husband's clothes in place of his own, which she packed with her own effects for removal. The rifles, etc., belonging to the guard were concealed in the fore peak. Soon after the master got on board the submarine the crew of the *Trondhjemsfjord* were directed to abandon ship immediately. When all the boats were clear of the ship the submarine fired a torpedo amidships from a distance of about 130 yards, and the *Trondhjemsfjord* listed heavily to port. Amongst other cargo this steamer was carrying a large quantity of sulphuric acid, which burst with a loud explosion and flew to the height of the mastheads on the ship being hit by the torpedo. After the vessel had sunk, the submarine towed the crew and armed guard in their boats about four miles to the southward, where the Norwegian barque *Glance* was met with and ordered by the German officer to embark them. The submarine was of the latest type, being

about 200 feet long, with two masts, fitted with wireless, and was armed with a 12-pounder gun forward and a 6-pounder gun aft. The hull was grey, and her number was painted out. Her commander was a young man about twenty-five, who treated the master of the Norwegian steamer with courtesy. He explained that his chief reason for sinking the *Trondhjemsfjord* was that she was an English steamer bought by a Norwegian Company since the commencement of hostilities. He also said that he was looking for the *Drammenfjord*, which he was instructed to sink on account of her British origin. The master of the *Trondhjemsfjord* (Captain Bang) and his wife appear to have behaved in a most circumspect manner throughout. Whilst on board the submarine, the former denied that he had an armed guard on board his ship or that he had been boarded by a British patrol vessel. The crew and armed guard were first transferred to the Swedish steamer *Orlando*, bound for Sweden, and the armed guard eventually reached Thurso in the trawler *Princess Juliana*, the master and crew of the *Trondhjemsfjord* remained in the *Orlando*.

While practical experience of war conditions in the blockading areas had shown the necessity for an alteration in the types of vessels employed, it had to be remembered that throughout the whole of the Empire's sea service unprecedented conditions were bringing about almost daily changes in the sphere of scientific equipment. From these experiments the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was not exempt, and an interesting little note of the Admiral in command, under the date of August 21st, 1915,<sup>1</sup> reveals that his flagship, the *Alsatian*, had been fitted up during July with a new wireless telegraph direction-finder, designed by the National Physical Laboratory. Trials were to be given to this, and a later note, of September 7th, shows that during a thick fog, in which the *Hildebrand* and *Teutonic* were to be met at a prearranged rendezvous, the new direction-finder proved very useful in determining their position. It is a matter of no great historical importance, but it is a vivid indication that, pressed as they were by circumstances, the scientific spirit of the officers of

<sup>1</sup> At this period of 1915 the *Alsatian* reported that she had experienced nearly twelve complete days of continuous fog and mist when on patrol to the south of Iceland.



the new navy, as well as the old navy, was as alive in the Tenth Cruiser Squadron as in any other division of the naval and mercantile services.

On July 19th, 1915, the flagship *Alsatian*, after coaling and repairing at Liverpool, proceeded to rejoin the squadron, which had by this time been welded into a thoroughly efficient blockading force. During the later part of this month enemy submarines in these southern seas had become very active; the *Columbella* was attacked on the 22nd in lat.  $60^{\circ} 26' N.$ , long.  $4^{\circ} 42' W.$ , but the enemy was avoided; this submarine craft, after making the attack, dived and came up again five miles astern, whether or not with the idea of attacking a Danish schooner in the vicinity was uncertain. At any rate, both the British patrol steamer and the Danish vessel escaped. On the same day, however, a trawler and a Russian collier were sunk, and the French ship *Danaë* on the 23rd by one of the submarines operating in lat.  $59^{\circ} 15' N.$ , long.  $7^{\circ} 20' W.$  On July 26th the *Teutonic* reported that she had intercepted the Norwegian steamer *Bianca*, which had also been stopped by a German submarine carrying two guns, twenty-five miles N.W. by W. from Foula Island; the British steamer *Grangewood*, which had been intercepted by the *Patuca* on the 24th, was also destroyed twenty miles east-north-east from Muckle Flugga in the Shetlands.

The Germans were evidently studying with jealous eye the success with which the blockade was being maintained, and the goodwill by which it was regarded by many neutral seamen. "Ruthlessness" was the German watchword. An indication of the enemy's counteraction was furnished towards the end of July, when the Norwegian steamer *Fimreite*, with an armed guard on board (furnished by the patrol ship *Motagua*), was torpedoed. At 4.14 a.m. on the 23rd, when about lat.  $60^{\circ} 15' N.$ , long.  $8^{\circ} 45' W.$ , a submarine was sighted on the port bow making for the *Fimreite* at high speed. She fired a gun and ordered the steamer to stop and send a boat. While the master was on board the submarine, the officer in charge of the armed guard (Mr. P. B. Clarke, Midshipman R.N.R.) ordered his men to take off their uniforms and help to put the boats out.

On his return to the ship the master of the *Fimreite*

stated that he had been questioned as to his destination, and had given it as Hull; asked if he were going direct, he had replied "via Kirkwall." He was then asked if he had a prize crew aboard, and answered, "Yes; one officer and four soldiers." The Germans told him they would sink him for trading with the English, and told him not to let the Englishmen get into the boats, as they were to sink with the ship. The officer of the guard, thinking the Germans might search the boats, ordered his men to remove every scrap of uniform and to disguise themselves as much as possible, taking their revolvers in their pockets. As soon as the boats were clear of the ship, the submarine opened fire on her with what looked like a 6- or 12-pounder gun. She fired about fifteen projectiles, one of which struck the boilers, and the *Fimreite* sank bow first. There were twenty-nine men seen on board the submarine watching the shooting, most of them dressed in duffle suits. The submarine had one mast amidships and a black patch forward where her number had probably been painted out. After sinking the *Fimreite*, she dived, heading in a westerly direction. The crew and guard were in the boats from 4.45 a.m. till 3.30 p.m., when they were picked up by the Norwegian barque *Springband*, which transferred them to the *Caliban* for passage to Stornoway.

The work of the patrol was now in full swing: the organisation, considering the novelty of the conditions, the seas in which operations were being carried out, and the complications provided by the German submarines, was working smoothly. Some idea of the amount of work being done at this period may be gathered from the fact that during the last week of July sixty-nine ships were intercepted and examined, twelve of them being sent into port with armed guards, while during the first week of August sixty-four vessels were intercepted, the same number as before being sent into port.

The most memorable incident, perhaps, of this month was the disaster which overtook the *India* while on patrol duty off the Norwegian coast some six or seven miles north-north-west from Heligver Light on the afternoon of August 8th. On the morning of this day the s.s. *Gloria*, a Swedish ship, had been sighted by the *India* to the northward, accompanied by two armed trawlers, the *Saxon* and

the *Newland*. The *India's* course was altered to meet them, and an officer went on board to examine the Swedish vessel. A search lasting about one and a half hours was made. The *Gloria* was allowed to proceed at about 10 a.m., a report upon her cargo being made by wireless to the senior officer of the patrol in the *Virginian*. The *India* then altered her course to the south-west, at a speed of 14 knots, zigzagging according to orders, and at 11 a.m. sighted another ship making for Taen Island. As she was inside the three-mile territorial limit, the officer in charge of the *India*, Commander W. G. A. Kennedy, R.N., closed her and followed her to the northward for purposes of identification. This again took the *India* several miles north of her patrol line into the West Fjord. The vessel proved to be a Swedish steamship, *Atland*. Once more course was altered for the patrol line, and at about noon an urgent wireless message was received from the *Virginian* ordering Commander Kennedy to send the Swedish ship *Gloria* into Kirkwall. Once more, therefore, he had to alter course, increasing his speed to  $16\frac{1}{2}$  knots, with the hope of again intercepting this vessel. At 2 p.m., however, he had seen nothing of her, and being then well to the north of his patrol line, he again turned south, and zigzagged at a speed of 14 knots. An hour later a steamer was observed inshore, just to the northward of Taen Island, and the *India* altered her course so as to intercept her, coming up with her about 4 p.m. Being just inside the territorial limit, Commander Kennedy could not interfere with her, but on signalling she replied that she was the s.s. *Hillhouse*, bound from South Shields to Archangel in ballast, and she hoisted the Red Ensign. As she had no name visible anywhere, Commander Kennedy considered her to be very suspicious, but was obliged to leave her alone. Yet again, therefore, having sighted and signalled the armed trawler *Saxon*, he altered his course back to the centre of the patrol line, soon afterwards perceiving another steamer making towards Taen Island.

Course was again altered in order to try to intercept the new-comer, and Commander Kennedy then left the bridge for a few minutes to go to the wireless house, passing thence to the hurricane deck. Within a few minutes the alarm gong sounded, and returning to the bridge he saw the track of a torpedo approaching the *India* from an

angle of about 30 degrees on the starboard bow. Orders were given "Full speed ahead" and "Hard aport." Commander Kennedy hoped that the torpedo had safely passed under the ship, as her track had reached the vessel's side before the explosion. Unfortunately this was not the case, the *India* being struck on the starboard side between the after companion-way and the after gun on the starboard side.

The great vessel at once began to settle by the stern, and the order was given to abandon ship. Seven of the ship's lifeboats—four on the starboard and three on the port side—had been kept lowered in view of such an eventuality, and though six of them were fully and successfully manned, one of the port boats capsized, owing to a great deal of way being still on the ship. The starboard boats were being thrown into hopeless confusion, owing to the first lifeboat's foremost fall freeing itself and causing her to swing round and foul the third lifeboat and first whaler; the first cutter was, it was believed, stove in against the ship's side whilst being lowered. "I very much regret," Commander Kennedy reported, "that all the efforts which were made to save life by means of the boats actually caused the great loss of life." Of the number saved, namely 189 officers and men, no less than 19 officers and 138 men had all dived into the sea, or gone down with the ship. As the vessel sank in less than five minutes after the explosion, all efforts to get the rafts out were unavailing. Commander Kennedy went down with his ship, and eventually floated up amongst the wreckage. Throughout the trying ordeal, discipline was splendidly maintained. "I wish to place on record," Commander Kennedy stated in his report, "my admiration of the magnificent behaviour of the officers and men; notwithstanding the appalling swiftness of the catastrophe, the most perfect discipline prevailed until the end." The survivors were subsequently picked up by the Swedish steamer *Gotaland* and the armed trawler *Saxon*, and were landed in Norway; they were removed to an internment camp at Jorstadmoen. The total number of lives lost was 9 officers and 107 men.

Meanwhile the work of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, temporarily short of three of its units, continued to increase, in face of great submarine activity on the part

of the enemy, which necessitated frequent variations of the patrolling. During the first week of September 1915, no less than eighty-nine vessels were intercepted and examined, fourteen being sent into port with armed guards. The development of the new base at Swarbacks Minn became a matter of the first importance in view of the rôle which the squadron was filling. On September 9th Admiral de Chair accordingly landed to inspect, in company with Rear-Admiral Fawckner, the progress of its coaling and watering plant and other local arrangements. He found that the rate of coaling had increased with experience and was now averaging from 50 to 60 tons per hour, while a plentiful supply of boiler water was procurable. Ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron were being sent in to coal singly, taking about 1,000 tons each, but the resources of the base were being so developed as to allow, it was hoped, of several ships being coaled simultaneously. A further technical improvement had also been brought about by the fitting of a second look-out crow's-nest on the foremast of all ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron. This, being placed well above the height of the funnels, gave them a very good range of vision, and ensured that other ships could be sighted before the patrol vessels were themselves seen. Ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron had thus become readily recognisable by the two crows'-nests on their funnels.

Great trouble was now being experienced through fog in these far northern seas, and this resulted, on September 11th, in an unfortunate collision between two vessels of the patrol, the *Patia* and the *Oropesa*, both of which had, in consequence, to be sent into the Clyde for repairs; the *Patia* was attacked en route by a submarine, happily without injury. The *Patia* adventure was a curious one. The injury suffered by the vessel's stern had been so considerable that the water rose to the collision bulkhead. The bulkhead was shored up and the ballast shifted aft, so as to bring her bow up, and the captain decided to steam stern first, with the *Ebro* as escort. In these circumstances slow progress was made, so Rear-Admiral de Chair submitted to the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet that assistance should be sent. The suggestion was adopted, the *Patia* being ordered to proceed to East Loch Roag, in the Hebrides. Early on the morn-

ing of the following day—September 13th—the *Ebro* reported that she had sighted a submarine in lat.  $58^{\circ} 5' N.$ , long.  $10^{\circ} 5' W.$ , steering north. From later reports from this vessel and the *Patia*, it appeared that they had both observed the lights of a supposed steamer, which the *Ebro* went to investigate. It was very dark. The chase proved to be a submarine, but her identity was not established until the *Ebro* was so close that she could not depress her guns sufficiently to fire, when the submarine dived. After a short interval she rose again and showed a light. The *Ebro* attempted to ram her, but she had disappeared when the ship arrived on the spot. Meanwhile the *Patia*, which had hitherto been proceeding stern first at 3 knots, reversed her engines and went ahead at 12 to 13 knots to clear the dangerous area. At 6.30 a.m. she reported that she was proceeding east at 13 knots and that her shored-up bulkhead was intact, collision mats in place, and 200 tons of ballast shifted aft. In view of these favourable conditions, she requested permission to proceed direct to the Clyde, instead of putting into East Loch Roag, and, this course having been approved by the Commander-in-Chief, she changed course to the south with the *Ebro* in company.

In spite of fog and the bad weather which continued almost without intermission throughout the month, the work of the patrol went forward; 51 vessels were intercepted during this week, 9 of them being sent into port with armed guards; while during the following week these numbers increased again to 77 and 14 respectively, and on the last day of the month no less than 8 steamers were sent within twenty-four hours into Kirkwall and Lerwick under armed guard, 2 of them being found to contain German subjects.

Beset by fogs, often so dense as to obscure all vision, and with German submarines still active, the patrol continued its difficult and arduous task. One dark night, with a breeze blowing, wireless telegraphy signals were received from a ship on "C" patrol to the effect that the captain and officers' watch could smell petrol. As none of the ships carried petrol, it was concluded that a submarine had just passed to windward of this ship, probably waiting for daylight to get a shot at the vessels on that patrol line. On receiving this signal the Admiral moved

the whole line thirty miles to the westward during the night, which avoided that submarine, while at the same time not impairing the efficiency of the patrol. One can imagine the disgust of the commander of the submarine, after all his trouble to locate the patrol, when he realised that he had been outwitted. The place of the *India* had in the meantime been filled by the *Almanzora*. In the course of their work the ships were repeatedly succouring neutrals, as well as British and Allied ships.

Instances of individual heroism and seamanship on the part of officers and men of the vessels of the patrol were of such daily occurrence as to forbid any attempt at a complete record. A typical instance of the sort of problems set to and solved by even the youngest officers of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron may, however, be cited in the experience of Midshipman C. A. Bamford, R.N.R., and Sub-Lieutenant D. L. Edwards, R.N.R., during two voyages, each beginning on September 16th. On this day Mr. Bamford had been placed in charge of an armed guard on board the Swedish topsail schooner *Valand*, bound from Iceland to Leith with a cargo of herrings, with orders to take the schooner to Lerwick, making Muckle Flugga during the dark hours, if possible. A light fair wind was experienced until the morning of the following day, when the wind began to haul easterly. At half-past nine the next morning Myggenaes, in the Faeroes, was sighted, bearing S.E. by S. By the evening of this day, however, the wind had increased to a strong south-easterly gale, and on the morning of the 20th the gale had become so high that, after consultation between the captain of the *Valand* and Mr. Bamford, it was resolved to heave to.

As the wind continued to increase, the only course then seemed to be to run north and sail down the eastern side of the Faeroes. This was accordingly done, and at 8 p.m. on September 21st Myggenaes was once more sighted, this time bearing S. by W. At this point the *Valand's* steering gear broke down, but fortunately the gale had somewhat moderated, and in a few hours the necessary repairs had been effected. On the 22nd the little vessel was becalmed, but on the following day a head wind was encountered, accompanied by dense banks of fog. On the 25th the fog had cleared, and there

was a moderate east-north-east wind. By this time provisions had been almost exhausted and reliance had to be placed mainly on salt herrings from the cargo. At noon the wind once more began to blow from the north-east, and by evening the vessel was again labouring in a strong north-easterly gale. At 8 o'clock Muckle Flugga was sighted, but owing to the fierceness of the storm and the absence of coast lights, and the improbability of sighting any of the patrol near Lerwick, it was decided to steer a course farther eastward rather than to attempt to make port.

At 1 o'clock on the morning of the 26th the fore rigging carried away, and the foremast itself nearly went overboard, but by knocking away the bulwarks on the port side, passing wire stropes round the ribs of the ship, and rigging up temporary stays, the damage was repaired in a few hours' time. On the evening of September 27th Mr. Bamford determined to make another attempt to get to Lerwick, and accordingly sailed northward on the port tack. At 4 o'clock in the morning of the following day the starboard anchor was carried overboard, but was eventually got on board again without doing any damage beyond making a dent in the ship's side. An hour later land was sighted, and at 8 o'clock it was discovered that the ship was between the Fair Island and Sumburgh Head, the north-east gale having set the vessel to the westward. As it was then clearly impossible to get to Lerwick, and, in view of the wind, dangerous to attempt to reach Kirkwall, the ship's gear being in a rotten condition—sails and ropes carrying away incessantly—Mr. Bamford now decided to run before the gale and try to make Leith.

On September 29th land was sighted bearing west-north-west, and at 4 p.m. the storm-beaten *Valand* passed close to a town which her master thought was Aberdeen. Sail was reduced accordingly in order to make Bell Rock by daylight. As there were, however, no proper charts or navigation instruments on board, and as the sun had not been visible since the Shetlands had been left behind, it was not surprising that an error in the vessel's bearing was made, the town which had been sighted being Montrose and not Aberdeen. At 4 o'clock on the morning of September 30th the *Valand* attempted to go through the southern channel of the Forth between



May Island and Dunbar, but was instructed by destroyers to enter by the northern channel. Owing to the wind, May Island was not weathered until 5 o'clock that evening, when the vessel proceeded up the Forth as far as Largo Bay and anchored for the night, to proceed next morning into Leith Roads after an experience that none on board was likely to forget.

Somewhat similar were the adventures of Sub-Lieutenant D. L. Edwards, who was in charge of an armed guard on board the Norwegian brigantine *Haugar*, also bound from Iceland, with a cargo of herrings, to the port of Haugesund. With similar orders to take the vessel into Lerwick, Lieutenant Edwards set his course accordingly, and on September 18th, at daybreak, sighted the Faeroes. Here, however, caught in the same gale as the *Valand* was experiencing, he agreed with her master that the only course to adopt was to heave the vessel to. The seas were running so high that the pump had to be worked continually; the ship, which was over fifty years old, was leaking badly, and the water in her, in spite of all efforts, was increasing rapidly. While the original crew of the *Haugar* were manning the pumps, Lieutenant Edwards, with the armed guard, trimmed the sails as necessary. Throughout the next day the gale continued unabated, heavy seas being continually shipped. The topmast backstay was carried away and a preventor rigged.

On September 20th the vessel was in the neighbourhood of Faeroe Bank, and, the wind decreasing a little, a course was set on the starboard tack. At 9 o'clock next morning the Faeroes were again sighted; the ship was headed for Dimon Fjord, the wind being south-south-east. As it was essential to weather the Faeroes, and not anticipating a change of wind before they could tack clear of them, Lieutenant Edwards and the master of the *Haugar* decided to go through the fjord and thus save considerable time. By 8 o'clock they were due north of Sydero Island, where they were becalmed and drifted out to sea again. At 7 o'clock in the evening a south-westerly wind sprang up, and they again attempted to go through the fjord, but when only half a mile from the high land the wind dropped and the tide carried the ship landward. By then it was quite dark, no lights were visible and the vessel was near the rocks. Drifting west, and almost sweeping against the

rocks, there now became visible to leeward a ledge of rocks running out to sea, and as it seemed impossible that the ship would be able to clear them, Lieutenant Edwards, after consulting with the master, decided that the ship would have to be abandoned. The lifeboat was accordingly hoisted out with topsail halyards, and as it was not provisioned, Lieutenant Edwards put his remaining stores into it. The boat was then pulled off a little way, there being no place where a landing was possible, and those on board watched the ship drift towards the rocks. To everyone's surprise, however, she passed clear of them, so they once more re-embarked from the boat, which was itself leaking so badly that it had to be continually baled.

On once more getting on board the *Haugar*, Lieutenant Edwards found that the compass had been broken to pieces by the main boom, but luckily there was a spare compass, which he succeeded in rigging up. A breeze now sprang up from the south-south-west, and the *Haugar* proceeded to tack to the south of Sydero. By September 22nd the provisions which Lieutenant Edwards had brought with him had been finished and the ship had not much left in the way of stores. Those on board had therefore to subsist almost entirely on hard bread and salt fish. On September 23rd they were once more becalmed, and Lieutenant Edwards, from aloft, sighted the Faeroes. At 4 o'clock on the morning of the 24th a breeze sprang up from the north-north-east, which freshened towards evening.

The ship would not head up so high as Muckle Flugga, but it was found that the course would take them south of the Shetlands, and that they could thus make Kirkwall instead of Lerwick. The next day the wind increased to such an extent that at 8 o'clock in the evening they had once more to heave to. Towards night the weather grew steadily worse. Part of the bulwarks were stove in and the jib and stay sail were blown away. The old ship was now labouring heavily and making water fast; the armed guard were helping at the pumps and rendering every assistance possible to the *Haugar's* crew. On the next day the weather began once more to moderate, and by 3 o'clock land was sighted, which was made out to be Papa Westra Island, north of the Orkneys. Being unable to pass north of it, however, the ship stood out again, and on the 27th the wind, which was now north-north-east, again

rose. Lieutenant Edwards, however, advised the master to proceed on their course in the hope of sighting land before dark, which, however, they did not do. The heavy squalls were now straining the ship in every part. Seas were being continually shipped, and pumping was very difficult. At daybreak land was sighted, the wind still being in the north-north-west and blowing in violent squalls. Sule Skerry was, however, successfully rounded at 10 o'clock in the morning, and the port of Kirkwall made by 6 in the evening, the *Haugar* then having four feet of water in her holds. Throughout this period of stress and storm, the conduct of all on board was beyond praise. Continually wet through, and frequently only able to snatch their sleep in saturated clothes, the highest standard of courage and seamanship was maintained.

Another incident at this period further indicates the difficulties with which the young officers in charge of the armed guards had to deal. On September 30th Sub-Lieutenant Alfred M. Easty, R.N.R., boarded the Swedish steamer *Avesta* in lat.  $60^{\circ} 46' N.$ , long.  $13^{\circ} 26' W.$ , and proceeded towards Kirkwall, the course being set to make the Butt of Lewis. At 6.45 a.m. on October 1st, in lat.  $59^{\circ} 54' N.$ , long.  $10^{\circ} 40' W.$ , an enemy submarine was sighted by T. Watson, A.B. (who was then on watch), about two points on the port bow. This was immediately reported to Mr. Easty. The ship was then steering S.E. by S. (magnetic) and steaming at about 8 knots. When sighted, the submarine appeared to be steering to the southward. About 7 a.m. she altered course to the south-south-east. She did not appear to be capable of any great speed, as, although closing the *Avesta*, she was drawing astern all the time. She was also evidently either using an excess of oil or having some engine trouble, as she was smoking slightly. The *Avesta* hoisted the Swedish colours on sighting the enemy. Mr. Easty ordered the guard to keep out of sight and to hide their uniforms as much as possible, he himself removing his cap and jacket. The captain was instructed to keep a steady course and speed as long as possible, and was told that should he be compelled to stop, he was to make no mention of having an armed guard on board. He replied that he would probably have to give some reason for his present course, as apparently the Germans were aware that the vessels of his line (A.

Johnson, Stockholm) made a northerly course on their homeward voyage.

“I accordingly instructed him,” Mr. Easty recorded afterwards, “to inform the submarine commander that he was proceeding to Kirkwall voluntarily. Probably, had we been examined, a German, who was a member of the crew, would have informed the enemy of our presence. It was useless to attempt to hide him, as his name and nationality appeared on the crew list. I must here remark that the Swedish captain behaved with great courtesy and seemed only too anxious to do all he could for us. Meanwhile the submarine was closing us, and about 7.30 a.m. she was about 3 points abaft the port beam, distant about one mile. She then hoisted a signal . . . but as we could not clearly distinguish the flags, we kept our course and speed. Just at this time smoke appeared to the eastward, and a vessel looking remarkably like a cruiser was apparently approaching. The submarine also saw this vessel, and evidently thought her to be a cruiser, for she turned and, without bothering further about us, made off in a north-westerly direction, and was soon lost in a rain squall. She was seen again later, proceeding slowly in a westerly direction. The approaching vessel proved to be the American s.s. *Polarine* of New York—an oil-carrier. She was light, and steering W. by S. She appeared to be keeping a steady course and speed so long as she was in sight.

“The submarine appeared to be one of the modern large ones. She was on the surface the whole time. I was unable to ascertain whether she carried a gun or not, but she appeared to have been at sea for a considerable time. She was covered with rust, and looked something like a ‘drifter’ at a distance.” She was last seen at about 7.50 a.m. steering west at a slow speed. I reported having sighted a submarine—giving the position and direction she was last seen heading—by semaphore to one of the armed trawlers (fitted with W/T) which stopped me off Cape Wrath at 8 a.m. on October 2nd. We arrived at Kirkwall at 6.30 on October 2nd, and myself and armed guard returned to H.M.S. *Mantua* at 4 p.m. on October 7th.”

Yet another example of outstanding seamanship, this time on the part of one of the larger vessels of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, was that of the *Hildebrand*, which intercepted and boarded on October 16th the Norwegian steamer *Corona*, bound from Baltimore to Bergen with a load of grain. Her master having stated that his ship had sprung a leak and was sinking, the crew of the *Corona* was taken on board the *Hildebrand*, which stood by the damaged vessel. The crew were thoroughly examined, six of them, who had joined at Baltimore, being placed under arrest on account of their suspicious character. In the meanwhile the *Otway* had been directed to proceed at full speed to assume charge of possible salvage operations, intercepting en route, and sending into Kirkwall with an armed guard, the Danish steamer *United States*, which was proceeding east with 312 passengers, amongst whom was a well-known Austrian aviator, Guido von Georgevitch.

It was at midnight that the *Corona* had first been intercepted by the *Hildebrand*, and by half-past eight the next morning it was discovered that she had made 18 inches of water above the stokehold. The leak, however, appeared to be a small one and confined to the engine-room and stokehold, and accordingly an attempt at towing was undertaken at a quarter to one. At half-past five the steamer's cable, which was being used in conjunction with the wire hawsers, parted, but in spite of the very heavy sea that was running at the time, she was once more taken in tow shortly before 9 o'clock and headed for Stornoway. In view of the darkness of the night, the heavy seas that were running, and the presence of possible submarines, this was an exceptionally skilful and daring piece of seamanship on the part of Captain Edwards, R.N., to which the attention of the Admiralty was afterwards drawn by Admiral Jellicoe, in command of the Grand Fleet. Unfortunately Captain Edwards' efforts were not destined to be successful, and at 11 o'clock on the following morning the *Corona* had to be sunk, as she was likely to become a danger to navigation.

That the *Hildebrand*, and indeed all the vessels of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, were often, in spite of their policing functions, friends in need, was again made clear when, on October 30th, this vessel intercepted the Danish

sailing-ship *Haracaibo* and supplied her with eight days' provisions, the heavy south-easterly gales having prevented her from making any headway towards Lerwick, her port of destination.

Throughout the rest of October, and indeed at frequent intervals throughout the whole of the following two months, the patrol work of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was carried on in the face of such weather as has already been described in the experiences of the preceding three officers. Vessels to be examined were almost daily boarded under conditions of wind and sea that in ordinary times would have seemed to involve the highest degree of risk. Often the weather was so bad that even by the storm-experienced boarding-parties of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, it was found impossible to get a footing upon suspected vessels; and on these occasions it was frequently found necessary to follow such vessels and, in some cases, to lie to while keeping them in company. In a letter to the Admiralty at this period Lord Jellicoe drew attention to the fact that "very heavy weather was experienced by the patrols" and that "a number of ships were boarded and armed guards placed on board in most difficult circumstances."

Another type of difficulty, and one that illustrates the tax that was at all times placed upon the tact and initiative of the responsible officers, may be exemplified in the experience of the armed guard from the *Columbella*, which was placed on board the American sailing-ship *Andrew Welch* on November 2nd. After sighting several submarines, the *Andrew Welch* rounded Muckle Flugga on November 6th, in an attempt to make Lerwick, under the usual stormy conditions. She spoke to a patrol-boat off Noss Head, which directed her to heave to, but disappeared again from sight without rendering her any assistance. The weather becoming worse, the master of the *Andrew Welch* wished to make for the port of Helmsstadt, in Norway, and on the refusal of the officer in charge of the armed guard to allow this, the crew of the *Andrew Welch* struck work. As the armed guard was, of course, quite insufficient for working the ship, a compromise had necessarily to be made, and the officer in charge agreed to try and attempt to make the port of Aberdeen. On November 11th the little vessel accord-

ingly arrived off Girdleness, where signals were made for a pilot and a small steamer was spoken, which promised to send out a tug. The tug did not arrive, however, and the heavy gale from the north-north-west obliged the *Andrew Welch* to remain hove to for three whole days and nights. Once more the crew refused to work, and as the water supply was getting very low and the pumps were failing to draw, the officer of the guard was at last obliged to run for the nearest Norwegian port, Christiansund, where he put himself into communication with the British Consul, and whence, with his armed guard, he was subsequently allowed to return home. That such instances of insubordination were rare is perhaps the best tribute to the firmness and humour with which these officers, many of them little more than boys, carried out their difficult and delicate tasks.

The transition year of 1915, during which, as we have seen, the nature, personnel, and technical equipment of the patrol had had to be very considerably modified as well as amplified owing to the unprecedented and unforeseen exigencies of a sea blockade under modern war conditions, was now drawing to an end, and Admiral de Chair was able to give a summary of the work done under these trying conditions. Despite the weather, the almost constant presence of enemy submarines, the losses of time and material as the result of inevitable accidents, and the primitive nature of the island bases upon which the patrol largely depended, the ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron had patrolled, without intermission, an area of 220,000 square miles. During this time 3,068 ships had been intercepted on the high seas and carefully examined. Of this number, 743 were found to be carrying contraband and otherwise suspicious cargoes, and had been in consequence sent to British ports for examination and confiscation of cargo as considered desirable by the authorities in charge.

During the twelve months, the Tenth Cruiser Squadron had lost two ships by submarine attack, the *Bayano* and *India*; two by mines, the *Viknor* and the *Arlanza*; and one by foundering at sea in heavy weather, the *Clan Macnaughton*.<sup>1</sup> With these ships there had gone down some 63 officers and 800 men. With regard to the armed

<sup>1</sup> The *Arlanza* was brought into harbour.

guards placed on intercepted vessels, some typical experiences of which have already been recorded, the casualties sustained by these were remarkably few, only one guard being taken prisoner, while two had their prizes sunk under them by submarines. Of the vessels intercepted, 90 were American, 857 Norwegian, 300 Swedish, 606 Danish, 8 Dutch, 1 Spanish, and 1 Argentine. In addition 264 British vessels, 17 French, 124 Russian, 2 Belgian, and 1 Italian were examined, while 7 other vessels of unknown nationality were also intercepted. In addition to these, 817 fishing-craft of seven different nationalities came under notice and were examined.

Even more, perhaps, to the Tenth Cruiser Squadron than to any other portion of the British sea services during the war was the value of wireless telegraphy under modern war conditions apparent. Continually moving from place to place in the course of their patrol, covering in so doing enormous distances, and seldom in sight of one another, the efficient control of the ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron would have been impossible without the aid of wireless telegraphy. How great a reliance was placed upon it during the year 1915 may be gathered from the fact that a daily average of twenty-one signals was sent and forty-six signals received by the one senior officer alone of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, an average, throughout the year, of one signal every twenty-one minutes, although the amount of such signalling was strictly reduced to the smallest possible minimum.

Throughout the year, except during brief periods in which she had to go to port for coaling and repairs, the *Alsatian* remained the flagship of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, under the command of Rear-Admiral Dudley de Chair, Commodore Benson taking over the command in his absence. For 262 days the *Alsatian* was at sea, steaming during that time 71,500 miles and using 40,287 tons of coal, a record that may be taken as typical of the work of each ship of the squadron.

The year went out in gales. The character of the weather is reflected in the story of the wreck of the British steamer *Morning* in lat. 62° 21' N., long. 6° W., when the patrol-ship *Cedric* rescued the master (Mr. Andrew Smith) and the second officer (Mr. Joe Hansen). The steamer—a Dundee whaler—was loaded with ammunition



at Brest and was on her way to Archangel. She left Queenstown on December 21st, and after bunkering in the Faeroes was spoken by the *Alsatian* on December 22nd during a south-easterly gale. The master stated that after leaking for two days, due to working of ship, she foundered on the morning of December 24th in lat.  $64^{\circ} 15' N.$ , long.  $7^{\circ} W.$  With the exception of the second mate and himself, the crew were drowned, the boats being stove in. Both men were much exhausted, having been four days in an open boat in bad and very cold weather.

Admiral Jellicoe was in no doubt as to the devotion exhibited by officers and men of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron. He reported to the Admiralty at the close of 1915 that he was "fully in agreement" with Rear-Admiral de Chair in praising the work which they had done under conditions of much difficulty and in the face of great dangers. "The work of officers and men," he remarked, "merits the highest commendation."

As the Old Year closed in gales, so did 1916 open with fierce winds and high seas. The Tenth Cruiser Squadron, in maintaining the blockade of the enemy, had to struggle against a variety of difficulties during winter days and nights. Under such circumstances it was not, therefore, surprising that orders could not sometimes be carried out, and in a typical failure to do so, owing to overwhelming handicaps, the significance of the work successfully accomplished can better perhaps be appreciated. As an example we have the adventures of a young officer of the Royal Naval Reserve, Lieutenant S. F. Carter, who had been placed, on December 21st, in charge of an armed guard consisting of one midshipman and four seamen, on board the Norwegian barque *Skomvaer*. Provided with supplies for eight days, and with orders to take the *Skomvaer* into Lerwick, it was not until January 1st, owing to the strong easterly winds, that Lieutenant Carter was able at last to make a run for this port. During the interval, in which he had been beating about, he had fallen in with other vessels of the patrol, the *Orotava* on December 26th, who had supplied him with provisions for a further eight days, and the *Cedric* on January 1st, who had given him provisions for another five days. On January 1st, the wind veering to the south-west, he was able at last to run toward Lerwick, passing Muckle Flugga two days later at 2.30

p.m., and arriving off Lerwick in the first watch. For five whole days, however, it was a case of being so near and yet so far, and owing to the contrary and baffling winds, he was unable actually to get into port. By January 8th, so fierce was the gale blowing from the northward, that he decided at last to run his vessel into Kirkwall, but on the evening of the next day the wind fell back to the south-west, and he once more headed, according to his orders, for Lerwick.

On January 10th a gale was blowing from the west-north-west, and in the forenoon the master informed him that provisions, water, and oil were all running short, and the crew complained to the master respecting the safety of the ship. The sea was then running so high that at 5 p.m. the master insisted that the ship must run for safety, and Lieutenant Carter reluctantly consented, and accordingly ran to the south-eastward. On the next day the Norwegian coast was sighted, in a period of calm between heavy snow squalls, and on January 12th, shortly after noon, a pilot was picked up. The *Skomvaer* then tried to make either the port of Stavanger or Haugesund, but was eventually taken in tow by two small tugs on January 13th and towed into Flekkefjord, where she arrived early in the morning of January 14th, more than three weeks after Lieutenant Carter had boarded her with his armed guard.

On January 15th the weather was once more so bad that the patrols were forced to lie to, the wind increasing to hurricane force. So fierce was the gale that the *Orotava*, which was at Swarbacks Minn for the purpose of coaling, dragged both anchors and was unable to complete her coaling. The boom-gate vessel of the port also dragged her anchors, so that the entrance to the harbour was temporarily blocked, while the shore end of the boom net defence, which was secured round a large rock, was carried away owing to the splitting of the rock under the enormous strain. Four days later the *Duke of Cornwall*, which had left Swarbacks Minn to return to Longhope with despatches, was also forced to put back to harbour owing to the heavy seas running, while ships coaling at Busta Voe were obliged to stop coaling and raise steam, some of them dragging their anchors, although all had two anchors down. The next day the *Patia* reported that, while hove to, she had shipped so heavy a sea that her bridge had

been seriously damaged and an officer injured, while at Swarbacks Minn, in going alongside the *Artois*, the collier came into collision with her, making a hole in the port bow with the crown of her starboard anchor. On January 21st the *Orotava* reported that her wheelhouse and all bridge fittings had been smashed by a heavy sea, and that she had been obliged to run before the gale, endeavouring, but unsuccessfully, to use her hand-steering gear. On January 22nd, owing to the heavy weather, the gate of the boom at Swarbacks Minn was damaged and sank below the surface in the centre and could not be opened, while the main deck in the store-room passage on the starboard side of the *Orcoma* was buckled by about seven-eighths of an inch. The persistence of the patrol in continuing its work under such conditions is perhaps evidenced by the fact that no less than ten vessels were intercepted in that stormy week, eight of them being sent into port.

Of the skill and stout-heartedness that made such a record possible in such conditions, an admirable instance is afforded by the experience, a day or two later, of the *Ebro*. This vessel, on January 24th, intercepted the Norwegian barque *Beechbank*, with an armed guard on board, in lat.  $61^{\circ} 25' N.$ , long.  $1^{\circ} 50' E.$  The barque was trying to make Lerwick, but had lost her fore and maintop masts, her mizzen and top-gallant mast, and nearly all her sails and boats. As the barque herself was comparatively undamaged, however, the *Ebro* resolved to endeavour to take her in tow, but could not at first succeed in doing so, owing to the heavy weather. There was nothing for it, therefore, but for the *Ebro* to stand by till morning, the crew of the *Beechbank* proving themselves somewhat difficult to handle and refusing to go aloft. The cutting away of the mizzen and top sail and other work aloft had, therefore, to be carried out by the Royal Naval Reserve officers of the armed guard, Lieutenant Wynn, and the master of the ship, Lieutenant Wynn taking complete charge after the dismantling had been accomplished.

On the following day the weather continued very bad, with a gale from the west-south-west, and the sea ran so high that it was found impossible to communicate by boat, while the *Ebro* herself, being in light condition, with

only 22 per cent. of coal remaining, became somewhat unmanageable. This difficulty was overcome by veering an anchor and six shackles of cable, a dangerous experiment, but one that justified itself in steadying the *Ebro* and enabling hawsers to be got on board the other vessel by means of a rocket and a buoyed line drifting to windward.

The *Beechbank* was thus eventually got into tow with a 6-inch and 5½-inch wire and 90 fathoms of her chain cable. By half an hour after noon, the *Ebro* and *Beechbank* were on their way to Lerwick at a maximum speed of 2 knots, with the *Alcantara* standing by as a defence against submarine attack. Throughout the night, in spite of heavy weather, the *Ebro* succeeded in towing the *Beechbank* towards her destination, and was at last successful in reaching Lerwick at 10 o'clock on the morning of January 27th. Had Commander Dugmore of the *Ebro* not succeeded in taking the *Beechbank* in tow, she would almost inevitably have been lost, as she was being driven by the gale on to a lee shore. For their work in this connection, Commander Dugmore, R.N., of the *Ebro*, and Lieutenant Wynn, R.N.R., in charge of the armed guard in the *Beechbank*, received the special commendation of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Till the end of the month the weather continued rough and difficult, but nevertheless during the last seven days of January twenty-one vessels were intercepted and examined and five sent into port. Nor did February open more auspiciously, as can be gathered from the incidents that followed the interception, on February 2nd, of the Danish sailing-ship *Vigilant* by the patrol-vessel *Artois*. At the first attempt of the latter to send a party on board, there was an accident with the boat and a man fell overboard. He was picked up, however, and the *Vigilant* was safely reached. It was found that her foremast was gone, and her rigging in such a bad state that the master requested that he and his crew should be taken on board the *Artois*. This was done with very great difficulty, owing to the weather, and an attempt was then made to tow the derelict vessel, which was loaded with wood and leaking badly. The weather became worse, however, and it was found impossible to get the *Vigilant* in tow, the *Artois* consequently standing by her

for the night. As the *Vigilant* had been bound for Morocco, and as it was considered most desirable to get her to Stornoway in order that she might be well searched, in view of the possibility that she might be carrying stores for enemy submarines in the Mediterranean, the *Orcoma* was also sent by Rear-Admiral de Chair to stand by.

Throughout the next day the *Artois* continued to keep in touch with the *Vigilant*, but was unable to take her in tow on account of the high seas. On February 4th the weather improved a little and the *Orcoma* helped the *Artois* in taking the *Vigilant* in tow, and they proceeded towards Stornoway at a speed of 4 knots, the *Mantua* subsequently joining them in order to protect them from submarine attack. On February 5th, owing to the gale increasing again, the *Artois's* speed was reduced to 1 knot, a further escort consisting of a yacht, two whalers, and a tug, which had been ordered out from Stornoway, being unable to join them owing to the stormy weather. On the evening of that day the *Artois* arrived under the lee of the Butt of Lewis, and at last, on February 6th, she succeeded, in spite of the force of a full gale, in safely arriving with her prize at Stornoway. Great care had to be taken in overhauling and boarding prizes in case they might be raiders in disguise.

While the work of the patrol was thus continuing, under conditions of the utmost difficulty, the chief event of the month was the action which took place on Tuesday, February 29th, between the *Alcantara* and *Andes* and the German raider *Greif*, which resulted in the loss of the *Alcantara* after a fierce and plucky fight, and the subsequent destruction of the *Greif* by the guns of the *Andes*.

On February 29th, 1916, at 8.45 a.m., the *Alcantara*, when on patrol, sighted smoke on her port beam and, steering towards it, sighted a steamer flying the Norwegian flag and steaming north-east. Acting under previous orders, Captain Wardle took care to find out all about her before getting within 4,000 yards. He inquired her name by signals, and was told she was the *Rena* from South America with a cargo of coffee. Lloyd's Register proved the existence of a ship of that name, so Captain Wardle closed, signalling to the stranger to stop her engines. When she had done so, the *Alcantara*.

getting within 2,000 yards, with her guns manned and all ready for action, examined her carefully, and approached from right astern to board. When about 1,000 yards distant, the *Rena's* ensign staff, carrying the Norwegian flag, dropped over the stern, her steering house on the poop disappeared, disclosing a gun; flaps fell down on the ship's side, and guns opened fire, the German ensign being hoisted at the moment. The *Alcantara* replied at once with her bow guns. The opposing vessel was hit repeatedly, receiving serious injury. In desperation the mysterious vessel discharged torpedoes, but without success.

The action had lasted about forty minutes, when the enemy abandoned ship owing to the fierce fires which had broken out, and Captain Wardle ceased firing. The *Alcantara* had been badly holed in the water-line, and, listing to port, turned on her side and sank at 11 a.m. The *Andes*, being the next ship on patrol, had closed on receiving the *Alcantara's* signals, and came up in time to take part in the action and sink the enemy. The *COMUS* and *MUNSTER*, which had also arrived on the scene, helped to finish off the enemy and pick up survivors. An officer and 110 men of the enemy ship were rescued. The German prisoners admitted that the sunken vessel was the *Greif*. She had been secretly converted into a raider at Hamburg, and was carrying a crew of 360 officers and men. She had left Germany a few days earlier and was making for the Atlantic to raid commerce. She had not reckoned on the vigilance of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, and her loss was a severe disappointment to the Germans.

By this time the blockade was proving highly efficient. It was not until it had been in operation for some time that smooth working was secured. The whole system represented an innovation, and day by day experience suggested ways in which the efficiency of the system could be improved. At first the Customs House officers, accustomed to the routine of a Free Trade policy, found it difficult to adjust themselves to new conditions. It had hitherto been their habit to board incoming merchant ships and to content themselves with a formal inquiry for dutiable wines, spirits, or cigars, making examinations only when the circumstances were suspicious. When the new régime of the blockade was introduced, some of the masters of neutral ships, familiar with the ordinary routine,

would produce a few bottles of whisky and allow the Customs officers formally to seal them. This apparent honesty, there was afterwards reason to believe, was intended to divert attention from contraband carefully hidden away in the bottom of the hold. A few weeks of experience of the blockade worked wonders, and the Customs officers were so "knowing" that all the devices adopted to elude the blockade proved fruitless. Probably never before did an enemy, and those in collusion with him, adopt so many ingenious ruses. Among them a few may be mentioned as a matter of interest :

(1) Double bottoms, decks, and bulkheads, concealed guns, rifles, and other firearms and ammunition.

(2) Copper keels and copper plates on sailing-ships.

(3) Hollow masts.

(4) Rubber onions. These were discovered when a British officer dropped one on the deck. "The onion bounced 10 feet into the air."

(5) Rubber concealed in coffee sacks.

(6) Cotton concealed in barrels of flour.

(7) Rubber honey, made in the form of honeycomb filled with a curious liquid mixture.

(8) False manifests. This was the most frequent form of "faking." In several instances, where the captain of the neutral realised that the "game was up," he produced both the genuine and the false manifests for boarding-officers to compare; a form of frankness not without its element of humour.

But, in spite of every artifice, and in spite also of gales of wind, high seas, fogs, and a variety of difficulties, the Tenth Cruiser Squadron had succeeded in interrupting most of the trade by sea which the enemy was endeavouring to carry on.

The success of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron and the course of events generally since the war had opened had created a new situation as far as the blockade was concerned. At the outbreak of war absolute contraband consisted only of those articles which were exclusively of military character, such as guns, ammunition, etc.

Conditional contraband included foodstuffs, but they had to be destined for the use of the fleets and armies of the enemy. This left many of the important articles included under the heading of raw materials quite free,

and it was only gradually that such were restricted. During this time the arduous work of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was, in a great measure, being nullified by the release of ships carrying necessaries for the enemy, but finally the extreme dissatisfaction of the Navy (especially of the officers and men employed in the blockade) became apparent to the Government, and the establishment of a Ministry of Blockade, with headquarters at the Foreign Office, was determined upon. In March 1916 it was decided to appoint Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair as naval adviser in order to bring his great experience to bear on the problem, and try to make the blockade work of the Navy more directly effective. Consequently, on March 6th, 1916, he hauled down his flag to take up his temporary appointment at the Foreign Office, subsequently being selected to represent the British Navy on Mr. Balfour's War Mission to the United States of America in 1917.

In a speech at Montreal University on May 31st, 1917, on the occasion of the Honorary Degree of LL.D. being conferred on Admiral de Chair, Mr. A. J. Balfour, who had served for some months as First Lord of the Admiralty, recalled that that officer, during "the long early months of the war," was in command of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, "which practically carried out, single-handed, the blockade of Germany—night and day through summer and winter in the stormiest seas to be found anywhere on the face of the globe." "The Squadron under his command," Mr. Balfour added, "carried out, untiring, unchecked, and with unqualified success, the great task with which they had been entrusted. While we remember and know these things, there are two great branches on which, perhaps, our ordinary thoughts are least occupied. One is the unflinching service rendered by our Merchant Marine in the face of dangers never contemplated as incident to the life of a sailor, and not less than this is the work of that Cruiser Squadron to which I have referred, whose labours were more continuous, more important, and more successful than any other branch of His Majesty's naval forces." Sir Dudley de Chair was succeeded in command of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron by Vice-Admiral Reginald Tupper.

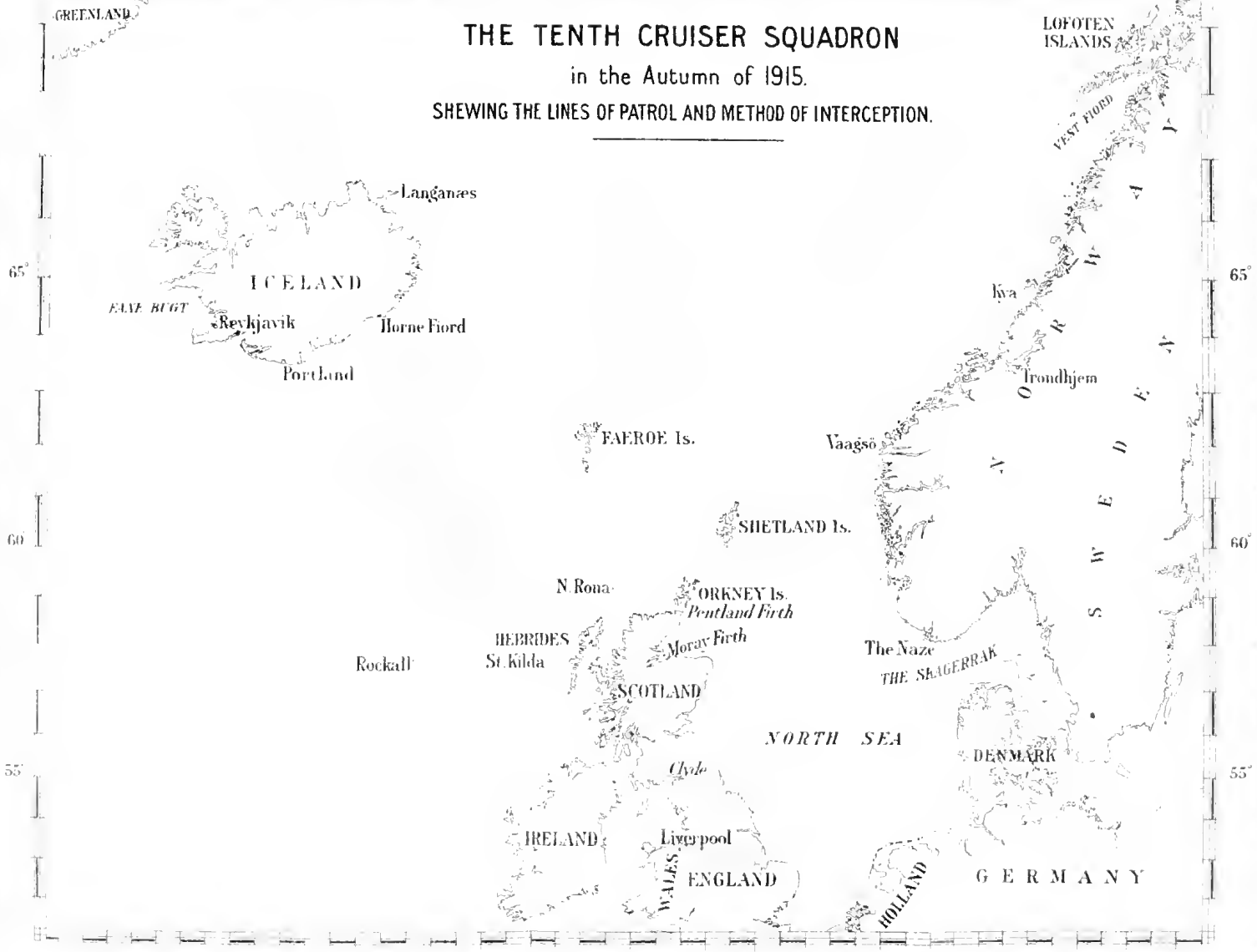


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## THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON

in the Autumn of 1915.

SHEWING THE LINES OF PATROL AND METHOD OF INTERCEPTION.





## CHAPTER VI

### THE AUXILIARY PATROL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

AN incomplete picture of the extent and character of the operations of the Auxiliary Patrol would be presented if the impression were conveyed that its work was confined to the waters around the British Isles. From a comparatively early date in the war, a demand for auxiliary craft came from the Mediterranean. At the beginning of November 1914 the Turkish forts on the Gallipoli Peninsula had been bombarded for a short time, and in the following February a determined movement to force the Straits was initiated. It soon became apparent that the men-of-war engaged in this operation were as dependent for safety on mine-sweeping trawlers as were the vessels of the Grand Fleet in the North Sea. Hopes of forcing the Dardanelles rested on the success of trawlers in sweeping a clear passage for the battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, for the entrance was strongly defended by successive mine-fields. The demand for auxiliary craft in the Mediterranean became more insistent later on, when it became impossible to sweep in face of heavy fire from the shore batteries, and the men-of-war had to be content with rendering aid to the Allied military forces by distant bombardment of the Turkish batteries and positions. This change of tactics offered to the enemy the opportunity of employing submarines, and several of these craft issued from the Adriatic to attack the bombarding vessels. The need thus arose for patrol trawlers and drifters provided with nets to assure the safety of the men-of-war.

Another stage in the operations opened on Italy entering the war on the side of the Entente on May 23rd, 1915. By this time German and Austrian submarines, operating from Cattaro, had been encouraged by the disadvantages which the neutrality of Italy had inflicted on the Allies,

to attack the maritime lines of communication between the Straits of Gibraltar and the Dardanelles, thronged with men-of-war and supply ships, and eventually they threatened the trade route between the northern end of the Suez Canal and the Atlantic, over which essential supplies of goods of various kinds were being conveyed from the Far East and the Antipodes. This phase of the enemy's activities led to a determined attempt on the part of the Allies to restrict the use of the submarine bases on Cattaro and Pola, an operation facilitated by Italy's entrance into the war. This problem closely resembled those presented, respectively, by the Straits of Dover and the North Channel, to which allusion has already been made. Whilst Cattaro in the Adriatic corresponded roughly to the position of Zeebrugge in the Straits of Dover, in the case of the North Channel the enemy's submarine bases were several hundred miles distant. Since the problem of defending these three Straits had much in common, the tactics adopted were very similar. When the position in the Mediterranean became critical, drifters were dispatched by the Admiralty to shoot their nets in the Adriatic as they had done at the southern exit of the Irish Sea, as well as off Zeebrugge, in the hope of denying passage to the enemy submarines issuing from the Austrian ports. The defensive measures in the Mediterranean had, of course, to be varied owing to differences in depths and distances, but generally the problems of the three straits were identical in character.

The various stages in the operations of the auxiliary craft in the Mediterranean may be stated with advantage in chronological order. On January 19th, 1915, arrangements were made by the Admiralty to collect twenty-one mine-sweeping trawlers as soon as possible and dispatch them to the Dardanelles. They were to be sent first to Devonport, to be coaled and provisioned. Of this twenty-one, seven were selected from Grimsby and fourteen from Lowestoft. On January 28th thirteen of them set out from Devonport under Commander William Mellor, in the trawler *Escallonia*, and the remaining eight followed a few days later, after remedying certain engine-room defects. The first trawlers began to arrive at Gibraltar on February 3rd, and the next day left for Malta. Four days later these vessels put into Malta, where they were fitted

out for the dangerous work that was awaiting them. The Dardanelles campaign could not begin—so telegraphed the Commander-in-Chief—until the arrival of these craft, so important had the fishing-vessel become in modern naval warfare. By February 21st the whole of the twenty-one trawlers had assembled at Malta, of which four had sailed for the Dardanelles on February 15th and another four two days later.

On February 25th the trawlers began their task of sweeping at the entrance to the Dardanelles, covered by a division of battleships accompanied by destroyers. Within two days they had swept a distance of four miles from the entrance of the Straits, no mines having been found. The plan was that the trawlers should first clear areas in which the battleships could manœuvre for the purpose of bombarding the enemy's forts. But it was when the sweepers approached the Narrows that the trouble began, for at this position the enemy had laid line after line of mines between the Asiatic and European shores. Furthermore he had protected these mines by batteries and searchlights. There was a strong current running down towards the Dardanelles Straits further impeding the work of the trawlers. The undertaking of the trawlers was therefore difficult as well as dangerous and, as events were to prove, impossible in spite of all the courage, seamanship, and tenacity of purpose exhibited by the fishermen in face of dangers they had never thought to confront. On March 1st these little ships steamed up under cover of darkness, protected by destroyers. They swept to within three thousand yards of Kephez Point. It was a bright moonlit night. When abreast of the Suandere River, the enemy's batteries opened such a fierce bombardment that the trawlers had to retire, the destroyers aiding their withdrawal by making a smoke screen. Fortunately none of the trawlers was hit, and Admiral Carden telegraphed to the Admiralty that the sweepers were doing excellent work.

But at this date neither the magnitude of the Dardanelles task nor the hopelessness of the mine-sweeping trawlers' efforts was appreciated. The key to the problem of advance was the mine-fields at the Narrows. The battleships and cruisers were held up till the fishermen, recently arrived from the North Sea, could clear a wide channel

in the face of powerful batteries and forts. During the night of March 6th-7th the sweepers, protected by the light cruiser *AMETHYST* and destroyers, again essayed the task, and were once more driven back by the enemy's guns. During the night of March 10th-11th seven more trawlers, attended by two picket-boats fitted with explosive creeps, and supported by H.M.S. *CANOPUS*, *AMETHYST*, and destroyers, once more entered the Dardanelles and proceeded up the Straits. The protecting vessels opened fire on the batteries and searchlights which guarded the Kephez mine-fields, but it proved impossible to extinguish the lights by gunfire. In spite of the enemy's heavy fire, the trawlers *Escallonia*, *Avon*, *Manx Hero*, *Syringa*, *Beatrice II*, *Gwenllian*, and *Soldier Prince*, together with the picket-boats, succeeded in getting above the mine-field, the intention being to sweep down with the current.

In this inferno of invisible mines, blinding searchlights, and bursting shells, the position of the trawlermen was not an enviable one. The result was that only one pair of sweepers succeeded in getting out their sweep, securing a couple of mines. The trawler *Manx Hero* struck a mine, blew up, and sank, though the crew were picked up. Two trawlers were struck by shells and a couple of men wounded. It is remarkable that any of these dauntless men escaped the ordeal, for all the vessels were under heavy fire from 6-inch guns and weapons of lesser calibre. Although the first pair of trawlers had succeeded in getting out their sweep, it is matter for little surprise that both the second and third pair failed to run a proper sweep, with the result that little progress was made that night.

On the following night another group of trawlers made the effort, and in view of their experience their names should be perpetuated. They consisted of the *Restrivo*, *Vidonia*, *Star of the Empire*, *Frascati*, *Fentonian*, *Strathlossie*, and *Strathord*. The plan was to be the same as had been adopted on the previous night. Similar misfortunes were again encountered. As soon as the sweepers entered the rays of the searchlights, the enemy's guns opened fire and seven shells dropped over the trawlers. The sweepers, realising the odds which were against them, absolutely defenceless against such attack, turned sixteen points and retired. But let no one dare to call these men cowards! Throughout the whole war these fishermen and their

R.N.R. officers were never frightened of mines or submarines, which they attacked with the greatest possible gallantry whenever they encountered them; but it was quite another matter to take these men straight from the North Sea and turn them, ordinary fishermen, into conspicuous targets for field-guns and forts. No harder or more dispiriting a task was ever set the vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol throughout the war than that of sweeping the Dardanelles Straits. The dice were so loaded against them that the sweepers had no chance. To have been successful the operation required very fast craft fitted with efficient gear, and very highly and specially trained crews; moreover, the work had to be done by day, if at all. As it was, the sweeping was carried out by night by slow trawlers handicapped by the current, whose officers and men were inexperienced and had never before been under shell fire.

In the circumstances, it was decided to stiffen the crews with volunteer officers and men from the Royal Navy, and volunteers were speedily forthcoming. But not even with this aid was it possible to get to Kephez. On March 18th the *Restriwo* and five sister vessels made the attempt—by daylight this time. One pair got out their sweep, but owing to the fire from howitzers and field guns they were unable to reach Kephez. The reorganisation of the mine-sweeping flotilla at the Dardanelles indeed was to prove a lengthy operation. Many of the original crews who had brought out these trawlers were unwilling to continue sweeping under heavy fire and were sent back to home waters, where they performed excellent work. Their places were taken by volunteer crews. Roughly about half of the original trawler ratings were recalled home—to the number of about one hundred. There were plenty left behind to continue to assist in the work. The admiration of the naval authorities found expression in the recommendation by Admiral de Robeck to the Admiralty for the award of a D.S.O. to Skipper Alfred Swain, of the trawler *Escallonia*, and Skipper Alfred E. Berry, of the trawler *Frascati*. These skippers and their men had been constantly under fire, but still continued to serve in the Dardanelles campaign. By April 7th the Commander-in-Chief had discontinued mine-sweeping inside the Straits, as he considered that the results did not

justify the risks which had to be run from the fire of the enemy. Thus, until the end of the war, these mines were never swept, and therefore the fleet never penetrated the Narrows. A change in tactics occurred and the work of the Navy consisted in supporting the Army.

This change involved further work for the trawlers, though of a different character. They were required to carry out all sorts of unfamiliar duties in support of the naval operations. As an illustration, some account may be given of the events of April 25th, a day which will always be known in the Antipodes as "Anzac Day." The first landing of the Australian and New Zealand troops north of Gaba Tepe was carried out under the orders of Rear-Admiral Cecil F. Thursby, with whose squadron fifteen trawlers were associated. In reporting upon this operation, Admiral de Robeck wrote: "I should like to place on record the good service performed by the vessels employed in landing the second part of the covering force: the seamanship displayed and the rapidity with which so large a force was thrown on the beach is deserving of the highest praise." Similarly at the southern extremity of the Gallipoli Peninsula the fourteen trawlers under Rear-Admiral R. E. Wemyss performed excellent work. By this time the Admiralty were dispatching reinforcements from England to Admiral de Robeck's fleet. On March 15th Lowestoft had been ordered to send thirty of the fastest mine-sweeping trawlers to Falmouth, en route for Gibraltar, Malta, and Lemnos. Eight fleet-sweepers, including railway steamers which had been attached to the Grand Fleet in the early stages of the war, but had been found unsuitable for the duty, were now dispatched to the Dardanelles, calling at Plymouth. On March 17th the Lowestoft trawlers left and they reached Plymouth two days later. At Malta they were fitted with armour-plating to protect winches and wheelhouses, and then they continued their voyage to the Dardanelles.

But in addition to the trawlers needed by the Army for many services, there presently devolved on them the duty of maintaining an anti-submarine patrol. Germany had come to realise how seriously her war plans would be affected if success attended the effort to force a way through the Dardanelles. So she determined that she herself would supplement the submarines which Austria-Hungary



had hitherto been operating. At first she dispatched only small submarines of the U-boat type. These craft had to be sent out in sections overland to Austria and were put together there. They were based on Cattaro and operated in the Ægean. One of these vessels, UB3, perished on a mine-field off Smyrna soon after she had been put afloat.

In view of the grave construction which was put upon the Allies' plans for bringing pressure on Turkey, the Germans decided on a yet more ambitious attempt to intervene. U21 was dispatched from Ems on Anzac Day (April 25th) under Lieutenant-Commander Hersing. He shaped a course round Scotland. He was to test the practicability of conducting a submarine campaign in the Mediterranean with submarines which had hitherto operated in the waters surrounding the British Isles. The event is important inasmuch as it marked a new epoch in the use of the submarine. U21 was the first German submarine to proceed to the Mediterranean under her own power, and it was the longest voyage which any such craft had hitherto accomplished unaccompanied and under war conditions. On May 13th she reached Cattaro, and a week later left there for the Dardanelles, where, on May 25th, she torpedoed and sunk H.M.S. TRIUMPH, and two days later destroyed H.M.S. MAJESTIC. On June 5th she proceeded to Constantinople.

The result of this fresh development of the submarine campaign was that new and extended plans had to be made for protecting the bombarding ships. It was at once decided to send out twenty more trawlers, as well as thirty net drifters. From Poole thirty drifters, with nets, indicator buoys, fourteen days' coal—half a dozen of them being also armed with a 3-pounder apiece—started out for the Dardanelles in the early hours of June 5th, reached Gibraltar on June 13th; they left for the eastward two days later. The twenty trawlers had to be taken up specially. They were sent to Falmouth, where each was armed either with a 3-pounder or a 6-pounder gun and given extra crew accommodation; the ventilating arrangements were improved and wind sails were provided so as to fit them for service in the heat of the Ægean. By June 9th these twenty vessels had started for the voyage south.

Some idea of the work which fell to these Dardanelles trawlers may be conveyed in a few sentences. On July 4th the trawler *Lord Wimborne* was engaged from 9.30 p.m. until 5.30 the following morning landing troops alongside the *River Clyde*. She was compelled to make seven different attempts, but each time was spotted by the powerful searchlight mounted in Chanak, and promptly shelled. The trawlers and trawlermen were the admiration of the soldiers whom they saved during the preceding weeks from starvation. Throughout the month of July the greatest strain of the Dardanelles naval warfare was borne by the trawlers employed in towing barges and transporting wounded men, loading ammunition by night for the Peninsula. The men had little chance of getting sleep, and the craft were infested most of the time with flies, which spoiled the crews' food.

So rapidly had this auxiliary force grown, that at the beginning of July Admiral de Robeck had under his command 47 trawler mine-sweepers, 31 net-drifters, 20 armed trawlers, 7 fleet-sweepers, and 4 motor patrol-boats, of which 3 had come out from England. One of the fleet-sweepers had been equipped for mine-laying. On June 2nd a blockade of Smyrna had been declared, and it was being maintained by a destroyer and various other craft, including a couple of trawlers and two motor gunboats of the Royal Naval Motor-Boat Reserve, commanded by R.N.V.R. officers. Within a few weeks U21 had been followed by other U-boats from Germany, bound for Cattaro, and thence to the Dardanelles, and by the end of August every available trawler in the Ægean, which was not employed either in handling supplies for the army or in escorting transports, was out on patrol searching for enemy submarines; and net-drifters were also at work with their nets, protected by trawlers moving on an outer circle.

During the autumn additional drifters and trawlers were sent out and employed in connection with the operations in Salonika; while during the last months of the year auxiliary craft continued to perform other tasks, especially in regard to protecting the transports. During the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac, which took place on December 19th-20th, these small craft again proved indispensable, no fewer than 42,700 troops being taken off by the

trawlers and fleet-sweepers. Meanwhile it was the duty of the net-drifters to protect the monitors and battleships while bombarding the enemy's coast. Finally, on January 7th, 1916, and the following day, came the evacuation of Cape Helles, in which the trawlers took their full share of the work, being once again subjected to heavy shell-fire. But even with the evacuations from Gallipoli, the task of the trawlers was not ended. Daily at dawn they swept from Mudros boom defence for fifteen miles, and so serious was the menace to British merchant ships that a complete chain of patrols had to be maintained from Malta to the Ægean and all round the islands. Trawlers and drifters were compelled to pass monotonous days in carrying out these essential duties. They were well organised, armed with guns and lance bombs, and most of them also now had depth charges.

Attention must now be turned to the Adriatic, where the trend of events had also made enormous demands on the craft of the Auxiliary Patrol. Three days after Italy's intervention in the war, Rear-Admiral Thursby had reached Taranto with a division of battleships. From the very first it was realised that it was absolutely necessary that the Austrian and German submarines based on Pola and Cattaro should, as far as possible, be thwarted. The Otranto Straits had to be denied to them. The intention was to station in these straits as many fishing-craft as could be provided, equipped with nets, just as in the Dover Straits, and supported by destroyers based on Brindisi and Valona, the operations being covered by aircraft. As has been stated, U21 had reached Cattaro on May 13th by sea, and previous to this date other submarines had arrived in the Adriatic overland. During the month of June these Adriatic submarines were most active. On June 9th H.M.S. DUBLIN, a light cruiser which had joined the Adriatic Squadron, was torpedoed whilst returning from the Albanian coast, but managed to reach Brindisi under her own steam. In the same week the Italian submarine MEDUSA was torpedoed by UB15 and sunk whilst on her way to Venice. On July 7th the same submarine sank the Italian cruiser AMALFI. It was therefore evident that it was high time nets were at work to make the Otranto Straits impassable.

At the end of August it was decided to send out drifters from England to the Adriatic. The necessity arose at an inopportune moment, for, owing to the great outburst of submarine activity during this month off the south-western approaches to the English Channel, more rather than fewer Auxiliary Patrol vessels were needed in home waters. However, drifter fishing was about to come to an end, and the opportunity was seized to take up some more of these craft. The result was that sixty drifters were got ready for the Adriatic, Commander O. Hatcher, R.N., being appointed to command them. On the last day of August the first batch left Falmouth for the Adriatic, via Gibraltar, and by September 10th the whole of the sixty had arrived at Gibraltar. By the end of the month the last of the flotillas had reached Taranto, and by September 25th the first two divisions had been dispatched to lay their nets across the Otranto Straits.

It was on October 12th that the first dramatic incident occurred to these craft. The line of drifters with their nets were laid across the Straits within but fifty miles of the enemy's base at Cattaro. At 8 o'clock that morning the drifter *Restore* was separated about three miles from the other drifters. She had for armament only a few rifles, and therefore was no match for the modern submarine with her gun or even guns. With the odds heavily against the little fishing-craft, an enemy U-boat, about four miles away, began to shell the *Restore* with two guns. The drifter was, of course, quite unable to maintain any engagement, so she blew her whistle, sent up rockets, and steamed towards Saseno Island to the north-eastward. Unfortunately one shell passed through the *Restore*, exploding in the engine-room, and disabled her. The drifter's crew had no alternative but to get into their boat, after which the U-boat, from about two miles, closed to twenty yards and again shelled the ship, sinking her within three minutes. Having attacked three other drifters, the U-boat steamed northward towards Cattaro. This experience was not without its sequel, for by November 13th all the Adriatic drifters had been armed. Admiral Thursby had sent a request to the Admiralty for more of these drifters. From Poole and Milford, where they had been serving, additional craft accordingly steamed to Falmouth, and a few days before Christmas thirty-five

had reached Brindisi to supplement the work of the original sixty vessels.

But in the meantime events of the first importance had been taking place ashore, no less than afloat. On the last day of November the Serbian army began its pathetic retreat through Albania towards the sea, and thenceforward the British drifters in the Adriatic had an exceptionally strenuous and hazardous time until the end of February. Vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol were indispensable at this most critical period in the fortunes of the Serbians. To these drifters fell the duty of assisting in the evacuation of the Serbian army and thousands of refugees; they were present at the landing of Italian troops at Valona; and they were at hand at all times to succour disabled ships. Thus on December 4th, 1915, the Italian transport *Re Umberto*, while carrying troops to Valona, struck a mine off Cape Linguetta. In the vicinity were the drifters *Evening Star* and *Lottie Leask*, which proceeded alongside the sinking steamship. They threw all available ropes to her decks, and over five hundred soldiers were thus enabled to swarm on to the decks of the two drifters before the transport sank. Just in time to avoid disaster, the drifters succeeded in chopping away the ropes as the transport disappeared. In this way many lives were saved. "The fact that any were saved," wrote Admiral Thursby, "is due solely to the courage and gallantry displayed by the skippers and crews of these drifters." On the same day the Italian destroyer INTREPIDO was mined at the entrance to Valona, but the drifter *Manzanita* was close by, and her commanding officer, Lieutenant H. C. C. Fry, R.N.R., placed her alongside the destroyer, notwithstanding the risk of mines, and took off both officers and men.

These small craft were always more or less directly exposed to attack by the enemy. For instance, on December 18th the drifter *Lottie Leask*, when twenty miles west-north-west of Saseno Island, was shelled by two submarines. The drifter was able to fire five rounds, but, after being hit as many times, began to sink and had to be promptly abandoned. After rowing about for all one night in their small boat, the crew landed on a sandy beach and stayed that night at a shepherd's hut; they then wandered farther on till they came to a

monastery; thence, after passing through swamps in the darkness, on December 22nd they fell in with some Italian soldiers, who gave them biscuits and enabled them to reach an Italian camp. Thence they marched with a hundred Serbians to Valona, and eventually got afloat again.

The value of the drifters in defending the Adriatic was proving inestimable, and by the beginning of January 1916 another fifty had to come out from England. Mines for their nets were also beginning to arrive, so that if an enemy submarine should foul their nets it was hoped that the U-boat would be destroyed.

Thus the dual work of these little ships went on. To them fell the lot of saving life and destroying submarines. On January 8th, 1916, the Italian transport *Città di Palermo*, carrying, among others, 150 British troops, struck a mine about ten miles from Brindisi. Notwithstanding the obvious risk, twenty-one drifters which happened to be in the vicinity at once steamed into the danger zone to her assistance and were able to pick up about a hundred survivors. While so doing, two of the drifters, the *Freuchny* and *Morning Star*, themselves ran on to mines and blew up, but the rest of the flotilla, undaunted by these disasters, continued their search for survivors. At this period Durazzo was full of Serbian troops who, having retreated, were embarking to a place of safety, and the drifters were kept busy with their nets off this section of the coast. The route from Valona to Corfu had to be actively protected by them during the movement of troops to the latter place. In fact so much protection had to be afforded that these British fishermen had scarcely any opportunity for rest, and even when they were able to get a nominal respite in port, they were liable to be sent out at four hours' notice in the event of sudden attack by the enemy. The Otranto drifters were, in short, performing the most active and important work in the Mediterranean area at this period.

So far, however, they had not enjoyed the desire of every patrol vessel, which was to destroy an enemy submarine, but this stroke of good fortune was to come. On January 20th, 1916, when about seven miles west-south-west of Cape Laghi, an engagement occurred between the drifter *Garrigill* and a U-boat, in which the latter broke

off the fight. Eight days later the *Heatherbloom* certainly had a submarine in her nets and dropped depth charges on her, but with no result. On February 8th the drifter *Lily Reach*, too, had a similar experience; before the end of the month this drifter had foundered on a mine off Durazzo. Several other drifters perished likewise on mines about this time. The danger suggested the defence, and by the middle of March vessels of this class, light though they were and slow, were therefore sent from Brindisi to sweep up mines. On May 13th, after months of weary waiting, of monotonous routine, of varied dangers and keen effort, there came at last to the drifters a well-deserved reward. It happened in this wise. At a quarter-past nine in the evening, when about twelve miles east-north-east of Cape Otranto, the drifter *Calistoga* (Skipper William Stephens, R.N.R.) had just finished towing her nets into position when an indicator buoy was fired and such a strain came on the nets that the *Calistoga's* head was towed round.

It was fairly obvious that a submarine was foul of the nets, so the skipper took a bearing of the buoy and found it was altering rapidly. He then fired a warning rocket signal, slipped the nets, and gave chase to the buoy. About a thousand yards away was the drifter *Dulcie Doris*, which also slipped her nets and went after the buoy. Presently a submarine came up about five hundred yards ahead. The *Dulcie Doris* opened fire on her at point-blank range, hitting her three times under the conning-tower. A third drifter, the *Evening Star*, which was seven hundred yards south-west of the *Dulcie Doris*, on seeing the indicator buoy flare, also slipped her nets, went in pursuit, and fired at the enemy, hitting her twice. The submarine listed over and began to sink, and the enemy crew was seen to take to the water. Boats were then launched from the drifters, and the commander and two other officers were picked up, as well as seventeen men. They were taken as prisoners into Brindisi. Next day the second in command admitted that they had been caught half an hour in the net by the propellers, and could not get clear. By this date the depth of the nets had been increased to 120 feet, which it was thought would be the farthest depth to which submarines would dare to dive. Thus ended the life of the Austrian U-boat No. VI.

For this fine service the sum of £1,000 was awarded for division between the three drifters mentioned.

On July 9th, however, the enemy had his revenge, when at four in the morning a group of five drifters, based on Brindisi, were attacked by an Austrian cruiser, with the result that the two drifters *Astrum Spei* and *Clavis* were lost. After this incident it became necessary to shift the drifter line farther south down the Straits, thus making it less easy for the raiders to interfere with them with little risk to themselves. Before the end of July the armed yacht *Catania* (Commander the Duke of Sutherland, R.N.R.) arrived at Taranto in advance of a number of motor-launches which were coming out from England to patrol the Otranto Straits. The drifters were badly in need of all the help which could be given. They had, however, further evidence about this time of the success which was attending their hazardous and monotonous work. About 6.30 a.m. on July 30th, U44 got foul of the nets of the *Quarry Knowe*, which signalled the *Garrigill*. The latter dropped depth charges, and eventually the nets, which had evidently enveloped the submarine, went to the bottom. The career of this vessel was ended. About a month later the enemy retaliated by sending three aeroplanes over the drifter line and sank the *Rosies* with the second bomb. During the autumn the drifter base was transferred from Brindisi to Taranto, as these craft were operating now farther to the southward across the Otranto Straits. The mine-layers, too, were based nearer their patrol area, being given the use of Tricase Harbour, which was specially deepened for them.

In spite of every effort, there was no doubt that submarines on their way to and from Cattaro were succeeding in avoiding the nets, chiefly by crossing the line at night on the surface. Bad weather, especially on a dark night, when the drifter line would become more or less scattered, was welcomed by the enemy submarines working in the Mediterranean. When once they had negotiated this nominal barrage of the Otranto Straits, they had a clear run, and only the right weather and the right time were needed to enable an enterprising submarine commander to get through. Indeed, it is remarkable in the circumstances that any U-boats were sunk. In face of many



difficulties, the little steam vessels—most of them built of wood—of the Auxiliary Patrol did maintain a barrier that was at least tiresome, often dangerous, and at times fatal, to the enemy's under-water craft. Exposed to attack from cruisers, aeroplanes, and submarines, and with the lightest of weapons with which to reply, these fishermen and junior officers of the Royal Naval Reserve deserved well of the Allies. The French and Italians, less familiar than the British seamen with the conditions of such warfare as the enemy was waging, were not protecting the drifters quite as well as might have been expected, although various conferences between admirals of the various nationalities took place now and again. The strain on the fishermen, the wear and tear of drifters towing their 180-foot-deep nets, and the large number of reliefs, together with costly shore establishments, indicated how enthusiastically Great Britain had come to the support of the common cause in foreign waters.

The conferences were not fruitless, and by the middle of December six Italian destroyers were patrolling in the Straits. On December 17th the Adriatic drifters definitely sank yet another submarine; this time it was the Austrian U-boat No. XX which was destroyed. The enemy craft fouled the 180-foot-deep nets of the drifter *Fisher Girl*, and after a number of depth charges had been dropped by the drifters, she sank to the bottom of the Adriatic, never again to be seen on the surface. Five days later the enemy replied by attempting to raid the drifter line by means of a force consisting of a light cruiser and three or four destroyers. This incident occurred at 9.30 p.m. Two drifters, the *Gowan Lea* and *Our Allies*, were shelled, the former being hit several times and severely injured, though there were no casualties. Fortunately the enemy force was seen by six French destroyers, which were not on patrol, but happened to be passing the drifter line en route from Brindisi for Taranto. The enemy was immediately chased by the French vessels to the northward until 2 a.m. From Brindisi some Italian destroyers and H.M.S. GLOUCESTER also put to sea at 11.30 p.m., but the enemy was able to escape. Although the Austrians had failed in their plan, it was only by a lucky chance that several of these British fishing-craft were saved from destruction. The defence of the drifters indeed consti-

tuted a difficult problem. The drifters were required because the submarines had to be hindered, and the actual losses of the latter through the tactics of the drifters showed what good work was being done. At the same time they furnished an easy target on any night that the Austrians might select. It was therefore decided to vary the position of the net line from time to time and to place it still farther to the southward; the previous line had extended from a position fifteen miles east of Cape Otranto to Strade Bianche, the nets being used whenever the weather permitted.

We must now leave the Adriatic and the Dardanelles and see what was happening in the rest of the Mediterranean. The position in the late summer of 1915 may be briefly summarised. The Germans were still nervous of the possible result of the Dardanelles campaign. If the British forces after all succeeded in breaking through, Germany would have virtually lost the war. The Germans accordingly began to send submarines to hinder the operations. The pioneer voyage of Hersing in U21 was followed by Rücker and Kophamel in U34 and U35. They set out from Germany on August 4th, and reached Cattaro three weeks later. They were followed by U39 and U33, which left Germany on August 27th and 28th, and reached Cattaro on September 15th and 16th. Orders were also given for other oversea submarines to follow. For a time, then, the scene of greatest submarine activity, irrespective of mine-layers, shifted from the British Isles to the Mediterranean. Through that sea passed not merely transports, but passenger liners and cargo carriers from the Suez Canal. It was the policy of the enemy to wage a keen submarine warfare against Allied mercantile traffic in this southern sea. The torpedoing of the transport *Royal Edward* in the Ægean by UB14 on August 13th, whilst this submarine was on passage from Cattaro to Constantinople, showed what could be expected. It was to be anticipated, also, that as the submarine mine-layer off the south-eastern English coast had begun to be very active, before long there would be submarine mine-layers in the Mediterranean. If mines were dropped off Malta—an obvious position—there would be serious danger to His Majesty's ships and transports, so it was

decided in August to send six trawlers from the Nore area to Malta for mine-sweeping and patrol, the first four setting out on August 14th.

During the autumn a number of trawlers were purchased from Portugal and, after being commissioned, were based on Gibraltar. During November a dozen German trawlers, which had been captured by Captain Tyrwhitt's Harwich force in the Heligoland Bight, were sent to Lowestoft, fitted out for the Mediterranean, and armed with 12-pounder guns. Other trawlers were similarly prepared and sent to Falmouth, where they steamed to the Mediterranean. Some of the craft were dispatched to Port Said, some to Malta, the others to Alexandria. In addition, the squadron of fast armed yachts, which had been patrolling in the Irish Sea, left early in November for the Mediterranean, where, at first, they were lent to the French. Vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol were at this period being put to all sorts of uses. At the end of November, for instance, troops were being sent from Egypt to Marsa Matruh in trawlers owing to the Senussi rising. The demand for armed trawlers was so insistent that by December another sixty-six had to be withdrawn from their patrol work off the British coast and sent to the Mediterranean, thirty-six being sent to Alexandria and thirty to Malta. The ex-German trawlers gave a good deal of trouble, owing to their defects, but at Lowestoft and Falmouth, Gibraltar and Malta, they were eventually made serviceable.

To organise these numerous patrol-vessels, Rear-Admiral le Marchant, who had had experience with them at Kingstown, was appointed to Malta. A few more yachts, such as the *Ægusa* and *Safa-el-Bahr*, were also dispatched to the Mediterranean before the end of 1915. It was decided on December 23rd that the Gibraltar, Malta, and Egypt anti-submarine patrols should be arranged as follows: Gibraltar was to have the yacht squadron, as well as eight other yachts and six sloops; Malta was to have four destroyers, twelve sloops, two yachts, and forty-eight trawlers; Egypt was to have a dozen sloops, besides her group of trawlers. These elaborate arrangements were necessary for the reason that the submarine sinkings in the Mediterranean were becoming serious. It was unfortunate that when already there were

too few Auxiliary Patrol craft in the British Isles the number had to be depleted. They brought with them south that same eager, fighting spirit that they had exhibited in British waters; they had to endure months of monotonous boredom, broken only occasionally by a short sharp burst of excitement, such as occurred to the yacht *Ægusa* on April 13th, 1916.

This yacht (Captain T. P. Walker, R.N.R.) received a wireless intercepted message that about 8 a.m. a submarine had been sighted in lat.  $37^{\circ} 18' N.$ , long.  $15^{\circ} 57' E.$  The *Ægusa* at once proceeded towards this position and shortly after 1 p.m., before arriving there, received news that the enemy had apparently gone towards the Adriatic. Captain Walker assumed that her track would be to the north-east, and shaped his course accordingly, hoping to catch her before sunset. At 5.35 p.m. a steamer was observed about five miles off, and almost immediately afterwards a submarine was seen coming away from the steamer. The submarine fired a torpedo, which caused the ship to heel over and sink. In the meantime the *Ægusa* had opened a deliberate fire at 8,000 yards. The enemy was making off at full speed on the surface in an easterly direction, and soon submerged, thus escaping. A fortnight later the *Ægusa* was lost off Malta, having been either torpedoed or mined.

During the early months of 1916 the submarine menace in the Mediterranean developed apace. Some idea of the success that fell to the enemy may be obtained from the record of U35 during the month of June of that year. This craft had changed her commander, Kophamel having been succeeded by Arnauld de la Périère, a German naval officer whose father was French and had fought against Germany in the Franco-Prussian War. This submarine officer, owing to the thoroughness of his work in the Mediterranean, earned a high reputation among his fellow countrymen. He sank no fewer than forty-one ships between June 10th and 29th, twenty of them being steamers and twenty-one sailing-craft.

In the middle of June, in order to keep abreast of the mine-sweeping necessities in the Mediterranean, six paddle-steamers (well-known hitherto to excursionists at British seaside resorts) were collected at Falmouth and thence sent south. Many of the Auxiliary Patrol vessels had been

out in the Mediterranean since the early months of the war and were needing a rest. There is a sea-saying that "ships and men always rot in port." But it is not less true that, unless they are both relieved at the end of a definite time, they will go to pieces. The crews had not been able to visit their homes and relations for a long while, whereas their brethren serving in the waters of the British Isles had been able to get a few days' leave at least twice a year. On July 28th, 1916, the first group of a dozen trawlers was ordered home from the Mediterranean so that the crews might be rested and the ships refitted, and further groups were to be sent home in the same way as opportunity offered. To replace these, another dozen craft were sent out from Falmouth and Portland at the end of July. The first of the home-coming trawlers began to reach Falmouth at the beginning of October from Mudros, and proceeded to Lowestoft for refit and some of them were afterwards sent to the White Sea. Thus from the Dardanelles to the north of Russia the trawlers extended their daily duties. Similarly with the drifters which had been out for a long time, being based on Mudros. In November orders were issued to select good steel drifters from the English patrol bases and to send them to Falmouth, where they were fitted with guns, nets, depth charges, bombs, and one month's stores. They then proceeded to Mudros via Gibraltar. These steel craft were to relieve twenty-four wooden drifters which were directed to return to England.

As further additions were made to the auxiliary defence force in the Mediterranean, so also did the enemy continue to maintain his activity.

Thus the contest went on between the submarine and anti-submarine. The Malta Auxiliary Patrol craft were doing their best to make it safe for the transports outward and homeward bound, but it was a vast undertaking. From Malta to Cerigotto Channel is a distance of 420 miles, and this transport route was patrolled by the trawlers to the east, and from Malta to the westward as far as Pantellaria, a further 130 miles. Other trawlers as well as some paddlers, were engaged in mine-sweeping; M.L.s and trawlers were patrolling off the Maltese coast; whilst other trawlers still, with some armed yachts, were busy doing escort work. Such was the position at the beginning

of 1917, a year that was to witness a record number of sinkings. For Malta it began badly enough, for on January 9th, 1917, H.M.S. CORNWALLIS, which had fired the first shell on the first day's bombardment of the outer forts of the Dardanelles and took part in that campaign for a longer period than any other battleship, was torpedoed and sunk by a submarine off Malta. There was no respite for anyone from the peril of the torpedo. Battleship or transport, armed yacht or trawler, it was all the same. Ships and men of all sorts were doing their best, but Germany had sent her very best U-boat officers to the Mediterranean, and these submarines, besides their ability to become invisible, were also better armed on the surface than were our small craft, suffering from the unsatisfied demands of the new British armies for equipment. Arnauld de la Périère, the "star turn" of the enemy flotilla, was a believer in attacking his victims by long-distance gunnery; and because of his gun's superiority of range he could do pretty much as he liked. It may now be confessed that the information which these submarines possessed of the tracks of the British merchant ships was remarkably accurate, since they had little difficulty in finding their prey. That having been done, the rest was easy, and many a mercantile officer was compelled to see his ship floundering in her death agony whilst on his way to Cattaro as a prisoner of war.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUBMARINE INVASION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

DURING the early months of 1915 the German Admiralty Staff, impressed by the freedom of communications which the Allies were enjoying in the Mediterranean, and particularly by the possibilities which resided in the attack on the Dardanelles, had been studying the situation in southern waters. It was assumed that the Allies would be unprepared for an extension of the submarine campaign and that, at first, counter-measures, such as were being developed in home waters, would be lacking. Moreover, the geographical formation of, and high visibility in, the Mediterranean were regarded as favouring submarine operations. Arrangements were accordingly made, as has been indicated in the preceding chapter, to send six small "B" submarines and four boats of the "C" class by rail in sections to Pola and to put them together at the Austrian port. Towards the end of May the sinking of H.M.S. TRIUMPH and H.M.S. MAJESTIC encouraged the enemy to further efforts. Kapitän-Leutnant Otto Hersing volunteered to take U21 round from the North Sea to the Mediterranean in order to prove the feasibility of submarines making so long a journey, unattended, under war conditions. The journey was successfully completed, and U21 was followed by other craft.

The news of the sinking of the transport *Royal Edward* on August 13th, with the loss of 132 lives, reached Germany at a moment when a fierce controversy between the naval and civil authorities was proceeding as to the wisdom of antagonising neutrals, and particularly the Americans, by attacks on merchant shipping round the British Isles. On September 18th, as already stated, the order limiting the operation of submarines in home waters was issued, and the scene of activity shifted to the Mediterranean.

Events had convinced the Germans that the Mediterranean offered favourable conditions for attacking the communications of the Allies. On September 4th the *Natal Transport* (4,107 tons) had been destroyed. This vessel was on passage from Bombay to Liverpool with a general cargo. She had left Port Said early in the afternoon of September 2nd and, in view of the rumours that submarines had appeared in the Mediterranean, a sharp lookout was kept. When the ship had been at sea two days and was off Gavdo Island, Crete, the chief officer (Mr. J. T. Jones) heard the sound of a gun, and looking astern, saw a shot drop into the sea about one mile away. A submarine was then observed three or four miles astern. The master (Mr. W. C. Davison) was in his cabin on the bridge, and at once took charge on hearing the firing, ordering a full head of steam. Two more shots followed, one astern and the other ahead of the vessel, and then the forecastle head was hit, the projectile penetrating the two decks and entering the fore peak. The unequal struggle had lasted about a quarter of an hour, and Captain Davison, responsible for the lives of the crew of thirty-three hands, felt that he had no alternative but to stop. The submarine continued firing while the crew were taking to the boats, but they got away safely. While the ship was being abandoned, another submarine rose to the surface two or three miles away and fired a rocket signal to her companion and firing ceased. As the boats pulled away to the north, the *Natal Transport*—which had been holed in many places—presented a sad spectacle; she had a list to port and smoke was issuing from the ventilators of the holds. In the darkness the boats proceeded toward the coast of Crete, and, with assistance sent to them by the British Consul at Canea, the officers and men got ashore.

The destruction of the *Natal Transport* was followed on September 7th by the sinking of the *Caroni* (2,652 tons), which was torpedoed fifteen miles west from Chassiron in the Bay of Biscay. She was shelled as the evening was closing in, and the crew were left to their fate fifteen miles from land. The *Mora* (3,047 tons) was destroyed by gunfire on the following day sixty-eight miles W. by S. from Belle Isle off the Brittany coast, and on the 9th the *Cornubia* (1,736 tons) met the same end



seventy-five miles S.E. by S. from Cartagena. After sailing and pulling for twenty-eight hours in a rough sea, with a high wind, the crew landed at Puerto de Mazarron. These three ships fell the victims to submarines which were outward bound to the Mediterranean. Ten days later the transport *Ramazan* (3,477 tons), carrying Indian troops, was shelled and sunk off Cerigotto Island with a loss of 315 lives, including 314 Indians. The *Linkmoor* (4,306 tons) was destroyed off Cape Matapan less than twenty-four hours later. Then came the sinking of the *H. C. Henry* (4,219 tons) in almost the same position on the 28th, and the *Haydn* (3,923 tons) went down off Crete on the 29th. The last-named vessel was bound from Karachi to Glasgow. The crew, under orders from the enemy craft, left the ship in two boats as darkness fell. The submarine, having completed her work, disappeared without offering assistance. The master (Mr. J. W. Learmouth) decided to remain in the vicinity until the next day, when it was agreed that both boats should steer for the nearest British port on the homeward voyage, a distance of five hundred miles. During the following night the boats lost sight of each other. Captain Learmouth's boat was picked up on October 3rd and brought into Malta. The remainder of the crew had been in their open boat for forty-eight hours before they were rescued by the s.s. *Trafalgar* and landed at Port Said.

These events occurred during the period when the enemy was reconsidering the submarine campaign in the light of American protests, and with the close of September he determined to concentrate his resources on an attack upon the lines of communication of the Allies in the Mediterranean. Henceforward British and other seamen were confronted with dangers in the Mediterranean resembling those with which events had made them familiar in home waters. The Germans had learnt that submarines could make the long passage from the North Sea to these southern waters, and every available craft of suitable design was dispatched to spread destruction in the Mediterranean.

With the opening of the month of October the submarine campaign in southern waters began in deadly earnest, with dire results to British shipping and British merchant seamen. In all ten ships were accounted for by

the enemy and thirty-five lives were lost during that month. On the 2nd the *Sailor Prince* (3,144 tons) was intercepted off Cape Sidero, Crete. Though the ship was forty-eight miles from land, the crew were ordered to take to the boats, but fortunately eight hours later they were rescued by the s.s. *Borulos*. As soon as he got on board the master of the *Sailor Prince* (Mr. J. Chilvers) told the story of his experiences, confident that he had nothing more to fear. That the submarine was still watching the course of events became apparent, however, about two hours later, when she made an attack on the *Borulos*. The steamer had on board about three hundred passengers, including a good many women and children, and when the submarine revealed its intention a panic broke out, some persons jumping overboard. Captain Chilvers immediately went to the bridge and hoisted a signal stating that the vessel carried passengers, including women and children. The Greek flag was afterwards hoisted, and then the submarine closed in. In the meantime as many passengers as possible had been rescued from the water and placed on board the enemy craft, but it was afterwards found that twenty-five had been drowned in spite of the efforts of two British firemen, named Barker and Crocker, who lost their lives in endeavouring to save women and children from drowning. Before the submarine could carry out its apparent purpose of sinking the *Borulos*, the second officer of that ship bore the visiting-card of Prince Mahmoud to the commander, at the same time telling him that the Prince and his family were on board. He also informed him that there were Greek passengers in the *Borulos* and appealed to him to spare the ship. Greece, though a small country, was neutral; the *Borulos* was spared and reached Alexandria without further incident.

The *Arabian* (2,744 tons) was sunk on the same day as the *Sailor Prince*, and the *Craigston* (2,617 tons) two days later, and then on the 5th the *Bursfield* (4,037 tons) was overhauled by a submarine seventy miles west of Cape Matapan. The master (Mr. A. L. Hunt), the fourth engineer, a messroom steward, and a fireman were killed by gunfire during the chase which took place before the vessel was overtaken by the enemy.

The ordeal to which merchant seamen had been condemned by the enemy is reflected in the following sum-

maries of the records of steamships sunk between October 6th and October 23rd, when the *Marquette* (7,057 tons) went down with a loss of twenty-nine lives.

The *Silverash* (3,753 tons) was overhauled by a submarine on the 6th when about 190 miles east from Malta. The master (Mr. John Parry Jones) decided that escape was impossible. The crew took to the boats, which were afterwards picked up by the steamer *Remembrance*.

The *Scawby* (3,658 tons) was stopped by a submarine at 2.30 p.m. on the same day when 220 miles from the nearest land—Malta. The crew were ordered to abandon ship, and the submarine, having exploded a bomb by the vessel's side, went off after another steamer. As there appeared some hope that the *Scawby* might not sink, the master (Mr. M. M. A. Fisker) ordered the boats to stand by. The submarine, observing the intention to reboard the vessel, returned and began firing with rifles at the boats as they were approaching the ship. Nothing further could be done, so the boats set sail in the direction of land. They were picked up the following morning—one at 6 o'clock and the other at 9 o'clock.

The *Halizones* (5,093 tons) was intercepted by a submarine off Cape Martello, Crete, on the 7th. The master (Mr. W. J. Eynon) put on full speed, but, after seven shots had been fired by the enemy, gave up the hopeless effort to escape, and the crew were ordered to abandon ship when 120 miles from the nearest practical landing-place. After being in their boats for seventy-two hours, they reached land on Sunday afternoon, October 10th.

The *Thorpwood* (3,184 tons) was also off Cape Martello when, on the morning of October 8th, she was chased by a submarine, which flew the French colours until the first shot had been fired, when the German ensign was hoisted. The pursuit was a short one. The master (Mr. Henry V. Adams), after consulting with his officers, decided that escape was impossible. Though there was no landing-place nearer than 125 miles, the crew were ordered to abandon ship.

The *Apollo* (3,774 tons) was off Gavdo Island, Crete, on October 9th, when she was overhauled by a submarine. The master (Mr. M. J. Redmond) had no recourse but to stop the ship. The nearest land was sixty-five miles distant. The crew was nevertheless ordered to

take to their small boats, and the only consideration extended to them was permission to take with them a chart and provisions. One boat was forty-nine hours before reaching land, and the other was fifty-two hours.

During November the enemy's anticipation of reaping a rich harvest in the Mediterranean was partially confirmed. In addition to nine ships, of 9,677 tons, which were sunk by mines in various areas, with a loss of no fewer than ninety-three lives, the submarines operating in the Mediterranean accounted for twenty-three vessels, of 84,816 tons, with casualties numbering twenty-five. Consequently during those weeks the British Mercantile Marine was deprived of thirty-two vessels (94,493 tons). In addition, submarines molested eleven ships, of 64,460 tons. The experience of the *Woodfield* (3,584 tons) furnished evidence of the effective use which could have been made of long-range defensive armament if it had been available at this period. This vessel carried only a small gun, and the attacking submarine kept at a safe distance. The *Woodfield* (master, Mr. Robert Hughes) was on her way from Avonmouth to Malta when, in the early morning of the 3rd, the stillness was broken by the sound of gun-fire, two shots passing across the vessel's bow. Far away in the distance, Captain Hughes then saw a submarine steaming towards him. The vessel was at once put stern on to the enemy.

As soon as the merchant captain's intention to evade capture became apparent to the commander of the submarine, he opened fire again and for two hours the fusillade continued, the British merchant captain, undaunted by the odds against him, still holding on his course. The ship was hit several times; seven men were killed and the carpenter was fatally wounded. When Captain Hughes, who, with thirteen others, had been wounded, realised that his vessel was in a sinking condition, he ordered the port and starboard lifeboats to get away. He had in his charge, in addition to his crew of thirty-four hands, thirty-one passengers, and seven of these were among the injured. All who remained alive got away safely in the two boats. When everyone had left the ship except the captain, the gunner, and a soldier, the submarine ceased firing, submerged, and came up on the starboard beam. A torpedo was then fired, which struck

the vessel amidship. Not, however, until two more shots had been fired did the *Woodfield* sink. The master and his two companions were the last to leave the ship; they took refuge on a raft, which was picked up by the second mate's boat, which safely reached the coast of Morocco. Captain Hughes had not succeeded in saving his ship, but he had at least sold it at a high price in view of the large number of shells, besides a torpedo, which the enemy had had to expend. The incident took place out of sight of land, about forty miles east of Ceuta. On the same day the *Woolwich* (2,936 tons) was captured and destroyed 100 miles south from Cape Sidero, Crete, and but for the manner in which the transports *Japanese Prince* (4,876 tons) and the *Mercian* (6,305 tons) were handled on the same day, these two vessels would have shared the same fate, with probably heavy loss of life.

The escape of the *Japanese Prince* illustrated what could be done by good seamanship, for the vessel was unarmed and had no wireless. For over four hours the submarine chased this transport. She fired about forty-five shells, but fortunately none of them caused casualties, although many pieces of shell were picked up on the decks. This immunity was due to the skill with which the master (Mr. A. H. Jenkins) manœuvred his ship, earning recognition at the hands of the Admiralty. He was awarded a lieutenant's commission in the R.N.R., and he, as well as the chief engineer (Mr. C. James), was mentioned in despatches. Speed and skilful manœuvring also saved the *Mercian* (Captain Walker). This ship, like the *Japanese Prince*, was steaming in the Mediterranean, proceeding with 500 troops from Gibraltar to Malta. At 2.15 p.m. an enemy submarine was sighted about two miles on the starboard quarter. The submarine immediately opened fire with two guns, one being a 3.4-inch, the first shot striking the foremast, the second the mainmast, and the third wrecked the wireless telegraph house. The master then zigzagged his ship to try and dodge the shells. About this time the master sent the quartermaster from the wheel to find out the damage done to the wireless telegraph house; this man did not return, and in consequence the master had to take the wheel for over an hour of the action until relieved by Private Thompson. The master ordered the two Maxims

to open fire as soon as the submarine came within range, but these naturally were of small use against a 3·4-inch gun. The submarine fired about 100 shells, of which twenty to thirty struck the ship, causing twenty-three deaths and fifty-five wounded. At 3 p.m. a patrol-vessel hove in sight, and soon afterwards the submarine ceased firing and disappeared. The master, who was awarded the D.S.C., was ably seconded by the chief engineer and his staff.

Five ships, including the transport *Moorina* (4,994 tons), were attacked by submarines on the 5th. The escape of the *City of York* (7,834 tons) and the *Huntsman* (7,460 tons) was due to the effective use which was made of the two guns with which these vessels had been armed; while the *Lady Plymouth* (3,521 tons) got away owing to her speed. She was fired on again on the following day as she was proceeding along the coast of Algiers, but once more showed her heels to the enemy. The *Pola* (3,061 tons) also escaped by good fortune and good seamanship off Tukush Island, Algeria, on the 6th, when four other vessels, including the *Lumina* (5,950 tons), which was defensively armed, were destroyed.

On the following day an enemy submarine in the course of six hours sank off Cape Martello, Crete, two good British vessels of an aggregate of nearly 8,000 tons. The weather was fine, the sea was fairly smooth, and there was little wind. By chance the two ships steamed within the area under the observation of the submarine under these favourable conditions for attack. The *Clan Macalister* (4,835 tons), on passage from Liverpool to Indian ports with a general cargo of about 6,600 tons, was proceeding at full speed, at about 10 knots, and was some 120 miles south-east from Cape Martello when her master (Lieutenant-Commander J. W. Taylor, R.N.R., retired) noticed a vessel sinking about eight miles away. While heading in the steamer's direction in accordance with the immemorial rule observed by seamen of what Nelson described as "the polite nations," he saw the vessel disappear. Two minutes later his eye was arrested by what he took to be the bow wave of a submarine, some seven miles away on a south-south-easterly bearing. Putting on full speed, Captain Taylor went off to the north-north-west, placing the enemy astern of him.

In the stokehold and engine-room all the hands were

working hard to keep a full head of steam, but, in spite of their efforts, the submarine gradually gained on the *Clan Macalister*. When about two and a half miles distant the enemy began firing, using shell first of all and afterwards shell and shrapnel promiscuously. The vessel was hit several times, but as the damage inflicted was not serious, Captain Taylor ignored the enemy's signal to stop and continued on his course. For over an hour and a half the chase was maintained, and then the chief engineer reported that the lascars in the stokehold, frightened by the firing, to which the *Clan Macalister* could make no reply, had left their stations and that steam was rapidly falling. The vessel was by this time being shelled at close range, and Captain Taylor was forced to the conclusion that nothing more could be done to save his ship. The engines were stopped and all hands were ordered to the boats, the enemy continuing his bombardment while this was being done. A torpedo finally settled the fate of this unit of the Clan Line.

While this ship was being disposed of, the *Caria* (3,032 tons) came on the scene. She was proceeding in ballast from Naples to Alexandria, when the second officer, who was on the bridge, heard a shot and at once called the master (Mr. J. A. Wolfe). A submarine was then observed about two points on the starboard bow, two miles away, astern of the *Clan Macalister*, which was heading on an opposite course to the *Caria*. Captain Wolfe became the passive witness of the final phase of Captain Taylor's plucky attempt to escape. While chasing the Clan liner, the enemy devoted attention also to the other merchant ship. Having dispatched the *Clan Macalister*, the submarine returned to the *Caria*, which, owing to her light condition, was able to steam at considerably less than full speed, the propeller being half out of the water. Captain Wolfe had no hope of escape, so the ship was abandoned and forthwith sunk by gunfire. By a happy chance the boats of the two ships fell in with the steamer *Frankenfels* on the following morning, and thus the crews reached Malta in safety.

This double success encouraged the enemy to hang about off Cape Martello, and two days later the *Den of Crombie* (4,949 tons), homeward bound from Far Eastern

ports with a general cargo of 7,100 tons, came in sight. Shots began to fall near her, and then the submarine was observed on the port beam. The *Den of Crombie* was unarmed, and the master (Mr. H. C. Hemming) decided he had no alternative but to stop. The ship was immediately abandoned, and after the enemy had fired about a dozen shots the *Den of Crombie* disappeared and the submarine made off. The four boats kept company during the day. After darkness had closed in, a steamer's lights were seen approaching. Captain Hemming ordered flares to be burnt, but the strange vessel, evidently suspicious that an attempt was being made to lure her to destruction, shut down all lights and altered course when within about a mile of the chief officer's boat and disappeared to the eastward, to the dismay of the distressed seamen. During the ensuing night the boats lost touch with each other and became separated. Fortunately, on the following morning the troop transport *Royal George* hove in sight of the chief officer's boat, and an hour later came across Captain Hemming and his companions. The boats of the second and third officers were also picked up, with the result that all the crew of the *Den of Crombie* got ashore.

On the same day the master (Mr. Howard Tindle) of the *Sir Richard Awdry* (2,234 tons) had the mortification of being compelled to surrender his vessel off Gavdo Island, Crete. He was on passage from Saigon to Marseilles with a cargo of rice, and all had gone well for over a month, when he fell in with the submarine which was to bring about the destruction of the ship under his command. Captain Tindle, on observing the enemy, altered course in the hope of getting away. The submarine then began firing somewhat wildly. A signal for help was promptly sent out, and as events were to prove would have resulted in saving the ship but for circumstances beyond Captain Tindle's control. At last the submarine obtained the range, with the result that the wireless aerials were destroyed; other shots passed through the funnel and ventilators and shrapnel burst around the bridge. Captain Tindle was still maintaining a full head of steam, when the Chinamen down below became panic-stricken and deserted the stokehold. Speed at once began to fall off, so the ship was stopped. In spite of this action



the submarine continued firing and, drawing in, discharged six shots at point-blank range into the engine-room. The chief and fourth mates were slightly wounded. The Chinese seamen by this time had got beyond control, and all of them, with the exception of four, took to the boats without waiting for orders. Captain Tindle had to admit that the position was hopeless, so he and his officers and the four remaining Chinamen passed over the side into a small boat as the ship was settling down by the stern. Though the *Sir Richard Awdry* was not a large vessel, she was sinking slowly, so the Germans discharged a torpedo, which caused her to heel over and disappear in seven minutes. The French trawler *Marie Frédéric*, in response to the signal for help, appeared on the scene at this moment and drove away the enemy; but, owing to the conduct of the Chinese stokers, she arrived too late to save the ship from destruction. Though they little deserved their good fortune, all these men, except a Chinese cook, were saved. On the following day the *Californian* (6,223 tons) was torpedoed off Cape Matapan. She was steaming at 12 knots at the time, and, unlike the other vessels mentioned, was under escort, being accompanied by a French torpedo-boat. When the *Californian* was struck at 7.45 a.m. a French patrol-boat took her in tow, and there seemed some chance that she might get into port, but unhappily shortly after 1 o'clock the rope broke. Efforts were being made to resume towing, when a second torpedo hit the ship and she at once began to make water fast. The master (Mr. W. Masters), with his crew, remained by the ship for seven hours from the time that the first attack was made, but their devotion and all the efforts of the French seamen were unavailing. Fortunately, in spite of the extensive damage done by the torpedo, only one life was lost.

Four days passed, during which British merchant shipping in the Mediterranean was unmolested, and then, on November 14th, the losses began once more. The *Treneglos* (3,886 tons) was proceeding at full speed seventy miles west-south-west from Gavdo Island, off Crete, when a terrific explosion occurred in the engine-room, killing outright the third engineer and two firemen, and smashing the port lifeboat. It was at once apparent that the ship was doomed. The master (Mr. S. P. Beale) ordered the boats

to get away as quickly as possible, and hardly were they clear of the ship when she sank. From first to last nothing was seen of the submarine. On the following day, within a few miles of the spot where the *Treneglos* had disappeared, the *Orange Prince* (3,583 tons) was also torpedoed without warning, and in this case also three lives were lost. The vessel was going at full speed when the torpedo burst into the stokehold, killing three men. Everyone, except the master (Mr. J. Holloway) and the chief officer, took to the boats, and a few minutes later a second torpedo struck the ship. Captain Holloway and the chief officer had barely time to escape before their vessel disappeared below the water.

Little more than half the month had passed, and already the enemy had destroyed thirteen British merchant ships, and there was no respite for British seamen. On November 18th the *Enosis* (3,409 tons) came under a heavy shell-fire when 150 miles east-south-east from Malta. A submarine was observed on the starboard beam flying no flag and bearing no number or other distinguishing mark. The range was soon obtained; one shot fell on the fore-castle just as the men had left it, and another struck the bridge, mortally wounding the master (Mr. Alfred Bowling). The chief officer (Mr. J. Condon) was attending to lowering the boats, but he at once went to the assistance of Captain Bowling; the master had been terribly injured and, although still living, was past human aid. As the boats were being put into the water, another shell exploded near the chart-room, doing further damage and putting the master out of his suffering. As soon as the boats were clear of the *Enosis*, she was torpedoed out of hand and sank, the body of Captain Bowling going down with her. Though the ship was destroyed far from land, the crew fortunately got ashore in safety. On the 19th the *Hallamshire* (4,420 tons) was torpedoed without warning when off Cerigotto at 2.20 p.m. The submarine apparently stood by to await events, and as the vessel was not sinking fast enough, she was attacked by shell-fire shortly after 4 o'clock. The submarine failed to show any flag in accordance with the rules of warfare. By 5 o'clock nothing was to be seen of the *Hallamshire*, with her cargo of 5,600 tons of coal. A French destroyer picked up the master (Mr. A. G. Clark) and his men.

The *Merganser* (1,905 tons) met a like end off Gozo on November 20th. The ship was steaming at just under 10 knots, but the master (Mr. J. T. Sharp), in his effort to escape, managed to get 13 knots out of her. Even this speed, however, was not sufficient to take the *Merganser* out of gun range. Once more a French torpedo-boat was the means of saving the lives of the crew. After an interval of six days the *Tringa* (2,154 tons) was captured thirty miles from Galata Island and sunk by gunfire, with a loss of three lives ; on the following day the *Tanis* (3,665 tons) and the *Kingsway* (3,647 tons) were sunk by gunfire, the former three miles north from Zembra Island, and the latter off Cape Bon, Tunis.

The latter ship was in ballast, and was making little headway owing to the gale which was blowing, accompanied by high head seas. She was on her way from Malta to Huelva, Spain, when gunfire was heard. The narrative of events afterwards given by the master (Mr. Walter Langford) conveys an impression of the character of the ordeal to which British seamen were condemned :

“ I was in the saloon at the time and went on deck immediately. The third officer met me on the bridge ladder and reported that a shot had been fired which had struck the water about 15 feet ahead of the ship. I ran to the bridge and ordered him to stop the engines. At this time another shot was fired, which passed a few feet over the ship’s No. 4 derrick. I could see no sign of any submarine owing to the heavy sea. Realising that it was impossible to escape when the second shot was fired, I blew three short blasts on the whistle to indicate that my engines were going astern, and I immediately ordered all the boats to be lowered and the crews to get into them as quickly as possible. The firing ceased for about five minutes.

“ I ordered the chief officer to take ten men into the port lifeboat and to get clear. The second officer was directed to take charge of the starboard lifeboat and took twelve men with him. The remaining four were told to get into the starboard jolly-boat, and I got into this myself, intending to change afterwards into one of the lifeboats. By this time the submarine, which was now seen for the first time, had come close

in on the port side, and before all the crew had time to get into the boats she fired three shots in quick succession at Nos. 2, 3, and 4 holds. These went right through the ship—in one side and out the other. After considerable difficulty, all the crew got away in one lifeboat and two jolly-boats, the other lifeboat having been smashed by the action of the submarine. The submarine rounded the vessel twice, firing at her continually, and she sank at 0.30 p.m. on the same day. The submarine immediately disappeared. She was about 250 feet long, was painted a light bluish-grey and was apparently quite new. The gun appeared to be a 6-inch howitzer, mounted on a pedestal about 12 feet abaft the conning-tower, and seemed to be fired from the conning-tower, having recoil cylinders on either side. No letters or numbers were seen, but one man in her held a small Austrian hand-flag.”

Captain Langford and his men got ashore safely. The loss of this ship was afterwards the subject of a Court of Inquiry, which decided that “after the first shot to call attention to the presence of the enemy submarine, this was so close that the *Kingsway*, more especially having regard to the conditions of weather prevailing at the time and the lightness of the ship, could not possibly have escaped.”

A welcome relief to the rising record of shipping losses was provided by the spirited and successful fight, on November 23rd, which was made by the *City of Marseilles* (8,250 tons), when on her way from Liverpool to Bombay via Marseilles. She had been given a 4·7-inch gun, and with this one weapon she drove off the enemy. Three weeks earlier the *Kashgar* (8,840 tons) had performed a similar feat, and as already noted, the *Antilo-chus* (9,039 tons) had also used her gun with good effect. The experience of the *City of Marseilles* supplied confirmatory evidence of the value of such defensive armament as the Admiralty was able to provide at a time when, owing to the growth of the Army and expansion of the Navy, there was a serious shortage of guns.

The Ellerman liner (master, Mr. B. Dowse) was steaming at 12 knots at 10 a.m. when a submarine was sighted four miles on the port beam; the enemy was flying no colours and made no signals. Captain Dowse, realising the

peril in which he stood, put on speed and the ship was soon steaming at  $16\frac{1}{4}$  knots. There seemed good hope of bringing the submarine on the port quarter. The passengers on board, as well as the officers and men, were not unconscious of the emergency which had arisen, but exhibited praiseworthy pluck. There was no other vessel in sight, and unless the submarine was driven off reliance would have to be placed on the ship's boats for safety. A S.O.S. call was sent out by emergency code, fixing the position of the *City of Marseilles*, in the faint hope of help being forthcoming. The only reply received was, however, from an Italian hospital ship, stating that she had no code, but offering to stand by. As it was considered inadvisable to send messages *en clair*, this chivalrous response was not acknowledged. If the *City of Marseilles* was to be saved, it had to be by her own exertions.

The duel between the merchant ship with her one gun and the submarine with its concentrated offensive power opened at a range of about three miles. The enemy fired about seven rounds at the British vessel without doing serious damage, although splinters of shell fell on board. The British gun's crew made a spirited reply. Their seventh shot ricocheted and appeared to hit the submarine. The enemy craft at any rate took a list to port and, turning round sharply, abandoned the chase. When last seen the submarine was steering in a north-easterly direction and had a list of about 25 degrees to port, which brought a large area of her starboard side out of water. The *City of Marseilles* proceeded on her passage, the passengers overjoyed at the success with which the ship had been handled and the spirit shown by the men manning her one gun.

On the last two days of the month four more ships, all of them unarmed, were destroyed; three of them—the *Malinche* (1,868 tons), the *Colenso* (3,861 tons), and the *Langton Hall* (4,437 tons)—were sunk off Malta, while the *Middleton* (2,560 tons) was destroyed by gunfire seventy miles from Gavdo Island, which had become a favourite cruising-ground with the enemy. The last ship was on her way from Mudros to Alexandria, when a suspicious object was seen about three miles astern. At first the master (Mr. H. Rattray) was not sure what it was. Then a shell

passed over the ship and doubt was resolved into certainty. The *Middleton* at her best could steam only about 7 knots, but nevertheless Captain Rattray held on his course, zigzagging in order to confuse the enemy's fire. About twenty minutes after fire had been opened, seven of the crew were struck by shrapnel, one of them being killed outright. Escape was impossible, so Captain Rattray stopped the ship. As soon as the crew had taken to the boats, the enemy sank the *Middleton* by gunfire and then disappeared. An appeal by the second mate for bandages for the injured men was ignored. Captain Rattray found himself in a situation which called for all his resource. During the day two of his men died of their wounds. It was not until night was falling that the *Clan Maclareen* hove in sight and rescued the survivors. The casualty list was not, however, yet complete, for another man died on board the *Clan* liner before she reached Malta.

The year 1915 closed with a series of tragedies which cost the British Merchant Navy twenty-one ships, but still more grievous was the loss of 419 lives, of which all but three, caused by mine explosions, were traceable to the operations of enemy submarines in the Mediterranean. Apart from this terrible story of the destruction of the P. & O. liner *Persia*, which is dealt with in a subsequent chapter, incidents occurred which stand out conspicuously in the record of the enemy's attempt, at any cost of life and property, to interrupt the communications of the Allies in the Mediterranean. On the first day of the month, the *Clan Macleod* (4,796 tons) was sunk by gunfire no less than 100 miles east-south-east from Malta. She was on her way home from Calcutta with a general cargo of about 6,000 tons. The master (Mr. H. S. Southward) was steering towards Malta when, in the clear morning light, the chief officer sighted smoke on the port quarter. He assumed that it was a destroyer and, as the enemy had no surface craft at sea, nothing was to be feared. About twenty minutes later a shot came out of nowhere, falling short of the *Clan Macleod*. Captain Southward at once altered course so as to put the smoke patch well astern of him, the engines were opened out, and all the firemen were sent below in order to get as much steam as possible.

Though the British merchant ship was unarmed, Captain Southward was not without hopes of saving his ship. The submarine headed three or four times towards the vessel's port quarter, firing as she did so. The shots fell ahead, and Captain Southward, his determination still firm, continued to manœuvre his ship dexterously, the submarine maintaining a hot pursuit. It was soon apparent that the enemy had the advantage of speed. Shortly before 10 o'clock she had approached to within half a mile of the *Clan Macleod*. She then again opened fire, and the eighth shot struck the vessel. What happened afterwards can be best told in Captain Southward's own words :

“ About this time I realised that I could not save the steamer, hoisted international signal of surrender, stopped the engines, and rounded to, bringing the submarine on the starboard side. The crew were sent to boat stations, but to my surprise the submarine started to shell the bridge, doing considerable damage. I was struck by the first shell. He then started to shell the boats and boat crews, killing nine men, wounding six (three fatally), and smashing the starboard boats. During this shelling the crew had all been sent to the port boats, which were manned and lowered without any casualty. After the boats were lowered the chief officer and myself had a look round the decks, but could not see anyone alive, so we then left the steamer.

“ After the boats left the steamer the gun of the submarine was pointed towards the lifeboat and the commander shouted for me. As the second officer told him I was in the other boat, he turned the gun away and told him he need not be afraid. The submarine was flying the German naval flag. When the other boat appeared in view of the submarine, I was ordered to go on board. I did so, and found the commander and lieutenant in a furious rage with me because I had not stopped sooner. The commander rushed down from the conning-tower, shook his fist in my face, and said, ‘ Why did you not stop ? ’ I replied that I wanted to save my ship. He then said, ‘ Why did you not stop when I fired ? ’ I replied that my instructions were to escape if possible. The commander said, ‘ Never mind your instructions ;

you must obey my orders.' I replied that I did not know anything about his orders. His next remark was, 'I can shoot you as a *franc-tireur*.' I said, 'I don't think so.' He said, 'You are assisting my enemy.' I replied, 'I *am* your enemy.'

"The commander then said, 'Had you stopped when I fired three shots you would not have had this,' pointing to a wound in my hand. I replied that it was my misfortune.

"I was then ordered back into the boat, and the submarine at once proceeded to sink the steamer by shell-fire. After firing a couple of shots into every compartment, he returned to the boats and I was again ordered on board. I was asked for my instructions, which I said I had destroyed. I was also asked for the register, and told him it was on board the steamer.

"The lieutenant dressed my hand, pointed out that my foot was wounded, and gave me packets of dressing for my foot and for some of the wounded. Before I left the submarine he told me to inform all captains I met that they would be fired upon if they tried to escape. I told him that that would be their business and had nothing to do with me. He also asked me the position, and I said I had not had a position for some time.

"We then parted company, and after I had picked up two wounded men, who had evidently stowed themselves away, the two boats set sail for Malta, the chief officer having charge of the cutter with nineteen men on board, and myself in charge of the lifeboat, with fifty men on board. The submarine kept about half a mile south of the boats with only the periscope showing for three or four hours, when he disappeared.

"The lifeboat's crew were picked up by the steamship *Lord Cromer*, of Liverpool, on the following day at 6 p.m., and landed at Algiers on December 5th. The cutter's crew were rescued at 2 a.m. on December 4th, and were landed at Malta the same day."

One of the injured men died of his wounds. For several months Captain Southward was in hospital, recovering slowly from the injuries he had received during his courageous and skilful attempt to save his ship.

Within twenty-four hours two other large ships had



fallen victims to the same submarine—the *Umeta* (5,312 tons) on the same day, and the *Commodore* (5,858 tons) (master, Mr. H. Russell) early on the following morning. The submarine continued to fire on the former vessel after the master (Mr. W. Moxon) had stopped his engines. Fortunately, none of the boats was injured and everyone on board got away in safety, except one lascar who refused to leave, and an engine fireman who died of thirst and exposure in one of the boats. The *Umeta* was sunk 112 miles east-south-east of Malta, and when the enemy had disappeared, leaving the British seamen to their own resources, Captain Moxon gave the boats a course for that port. During the night they became separated. The master and his companions were drifting about at the mercy of the waves until the afternoon of the 5th, when they were fortunately rescued by the Greek steamer *Massalia* and landed at Algiers. The rest of the crew also found safety. The *Commodore* was even farther from the nearest land—160 miles—when she was overhauled. For half an hour she was kept under a heavy fire, which was not abated even when the men on board were taking to the boats. One man had already been killed, and another severely wounded, and while the boats were being lowered five more hands were injured—two of them severely. The survivors were adrift for twenty-eight hours before they were picked up by a Belgian steamer. On the following day the *Helmsmuir* (4,111 tons) was torpedoed off Gavdo Island, and three other ships were chased.

The attention of the naval authorities was attracted in particular to the conduct of the P. & O. *Benalla* (11,118 tons). She was proceeding from Alexandria to Malta with troops, when a wireless call was received from the transport *Torrilla* (5,205 tons), with 2,000 soldiers on board. The *Benalla* was carrying a 4·7-inch gun, and her master (Commander C. W. Cockman, R.N.R., retired) immediately proceeded to her assistance at full speed. He found that the *Torrilla* was being shelled by a submarine, and, as she carried only a 3-pounder gun, was being outranged by the enemy. Captain Cockman, exhibiting fine courage and a high sense of the comradeship of the sea, at once brought his 4·7-inch gun into action at a range of 8,200 yards. His intervention was

almost immediately successful, for after the third round the submarine submerged and made off. For thus saving a valuable ship, as well as many lives, Captain Cockburn was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

For a period of three days British seamen in the Mediterranean, as well as in other waters, enjoyed complete immunity from molestation, and then on the 7th a loss was again reported. The Cunard steamship *Veria* (3,229 tons) was steaming towards Alexandria and was within twenty-four miles of that port—almost safe from danger—when she was intercepted by a submarine and destroyed. On the following day the *Tintoretto* (4,181 tons) had a narrow escape in the same locality. At 9.30 a.m. a torpedo was fired at her, but fortunately missed the ship astern. The master (Mr. W. Tranter), sustained by the presence on board of a 12-pounder gun, brought the submarine astern of him, and when the enemy opened fire returned it vigorously. A running fight was kept up for nearly four hours, pieces of shell falling on board the merchantman, but causing no damage. At last the *Tintoretto's* gun hit the submarine at extreme range, and this success brought the action to a close. Captain Tranter, as well as the chief engineer, Mr. J. P. Rich, received “mentions,” and the Clasp of the Mercantile Marine Medal, which had by this time been instituted, was awarded to this Lambert & Holt liner in recognition of the fine defence which had been made against the enemy's attack. The same good fortune did not attend the *Busiris* (2,705 tons) on the following day, when she was sunk by gunfire 190 miles west-north-west from Alexandria, and the *Orteric* (6,535 tons) was torpedoed by the enemy off Gavdo Island. In both cases a determined effort was made to escape, in spite of the heavy fire to which the vessels were exposed. The master of the latter vessel (Mr. G. B. McGill) was encouraged to hold on his course by the reply to his wireless signal for help which he received from a man-of-war. At last, after the ship had been struck eight times, Captain McGill ordered the boats to be lowered. While this was being done one boat was hit, two men being killed outright and four others seriously injured. When the three lifeboats had dropped half a mile astern of the *Orteric*, the submarine opened fire on the craft in which the chief engineer and

sixteen hands had taken refuge, but fortunately the shots missed their target. It was the good fortune of the survivors, left afloat 140 miles from the nearest land, to be rescued within an hour and a half.

Another interlude then occurred during which the enemy met with no success. On the 13th the *Cawdor Castle* (6,243 tons) escaped by the use of her gun; on the 16th the *Teucer* (9,045 tons) outpaced the submarine by which she was attacked; and then on the 24th submarines began once more to take toll of British merchant shipping. In the meantime there had been a spasmodic outbreak of activity in the English Channel. The *Huntly* (1,153 tons) and *Belford* (516 tons) were torpedoed without warning off Boulogne, and before the month closed submarines had secured the *Van Stirum* (3,284 tons) off the Smalls, and the *Cottingham* (513 tons) off Lundy Island; while on the 28th the *El Zorro* (5,989 tons) was sunk near the Old Head of Kinsale, eleven lives altogether being lost. The *Cottingham* was on passage from Rouen to Swansea on December 26th, when a submarine opened fire on her. It was soon apparent that escape was impossible, so the engines were stopped and the boats filled. The master (Mr. C. Mitchell) was picked up by a patrol-boat the same evening, but nothing was ever heard of the chief officer and the six men who were with him in the other boat, though the *Cottingham* was sunk within sixteen miles of Lundy Island.

This outburst of activity in the waters surrounding the British Isles was of short duration, and in the meantime the enemy continued to pursue his campaign in the Mediterranean. On Christmas Eve the *Yeddo* (4,563 tons) was captured and bombed off Cape Matapan; the *Abelia* (3,650 tons) was sunk by gunfire 152 miles from Gavdo Island; and then on the 30th, as the Old Year passed into history, the P. & O. liner *Persia* (7,974 tons) and the *Clan Macfarlane* (4,823 tons) were torpedoed without warning with a loss of 386 lives. In recognition of his services Kapitän-Leutnant Max Valentiner was awarded the Ordre pour le Mérite.

The story of the experiences of the officers and men of the *Clan Macfarlane* furnishes the climax of the record of the sufferings inflicted on British merchant seamen during the year 1915. This defenceless ship was en-

gaged in her lawful occupation, having left Birkenhead on December 16th with a general cargo of about 7,400 tons. She was on passage to Bombay, and all went well until the afternoon of December 30th, when the vessel was sixty-three miles S.E. by S. from Cape Martello. A good lookout was being maintained as the ship pursued her voyage at an average speed of 10 knots. Though the atmosphere was clear and there was little sea, nothing was seen of enemy submarines. The *Clan Macfarlane* safely navigated the areas associated with the greatest danger, and it seemed as though she might make Alexandria in safety.

The master (Mr. James White Swanston) was among the fifty-two victims whose lives were sacrificed as the result of enemy action, and consequently we are dependent on the information, very full and circumstantial, afterwards supplied by the chief officer (Mr. F. J. Hawley). He was just going on duty at 4 p.m. when the ship was shaken by a terrific explosion. He immediately rushed on deck and found that the upper hatches of No. 5 hold, which had been battened down on leaving Liverpool, had been blown out. It was at once apparent that the ship had been torpedoed. She carried, fortunately, no passengers; but the crew were largely composed of Indians, and that the loss of life was not heavier was due in no slight degree to the courage and discipline exhibited by these natives under nerve-racking conditions. Mr. Hawley, having first ordered the boats to be lowered below the level of the harbour deck, sounded No. 5 hold and discovered that the water had already risen to a height of 18 inches and that part of the cargo was floating out of the steamer through the gaping hole which the enemy's torpedo had pierced. A search was made of the fore-castles in order to make sure that no one remained in them, and then, after conferring with Captain Swanston, instructions were given that this fine steamer should be abandoned. She was already settling down by the stern and darkness was coming on. There was no time to be lost.

With splendid composure officers and men left the steamer in six boats shortly after 5 o'clock and rowed to the north so as to keep clear of the sinking ship. After an interval of rather more than half an hour, a submarine

appeared from the southward and fired six shots into the *Clan Macfarlane* on the port side forward. The submarine commander made the usual inquiries, and then disappeared without a thought for the safety of the men in the boats. As the darkness of night fell around him, Captain Swanston, undismayed by his misfortune, ordered all boats to be placed in line and made fast astern his own boat, in order to ensure their keeping together during the oncoming night. Fortunately they had all been provided with sails, and each man had a lifebelt. So masts were stepped and a course was set for Crete, upwards of sixty miles distant. With the wind blowing from the west, the little boats continued to sail throughout that night and during the succeeding day, the sea happily remaining comparatively calm.

In the course of the afternoon land was sighted and the spirits of all on board rose. The survivors continued on their course in the expectation of speedy deliverance, but in the early hours of New Year's Day the wind dropped. Captain Swanston held a conference with his officers, and it was decided to separate the boats and take to oars. In these conditions some progress was made. By 10 o'clock that morning a light wind had sprung up and the craft once more set their sails. As evening closed in the boats were again made fast together astern of the captain's boat, in order that they might not lose touch with each other during the night. Early on the morning of January 2nd a glimpse was caught of the north-east corner of the island of Crete, but in the meantime the wind had risen and the sea was becoming rough, so sail was shortened and a course was set along the coast. A landing could not be effected owing to the high sea which was running; it was therefore determined to hug the coast at a distance of three or four miles on the chance of the weather conditions improving.

By this time the unfortunate men had become exhausted by exposure, and to add to their troubles a tow-rope parted, with the result that the third officer's and second engineer's boats went adrift. The captain, seized with a high sense of his duty, cast off his boat to go in search of the missing craft. It was an almost hopeless task in the darkness which prevailed. Mr. Hawley, the chief

officer, lay to with the other boats throughout the night. The weather, far from improving, became increasingly bad, and weary and dispirited as they were, the men had to bale continually. In the meantime death claimed five of the natives in the chief officer's boat and one died in the second engineer's boat.

At daylight on January 3rd the captain's boat was sighted. The search had failed. Three more native seamen had succumbed owing to exposure. The outlook was desperate as the remaining boats were once more made fast to one another. That afternoon it was regretfully realised that one of the boats was unseaworthy, so it was abandoned; the fourth engineer and six natives were transferred to the chief officer's boat, and two other natives went into the captain's boat. Hardly had this re-adjustment of the burden been completed, when the rudder of the captain's craft was carried away. So Captain Swanston cast off and made fast to the stern of the second officer's boat, and the chief officer was left at the head of the pitiful procession of little boats, buffeted by wind and wave. Late that afternoon, owing to the rising wind and sea, the surviving boats were once more in danger of being swamped. The captain, therefore, lay to and set a reefed jib, an oar being used for steering, while the chief officer's boat also lay to with its sea anchor down.

Throughout the night the little craft, labouring heavily, continued to ship seas and the men were kept hard at work baling out the water. With characteristic courage they fought the elements throughout the night, and then at dawn were distressed to find the captain's boat was missing. At noon, however, it was sighted, making in a westerly direction. Mr. Hawley decided to follow, and set jib and reefed lug sail for that purpose. As he had the second officer's boat in tow, he could make little headway. Efforts to attract Captain Swanston's attention failed, and as darkness fell the master's boat was lost sight of. It was not seen again, and it will never be known how this undaunted seaman and his companions, adrift in their rudderless boat on a distressed sea, met their end.

Early on the morning of January 5th Mr. Hawley was forced by circumstances to abandon another boat,

and the second officer and the fifth engineer, together with seven natives, passed over to the chief officer's boat. The operation was a hazardous one, and in the process the rudder of the chief officer's boat was carried away. High seas were running and the outlook was as black as it could well be. As the light broke over the waters the survivors of the *Clan Macfarlane* found themselves fighting grimly for life as the waves broke over the bulwarks of their frail craft. Hope revived at noon as the smoke of a steamer was seen at a distance, but the vessel disappeared. Thus another day passed and night fell.

Early the following morning, January 6th, the second cook, who had died from exposure, was buried, and before noon one of the boys and a native fireman had also succumbed to the ordeal to which they had been exposed by the enemy's inhumanity. It seemed as though the struggle was hopeless, but at last wind and sea began to moderate, and Mr. Hawley was seized with the faint belief that he might make the Port of Alexandria, which he reckoned to be about 250 miles off. So, with the reef lug sail set, he steered his little boat as well as he could with an oar on an east-north-easterly course. Throughout that night the chief officer and the second officer took alternate watches, and noticed with returning confidence that the sea was becoming quieter. Their hopes were again dashed; as daylight came the wind shifted and the sea began to rise once more. The little company was now a small one, for another native had died from exposure, and the captain's boy had also fallen into his last sleep. It seemed as though there might not be a single survivor. Just when hope had been wellnigh abandoned, a steamer was sighted about three miles distant. The distressed seamen had no means of attracting her attention except by waving articles of clothing. Would the signals be seen? Doubt was soon resolved into certainty as the strange vessel, which was revealed as the *Crown of Aragon*, bore down to perform her errand of mercy.

Mr. Hawley and his companions had been adrift in their small boats for seven days and seven nights, and the only wonder was that any of them had survived to tell the tale of their sufferings. During the passage of the *Crown of Aragon* to Malta two more natives died, worn

out by all they had gone through. The voyage to Malta was marked by an incident which raised fears that after all the rescue might prove vain. For a submarine was sighted as the *Crown of Aragon* was making her way to Malta. The vessel carried a 12-pounder gun. So the master turned the stern of his ship on the enemy and prepared to fight if need be. The submarine, taking note of this manœuvre, submerged and made off. In this way the twenty-four remaining members of the crew of the *Clan Macfarlane*, six Europeans and eighteen natives, escaped almost as by a miracle from the fate which had overwhelmed fifty-two of their companions.

Though the Germans continued from time to time to harry British merchant ships in the southern part of the North Sea by aircraft attack during the period when operations by submarines in British waters were suspended, they met with no success. The story of the General Steam Navigation Company's steamer *Balgownie* (1,061 tons) reveals the spirit with which masters and men stood up against this new form of warfare. This vessel was on passage from London to Rotterdam in the closing days of November, when she was surprised by the enemy. Captain Goodson's resource and courage led to the presentation to him of a cheque for one hundred guineas from the War Risks Association, a similar sum being distributed among the crew. In making the presentation to Captain Goodson, Sir Kenneth Anderson, President of the Chamber of Shipping, briefly recalled the facts as they had been modestly recorded in the Captain's log. At about 2.30 p.m. on November 27th the crew of the *Balgownie* were surprised by the rapid approach from the south-east of three flying machines, which dropped about twenty-three bombs, some of which fell within half a ship's length of the vessel. After attacking for about twenty minutes and using up all their bombs, two of the aircraft continued to fire with machine guns until their ammunition was exhausted, the bullets dropping on and around the ship like rain. The vessel kept on a zigzag course at full speed, the only weapon being the ship's distress rockets, of which the fullest use was made, and the captain fired over fifty rounds from his rifle. Although the shots did not strike the machines, they made them fly higher, and no doubt saved the ship.



During the closing months of 1915, when the enemy desisted from employing submarines in home waters, a number of other merchant vessels were attacked by aircraft in the vicinity of the Belgian coast, but all the bombs which they dropped fell harmlessly in the water, though all the vessels were unarmed and were therefore unable to prevent the aeroplanes from approaching close to them.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SINKING OF THE " PERSIA "

THE ordeal in the Mediterranean which British seamen were confronting with characteristic courage had attracted little attention until the P. & O. liner *Persia* was sunk on December 30th, 1915. In the case of the *Lusitania*, the enemy claimed that she had been built as an auxiliary cruiser of the British Fleet, that she was armed, and that she was carrying ammunition from the United States to a British port. These excuses for an act of inhumanity which shocked the civilised world have already been discussed.<sup>1</sup> The *Persia* was admittedly nothing more than an ordinary passenger ship, and the Germans had promised that passenger ships should not be molested; she was on her way from England to Indian ports and was under no suspicion of carrying munitions; she mounted a small gun aft, but it was available only for defence and, in the sudden emergency on December 30th, proved useless. Yet, in face of the pledges which had been given to the American Government, she was torpedoed without warning, and such was the effect of the explosion that within five minutes she had disappeared in the waters of the Mediterranean. Her destruction resulted in the loss of 334 lives.

The *Persia* (7,974 tons) had been built at Greenock in 1900, and was a sister ship of the *Egypt*, *Arabia*, *China*, and *India*, belonging to a class of vessel which was, at the time of building, the largest in the P. & O. Company's service. She held a passenger certificate issued by the Government of Bombay, allowing 530 passengers and 300 crew. The lifeboat accommodation, consisting of eighteen lifeboats capable of accommodating 830 persons, was far more than sufficient for all persons on board at the time of the casualty, and the large loss of life was

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I., pp. 410-28.

accounted for by the fact that the vessel took a sudden list after being torpedoed and sank within five minutes. Owing to the list it was not possible to lower the starboard boats, and owing to the short time she remained afloat only five or six of the port boats could be lowered.

The *Persia* left Tilbury on December 18th with 201 passengers, including many women and children, and had a crew of 317. She was bound for Port Said, Aden, and Bombay, and in addition to mails carried a general cargo. The early stage of the voyage was uneventful; the *Persia* called *en route* at Gibraltar and Marseilles, and then at Malta, where five of the passengers and two of the crew were landed.

On Thursday, December 30th, at about ten minutes past one in the afternoon, when the *Persia* (master, Mr. W. H. S. Hall) had reached a position about lat.  $34^{\circ} 1' N.$ , long.  $26^{\circ} 0' E.$ , she was torpedoed, without warning, by a German submarine. The passengers were at lunch at the time, the second officer, Mr. Harold Geoffrey Stephen Wood, was in charge on the bridge, Captain Hall and the chief officer, Mr. Gerald Clark, both being in their cabins. As usual precautions against the submarine menace had been adopted. On the previous day everyone on board had been assigned to a boat and drill had taken place. Instructions had been issued that all passengers in case of emergency were to assemble on the promenade deck, the boats, it was added, would be let down from the boat deck above until they reached the level of the promenade deck, when the passengers would get into them. There was no thought that only a matter of five minutes would be available for saving everyone on board.

At the moment of the explosion a native seaman was on the lookout forward; another native seaman was in the crow's-nest, while a British able seaman and a native were on the lookout on the lower bridge. A British able seaman was at the wheel. There was a moderate breeze blowing west by north, and a certain amount of swell, and the ship was proceeding at her full speed of about 16 knots, when the first warning of anything untoward came. The second officer caught sight of the wake of a torpedo rapidly approaching the *Persia* about four points on the port bow. It was so close that

before Mr. Wood could turn to put the helm hard a-starboard the vessel had been struck—just abaft the forward funnel on the port side, a violent explosion shaking the ship from stem to stern. This explosion was immediately followed by a second one, due to the blowing up of the boilers.

The second officer immediately went to the whistle, intending to sound the prearranged emergency signal, but found that all steam had gone. He then ran down to Captain Hall, who had left his cabin and come to the lower bridge, and Captain Hall ordered him to get the boats out. Mr. Wood hurried at once to his station on the poop, noticing on his way that there was a great hole in the hurricane deck on the port side, presumably due to the explosion of a boiler. The ship was then listing heavily to port, and continued to heel over until she lay on her port side, before disappearing within only about five minutes of the explosion of the torpedo. Within this brief time, however, Mr. Wood was able to see to the lowering of two port boats on the poop deck, which were loaded with men and women passengers and a few of the crew. He then loosened the grips of two inboard boats and attempted to lower a starboard boat, which was found to be impossible owing to the list which the *Persia* had taken. One of the port poop boats floated clear, but the other was pressed down by the davits as the ship turned over. The *Persia* was still making way, although with lessening speed, which rendered the lowering of the boats a difficult operation.

Meanwhile the chief officer (Mr. Gerald Clark), who had been momentarily dazed through having been struck by some of the furniture shaken from the walls of his cabin, had seized a lifebelt and axe and ran up to the boat deck. There he saw that the boats from the poop deck were already being lowered, and he at once, therefore, went to the assistance of those who were attempting to lower the boats from the boat deck, using his axe, where necessary, in order to clear the boats as quickly as possible. He remained on the boat deck freeing the boats as fast as this could be done, in the hope that, although there was no time to load them, they might be of service in picking up survivors from the water. He was occupied in this way until the listing of the vessel became so steep that

he found it impossible to keep his feet any longer, whereupon he slid into the water, to be eventually picked up by No. 2 boat.

The second officer had also slipped into the water, and had succeeded in swimming to an empty boat, into which he climbed himself, afterwards saving several lives. This boat was one of the inboard boats which he himself had helped to loosen, and both of them had fortunately floated clear. Ultimately Mr. Wood succeeded in getting forty-three people into his boat, the chief officer afterwards sending across five more from No. 2 boat. Unfortunately, owing to the fact that the *Persia* was still under way, most of the boats that had been loosened were swamped, torn away, or capsized. Only five got finally free of the rapidly sinking ship. Four of these boats were afterwards joined together and an attempt was made to row back to the scene of the *Persia's* disappearance, but in view of the overladen condition of the boats and the contrary wind and swell, this was found to be impossible.

The boats had all been swung out from the davits at the time of the explosion, and the understanding with the engine-room staff had been that in the event of the ship being struck by a mine or torpedo, the engines were to be instantly stopped. Unfortunately it seems probable that the engineers were in the stokehold at the time, superintending the cleaning of the fires, and were either killed by the explosion of the torpedo or as the result of the boiler explosion that followed. Altogether, out of the total number of 501 persons on board the *Persia*, only 167 were saved, 65 being passengers, including 2 children, and 102 crew; 121 passengers and 213 of the crew were lost. Throughout the afternoon and the following night the four boats remained together, and were finally picked up about 7 o'clock in the evening of December 31st by the mine-sweeper *Mallow*, which took the survivors to Alexandria. None of the ship's papers could be saved, and nothing was seen of Captain Hall, who presumably went down with his ship.

In view of the fact that most of the passengers were below at lunch when the explosion occurred, that the engine-room instructions could not be carried out, and that within five minutes of the impact the vessel had disappeared, it is a striking tribute to the courage, quick-

wittedness, discipline, and seamanship of the surviving officers and crew that so many lives were ultimately saved. An impression of the scene on board the vessel and of the subsequent experiences of those on board is conveyed in a graphic statement of Mr. Grant, an American business man, who, with two of his fellow-countrymen, was on board the *Persia*. The American Consul at Aden was among those drowned.

"I was sitting," said Mr. Grant, "in the dining saloon at five minutes past one, and had just finished my soup. The steward was asking me what I would take as a second course, when there was a terrific explosion, and the saloon was filled with broken glass, and with smoke and steam from the boiler, which seemed to have burst. There was no panic. We went on deck as if we were at boat drill, and I reported myself at my lifeboat on the starboard side. The vessel was listing to port and I clung on to the rail. . . . The vessel gradually listed more and more, and it was impossible to launch any of the starboard boats. Finally I climbed over the starboard rail and slid down into the water. I was sucked down and got caught in a rope, which pulled off my shoe, but, breaking loose, I got to the surface again and clambered on to some wreckage, to which I clung. The last I saw of the *Persia* was her bow pointing high in the air, and that was only five minutes after the explosion. While thus supporting myself, I managed to collect other wreckage for others to cling to. It was past 4 o'clock before I was picked up by a boat. I then saw that there were five boats pulling around in search of any other persons who might still be struggling in the water. Some of the boats were overloaded, and subsequently there was a redistribution of their occupants. Four of the boats were then tied together by their painters. The fifth was some distance away. At half-past three the following morning my boat separated from the others to search for help in a more frequented channel. We rowed for three hours, and at last saw a cruiser. We called out 'We are English,' and explained that we were survivors from the *Persia*, which had been sunk. We also gave particulars as to the whereabouts of the other boats. These were found about 7 o'clock, and the occupants

were taken off by the English sailors. The end was a horrible scene. The water was as black as ink. Some of the people were screaming; others were saying good-bye to each other; while those in one of the boats were singing hymns."

The torpedoing of the *Persia* was viewed from another angle by Mr. Walter Ernest Smith, assistant engineer of the condenser plant, Port Said. He was travelling second class, sharing his cabin with a friend, Mr. Knight. He was in his cabin washing his hands for lunch when there was an explosion.

"I immediately got hold of a lifebelt and started to make my way up on deck. On my way I came across a lady I had met on the boat who was standing dazed, doing nothing. I asked why she did not get her belt on, and seeing that she was stupefied, I gave her mine and went back to my cabin to get my own life-saving jacket; she was not amongst those who were saved. When I left my cabin the second time, I noticed that women and children were lying about, some evidently in a dead faint and others moaning and crying out. One woman I remember particularly, a Frenchwoman, who was leaning up against the rail in the corridor outside the cabins, was quite dazed. Seeing she was not in a fit state to help herself, I pushed her along, and that seemed to rouse her. I practically got her on to the deck, where someone else took the lifebelt from her, fastened it on her, and pushed her overboard. She was saved.

"When I got up to the boat deck I found Knight and another man in one end of our boat, and the carpenter and another sailor in the other end. They were trying to get her away. The three pins had been displaced and the fourth had stuck, as we had foreseen. Knight said 'An axe, Smith; this is jammed.' There were no axes in the boat. I was then in the boat and looked around and picked up a broken oar and handed it to him, and he gave the pin a whack with it. The pin luckily gave way and the last lashing was free. By this time the *Persia* was at a big angle, leaning over to the port side, that is, on the side the torpedo had struck her,

and so when we freed the last lashing our boat swung out from the side of the vessel and then bumped back again into her side. We all lost our feet in the boat, and one man was pitched over the side into the sea. Knight was pitched out of the boat, and I could only see his finger-tips above the side of the boat as he clung on. He managed to scramble on board our boat again.

"By this time the stern of the *Persia* was settling down. While I was helping in our boat I saw a boat next to us, full of people, being lowered down. All of a sudden one of the davit ropes broke, and that end of the boat fell down and everyone and everything fell straight into the sea. The other davit rope then gave way, and the boat landed in the water right way up and quite dry, but no one was in her. People then, who, I supposed, had jumped off the *Persia* farther forward, began to climb into this empty boat until, I suppose, there were about twenty to thirty people in her. She had remained fast to the *Persia* by her painter or one of her davit ropes. I then saw another boat empty of people fall right on the top of the boat in the water, and it appeared to me that most of the people in her must have been crushed. I saw some of them pinned between the two boats. We had failed to get the davit ropes of our boat loose in time, and the stern of the *Persia* was now low in the water. We waited until our boat touched the water, and then, as the *Persia* still sank, we unhooked the hooks of our davit ropes from the davits and thought we were free. Knight, however, cried out, 'A knife, Smith; the painter is fastened.' He said the davit had caught our painter. I gave him my pocket-knife and he cut the painter with it and we were free. We then were sucked right across the stern of the sinking *Persia*. We were then in the boat six—three passengers and three crew, the latter all white.

"We were fascinated by the sinking *Persia*, and also we were kept over the sinking boat by the suction. After she had sunk, we got out the oars and pulled out of the way of the wreckage. We immediately started to pull people in. There were a good many people in the water. All people we picked up had lifebelts. After some time we got in, I suppose, nearly fifty people. Among them were five women. There was not room in the boats for



all the people in the water. Five boats altogether, I believe, got away, but I only saw four—that is to say our own, No. 14, and No. 14A, which was next to ours on the *Persia* and must have floated off when the *Persia* sank. There was also No. 16 and the accident-boat, which was under the command of the chief officer. He took charge of all the boats, but we never had anyone who actually took charge in our boat. There were several scamen, besides the carpenter, but as there was no officer in the boat, the seamen were reluctant to obey in particular one of themselves, and if any one of the passengers offered a suggestion he was told to shut up. Some time after we had got clear I saw a small boat away on my side of the boat and Knight saw one also on his side. I saw a boat, too, which I took to be a tramp, and as I watched her—this was about 4.30 p.m.—I saw an explosion take place forward of her foremast. She did not sink at once, as we watched her for an hour or more, but the next morning she was no longer there. Before night-fall the chief officer ordered us to make an anchor, which we let down, and the other boats were moored to us in a line.

“After dark we saw the lights of a vessel, and we burnt our flares, but she took no notice of us. The next morning we saw a large Cunarder. Directly we saw her the chief officer instructed the second officer to set sail and head her off. This he did and got close to her, but directly she saw him she sheered off. This he told us afterwards. In the afternoon the chief officer, who had kept the best men in his boat—I think they were mostly passengers—said he was going to row in the direction of Port Said. This was about 3 p.m. After dark we saw the head light of a vessel. We watched it anxiously and burnt our flares. Finally we also saw the starboard light, and then the port light, and we knew she was heading towards us. When she got fairly close to us all the people in our boat got up, and as no one controlled our boat, she was soon broadside on to the sea. I do not know why we did not capsize. Knight was shouting to everyone to sit down. Finally we got alongside. There was a bit of a sea running, and they were only able to let down a rope ladder. We had some difficulty in getting the women up; one of them stuck halfway up, and I thought

she would get crushed the next time we rose on a wave, but Knight and I managed to push her up. Knight and I then scrambled on board. The ship was the *Mallow*, one of H.M. ships."

A noteworthy tribute to the discipline and promptitude of the crew was paid by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, one of the passengers, who was for some time presumed to have been drowned. Lord Montagu was at luncheon with the rest of the passengers when the explosion occurred, and at once went to the station which had been allotted to him in No. 6 boat on the port side in case of emergency. He saw that the boats were already being lowered. He realised, however, in view of the rapid heeling over of the vessel, that it would probably be impossible to get into them, and therefore, with great difficulty, he started to climb up the starboard side, trying to pull up with him his lady secretary, who happened to be standing by. He was then swept off his feet by the rush of water along the promenade deck, and the next moment he was overboard. The ship then sank, and he was sucked down a long way, striking his head and body against several pieces of wreckage. He ultimately came to the surface again, thanks in part to the buoyancy of the life-saving waistcoat which he was wearing at the time. "So far as I am a judge," said Lord Montagu, "I am convinced that the commander, the officers, and the crew did all that was possible to be done under the terrible circumstances."

When he had sufficiently recovered his senses to look around, Lord Montagu saw that the sea was covered with struggling human beings, but comparatively little wreckage. He swam towards a signal locker that he observed near-by, but found the ship's doctor clinging to this, apparently in a stunned condition and with an injury to his head. The locker being only sufficient to support one person, Lord Montagu then swam towards a boat floating upside-down some fifty yards away. A number of native seamen were clinging to this boat, a larger number than it was properly able to support. Eventually, however, Lord Montagu managed to climb up and get astride of the keel band on the extreme end aft, and from this position saw a boat only half filled

a short distance away. He shouted, but without succeeding in drawing the attention of the occupants, to whom frantic cries for help were rising up from all sides.

“About an hour after the disaster,” Lord Montagu said, “there were left on the upturned boat six Europeans and about a score of the native crew. The others had dropped off as they became too weak to hold on. At this time the boat was suddenly righted by a big wave, and with great difficulty we scrambled into her. I then discovered that not only had she a large hole in the bottom, but that her bows were split open as well. She was in a state of extreme instability, for some of the air tanks, which showed me that she was one of the lifeboats, were smashed, and others were perforated. The smallest weight on the starboard side tended to capsize her again. This, indeed, happened many times before we were picked up, and added very greatly to our sufferings. By sunset most of us were sitting up to our knees in water. When the sun went down on the first day there remained of the original party in the boat, thirteen native seamen and firemen, two native stewards, an English steward named Martin, an Italian second-class passenger, Mr. Alexander Clark (a Scottish second-class passenger), and myself. If it had not been for Mr. Clark and Martin, the steward, who more than once helped us to climb back into the boat when she capsized, I should have had little chance of surviving. Though there was not much wind, there was a considerable swell, and nearly all the time the sea was breaking over us. Before the night was half gone several more natives died from exhaustion, and as the bodies were washed about in the boat we made efforts to throw them overboard. The night seemed interminable. About 8 p.m. a steamer, with her saloon lights all showing, passed about one mile to the southward. I think she must have been a neutral boat. We tried to attract her attention by shouting, and the other ship's boat to the eastward burned two red flares; but no notice was taken, a submarine ruse probably being suspected. At dawn next morning there were only eleven all told left in the boat. About three hours after sunrise we saw a two-funnelled and two-masted steamer away

to the southward, and our hopes were again raised. We hoisted a piece of torn flag on the one oar left in the boat, and the other ship's boat, which seemed to be floating high and well, also signalled. The ship, however, passed westward bound, about three miles away. For the rest of the day we saw nothing. One of the native crew about noon managed to get a tin of biscuits from the locker in the boat under the thwarts, and we ate a little of this, though it was spoilt by the salt water.

"We had then been nearly thirty hours without food or water. I myself had had nothing but a cup of tea and a biscuit since dinner on the 29th. I felt the heat of the sun a good deal, as I had only a small khaki scarf for protection. At sunset on Friday we had practically given up all hope of being saved. . . . I found it a great struggle to keep awake. The tendency to drowsiness was almost irresistible, but to fall asleep would have meant the end. We capsized once more about 7 o'clock through the Italian turning light-headed. He had yielded to the temptation to drink salt water. In this accident we lost the tin of biscuits and the red flares we had hoped to use during the night. Then about 8 o'clock we saw the masthead lights of a steamer away to the eastward. At first I thought it was only a rising star, for there was very clear visibility that evening. Presently I could discern her side lights, which suggested that she was coming pretty nearly straight for us. When she came closer we started shouting in unison. . . . When the ship was half a mile away, she ported her helm, stopped her engines, and appeared to be listening. We knew then that, like other ships, she expected a ruse and dare not approach until she had made further investigations.

"After some time she came nearer and we heard a shout from her bridge. Then her steam whistle was blown. I dared to hope, though hope had almost died within us. We tried to explain that we were helpless and had no means of getting alongside. Eventually the captain of this ship—Captain Allen—which proved to be the Alfred Holt steamer *Ning Chow*, bound from China to London, very cleverly manœuvred her alongside our wreckage. We were by this time like a cracked eggshell. Bow lines were passed round us by a plucky Russian and an English quartermaster, and we were eventually hoisted on board.

The captain and his officers did all they could for us. I should like to mention that it was Mr. Allan Maclean—a Maclean of Duart, Island of Mull—the third officer of the ship, who was the officer of the watch at the time, and he first appears to have heard our cries. His alertness and keen sense of hearing were our salvation. I consider it was a very courageous thing for the captain to stop for us, as he and his officers knew they were in the danger zone, and ran the risk of being torpedoed themselves while they were helping us. Once on board we began slowly to recover from the exposure and our injuries. We arrived at Malta at dawn on January 3rd."

In a lesser degree, the harrowing experience of Lord Montagu and his companions were those of all other survivors, exposed as they were, in a drenched condition, for over thirty hours in open boats, while the fate of the others shocked the whole civilised world. As in the case of the *Lusitania* and of the many similar, if less conspicuous, outrages that were to follow, the traditions of the British Mercantile Marine were nobly exemplified, both in respect of decision in emergency and instant readiness for self-sacrifice.

It should be added that, although the *Persia* was armed with one gun for purposes of defence, this was not used, the *Persia* neither threatening to attack nor trying to escape from the submarine responsible for her loss, which was never seen by anybody on board, and from which no warning was received.

In replying to a number of questions in the House of Commons on March 8th, 1916, with reference to the sinking of the *Persia*, the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Walter Runciman) said :

"I would like to add a word of appreciation, in which I am sure the House would like to join me, of the coolness and courage of the passengers and crew and the discipline of the ship maintained in face of this sudden and appalling disaster. I am told that the captain, officers, and engineers of the *Persia* had spent their lives in the company's service, and all had unblemished records. The country is deeply indebted to those who are facing the perils to which our merchant ships are being subjected."

## CHAPTER IX

### IN THE HANDS OF THE BEDOUINS

IN the early days of 1916 a merchant ship on her way from the Spanish coast to India was destroyed by the enemy, and her officers and men left adrift in their small boats on a stormy sea 200 miles from the nearest land; the one boat which survived the fierce onslaught of the natural forces reached the North African coast at Ras Amana after six days. Events were to prove that the unfortunate men had only escaped from the merciless sea to be attacked by marauding Bedouins. Three men were killed, two were wounded, and ten others were carried away as prisoners by the Bedouins, to suffer in captivity for a period of nearly eight months.

The steamer *Coquet* (4,396 tons) put out from Torrevieja, on the Spanish coast, on the last day of the Old Year with 6,200 tons of salt, which she was to land at Rangoon. The ship was well found, the officers and men were competent, and until just before noon on January 4th the voyage proved uneventful. The master (Mr. Arnold C. B. Groom) had adopted the usual precautions. A seaman was on the lookout forward, the two lifeboats were slung out ready for lowering, and a man at the wheel kept his eyes skinned. The third officer was in charge on the bridge. Captain Groom was in the saloon when he heard a gunshot, and as he ran on deck there was another report, two shells passing across the steamer's bow. Though the breeze was only moderate, there was a heavy swell, and from the deck of the *Coquet* the captain was able to make out very indistinctly the form of a submarine on the port quarter, but several of the crew had noticed another submarine on the port bow. Confronted with two of the most highly developed scientific weapons for making war by sea, the captain instantly realised that his only course was to stop his engines and order the boats

to be got ready. The *Coquet* was already losing way when the master hurriedly placed his confidential papers in the galley fire. When he next looked out over the tossing waters he saw that one of the submarines (the other having disappeared) was flying a signal to abandon ship immediately.

The master, with his officers and men, at once got into the two boats, and the submarine then opened a fusillade on the merchantman; eight shots were fired at the ship, but not a single one hit her. The enemy craft drew in closer and ordered the boats to proceed alongside. "This was a dangerous proceeding," Captain Groom afterwards recorded, "as the submarine's deck was just awash and there was a big swell." At any moment the frail boats might have been dashed to pieces, and as it was they suffered considerable injury, which afterwards contributed to the sufferings of the survivors of this outrage on the high seas. Captain Groom was ordered on board the submarine, to discover that she was manned, in the main, by officers and men who were wearing Austrian uniform. A boarding party, armed with revolvers and cutlasses, got into the two boats and they were ordered to return to the *Coquet*. All hands were given twenty minutes in which to collect what they wanted to take with them. At the same time the captors ransacked the ship and lowered one of the small boats, in readiness to carry away them and their loot. When they had got all they wanted, they ordered the two lifeboats to return to the submarine, set two time-fuse bombs under water abreast Nos. 1 and 2 holds of the merchant man, and left the ship themselves. Shortly afterwards there were two explosions, and the ship settled down by the head. Within four or five minutes the *Coquet* lifted her stern high in the air, something hit the whistle lanyard, and with a pitiful scream the *Coquet* disappeared.

During these proceedings Captain Groom had been under close cross-examination by the commander of the submarine, who spoke passable English. He was plied with questions as to the progress of the war, but managed to parry the inquiries, probably conveying the impression that he was not a very intelligent officer of the British Mercantile Marine. The one-sided conversation was still

in progress when the two lifeboats returned, the men vigorously using buckets to bale out the water which was finding its way into the injured craft. Captain Groom pointed out to the commander of the enemy submarine that the bilge planks of both boats had most likely been sprung while they were alongside his awash deck. "I told him it was nothing short of murder to send thirty-one men away like that, in the middle of winter and so far from land. He laughed and said he would save the next ship and send her to look for us." The thought that these unfortunate mariners were about to be cast adrift on the wide expanse of the heaving seas of the Mediterranean must have seemed to Captain Groom demoniacal. The captors, however, were in no mood for mercy. As soon as the boats were alongside, they searched them for anything appealing to their fancy, taking chronometers, sextants, and charts, and every scrap of paper they could find, including the master's "account of wages." Captain Groom was then directed to take his place in one of the boats, and the submarine made off, having added a fresh page to the record of inhumanity by sea which was being compiled by the men to whom the prosecution of the submarine campaign had been entrusted.

Only those who are familiar with the Mediterranean in its angrier moods can appreciate the feelings of the master of the *Coquet* as he looked over the heaving waters and realised how much depended upon his own personal courage, seamanlike skill, and tempered judgment. The nearest land was 200 miles distant. What hope was there that the two boats, with their load of thirty-one men, could reach it?

"As we were well to the northward," he has stated, "I deemed it wisest to steer south (especially as the wind was freshening from the north to north-north-west), as we should then be running right across all the tracks of the steamers between Port Said and Alexandria and Malta. We ran so until nearly dark, when a steamer was sighted. We saw her hull. The mate's boat, which was a good bit nearer to her than we were, showed three red flares, and we showed one, but if she saw them—and I don't see how she could have failed to do so if any lookout at all were being kept—she took no notice of us. The





LEFT IN AN OPEN BOAT.



sea was getting too dangerous to sail any longer, so mast and sail were taken down and sea anchor put out; the latter, although of 'B.O.T.' dimensions, proved very inefficient as regards keeping the boat head on to the sea; latterly we used the mast instead. We were very soon all wet through, and remained so practically for the next six days (the whole of the time we were in the boat).

"Heavy weather, with a cold northerly and westerly wind, continued all that night. 'Allowance' of biscuits and water was started right away that night, viz., two and a half biscuits and two gills of water per man per day; latterly I increased the water allowance, finding it was not enough with so much salt spray about. All the able-bodied men had to take their turn at baling, two at a time; the steward, who firstly was old, and secondly ill, I made exempt from this work, also the four boys I had, who were very young, also seasick and somewhat frightened, I fancy. The boat was very overloaded with seventeen in it, and was ankle-deep in water, in spite of vigorous baling with the two buckets. The next day, the 5th, I got the carpenter to take out three of the water-tight tanks on the side where the plank was split, and caulk it roughly from inside with bits of shirt; this stopped the leaking a little."

Throughout that day and the following night the weather continued stormy, and all hopes of being picked up by a passing steamer had been abandoned, when just before daylight on the 6th Captain Groom was encouraged by the sight of a dark object which was disclosed, away to the seaward, as his boat rose on the crest of the waves. It appeared and then disappeared, and at last he concluded that it might be a steamer creeping along with everything darkened, so he lighted a red flare. In reply a red flare duly appeared, and hopes ran high. But the signal which had given such joy proved to have been made from the mate's boat. There was consolation in company, but the chances of falling in with shipping were reduced if the two boats kept together, so as the mate drew in towards him, Captain Groom shouted out that he had better keep some distance away in order to increase the possibility of rescue. So the two boats drifted apart, and the mate and his companions were

never seen again. What happened to them remains a matter of sad surmise.

“ The weather got a little worse that night and we used the oil-bag with good effect in keeping the breaking sea-tops flat. No change on the day or night of the 7th; everybody chilled to the bone with that northerly wind blowing right through our saturated clothes; we all used to look forward to the daylight coming, in the hopes of seeing a little sun; but it was nearly always covered with clouds. Several of us had excruciating pains in the ankles, knees, and wrists; the poor little Italian boy was crying all one night with them in his sleep, and, of course, I could do absolutely nothing for him; I had them badly myself.

“ In the early morning of the 8th the weather moderated somewhat, and I decided to set sail and make for the African coast. I reckoned that we had drifted across all the steamer tracks by this time, and with the sea then running it would have been entirely out of the question to try and sail back over them again. So we steered south again, and made fairly good weather of it. During the day the wind ‘backed’ to west-north-west. This did not make things any more comfortable; however, we continued on our course.

“ During the day of the 9th the wind ‘backed’ still more, and during the rest of the day and that night I was only able to make south-east instead of south course. However, just after midnight, I made out land to the southward, and just then the wind started to freshen considerably and shifted to the south. Such a bad and dangerous short sea rose that I had to take in the sail (I had tried reefing it at first), and got the mast and a couple of oars out as a sea anchor; such a disappointment when land was so near and our water so low, but there was nothing else for it. About 5 a.m. the wind moderated a little, also the sea; so we set our sail again and started to battle against a nearly dead head wind; a very hopeless job in a steamer’s lifeboat with a ‘regulation’ lug (sail). We slowly banged and punched on a diagonal course for the shore all day, and then, as we got nearer, the wind fell lighter and lighter, and this nasty lumpy swell still in evidence!”

Land was in sight, but could they reach it in the calm which had succeeded the high winds? The men were exhausted owing to the successive days of exposure and the absence of nourishing food. It was with difficulty that some handled the oars, while others continued to bale out the water; but at last the boat crept into a little bay, with houses dimly discernible in the background. The boat was nearly swamped on two occasions, but at last everybody got ashore and the boat was made safe for the night.

What a night of misery it proved to these unhappy men, after six days of indescribable suffering in their little boat! Captain Groom has left us the simple but harrowing narrative of their experiences:

“We slept on the sands that night, after having slaked our thirst with some well water and eaten a quantity of limpets from the rocks with our biscuits. There were a quantity of cave-dwellings around the bay; but they were all so damp and smelly that we deemed it wiser to sleep in the open on the sandy beach, thinking that the sand would have retained some of the sun’s heat. This conjecture proved faulty, however; there was a chill dampness which struck up through the sand, and, having only our wet clothes to cover us, we woke up chilled through and through, with every bone aching; we slept, owing to the fact that it was the first opportunity we had had of sleeping since leaving the ship. The buildings we had seen from the sea proved to be long-deserted ruins, and there was no sign of life anywhere. The two engineers, the second mate, and I kept watch by turns during the night.”

On the following morning, as the light was breaking, Captain Groom reviewed the situation—a merchant officer without a ship, marooned on the inhospitable shores of the African continent. He came to the conclusion that, as there was plenty of water, as well as shellfish, with which life could be supported, it would be unwise to stir until he knew exactly where he was and the direction in which the nearest port lay, at which he could obtain succour for himself and his men. There was little or no wind, so if the boat was to be employed in a recon-

noitring expedition it would be necessary to use the oars. Neither the master nor his companions, completely exhausted by the late ordeal, were tempted to re-embark with this prospect. So after breakfast Captain Groom set out with three men to ascertain what their surroundings were like, hoping that, perchance, they might discover some civilised human habitation.

“It was very bad walking, sometimes rough, muddy ground, strewn with big stones, and hills with ankle-deep sand, etc. We felt it terribly owing to having been cramped up in the boat so long and deprived of the use of our legs. We plodded on until about noon without seeing anything that we wanted, and were just giving up hopes when a very tall Arab appeared. He came back to the camp with us. One of the firemen, a Greek, could speak Arabic, and when it was made known to the Arab what we wanted he wanted us to get into the boat then and there and he would pilot us to the nearest port. This, alas! was impossible. When I left in the morning I had told the second mate to get the boat properly baled out, and, if possible, list her over so that the carpenter could make a better job of stopping the leak. He tried to do all this, but with all balers at work they could make no impression on the amount of water in the boat; it came in as fast as they baled it out. The keel had evidently been set up, as the planks each side of it were badly broken, and entirely beyond any repair that we could do to them. So the project was put an end to. The Arab suggested that I should go with him to the nearest town on foot; this I could not do, as I was utterly done up with the six or seven hours' walking that day; but I eventually sent two Greek firemen with him (one spoke Italian and the other Arabic), and told them to try and get some boats to take us out of this as soon as possible.”

With the departure of these two men another chapter in the experiences of the remnant of the crew of the steamship *Coquet* opened.

“That night the rest of us—fifteen—slept in one of the cave-dwellings with a big wood fire in the centre; we had dried our clothes somewhat during the day and

the fire helped to keep us warm during the night ; the floor, however, was very hard and damp. After 'breakfast' we began looking out longingly for signs of a boat coming ; some of us had a wash in a muddy river-bed. I was just going off to this pool about 9.45 a.m., thinking to have a bathe, when we were all surprised by several bullets whizzing round us. On looking, we found that they came from two Arabs on a hill some distance inland, who, between shooting at us, were dancing wildly and laughing and yelling. Thinking they were two Arab boys who had got hold of rifles somehow and were just amusing themselves, I told our people to take cover, which we did in a deep trench formed by the ruins of some old building, right at the water's edge ; in fact the sea came well up in the trench at one end. I could watch the two Arabs from where we were, and they soon went away, but I thought it wise to keep down there for a bit.

"Half an hour after that about fifteen Arabs, with rifles, suddenly appeared over the edge of our trench and, after giving a preliminary yell, began jabbering hard in Arabic at us. The two closest to me had their rifles all ready to fire. I held up my hands to indicate that I was unarmed ; one of them still jabbered at me, but the other took careful aim at my head ; I ducked forward and to one side a little at just about the same instant that he pulled the trigger, so the bullet took a track through the flesh across the back of my shoulders, instead of hitting my head. The Arab was only about six feet from me when he fired ; the force of the shock knocked me backwards. I remember falling and my head hitting the sand. After that I must have lost consciousness, as when I awoke everything was quiet except for the groaning of the carpenter, who was rolling between me and the edge of the water, about six feet. I found he was horribly mutilated, but still alive. He asked me to drag him away from the sea ; I tried to, but he was a big man and my wound was very painful. A little way out in the water the steward was floating, face downwards ; whether he was shot or drowned, or both, I do not know. Farther up the beach the little Italian messroom boy was lying dead. I could see nothing of anybody else, and was afraid to go out of the trench, thinking that if the Bedouins saw me alive they would come back to finish me off."

It must have seemed to this courageous and hardly tried merchant officer that he was doomed to die on this sandy beach, either from exposure or by the hands of the Arabs if they chanced to return. His sole companion was apparently the carpenter, to whom he gave drinks of water from a bucket, which they had brought to the trench, in the hope of alleviating his agony. At last a patch of smoke appeared on the horizon, and then the outline of a small steamer appeared and Captain Groom realised that help was at last to hand. The vessel was flying the Italian flag. She had sailed from Ania promptly in response to the appeals of the two Greek firemen. Could she arrive before the Bedouins returned ?

“When she headed into the bay and her boat was coming ashore, I came out from the trench. There was not a sign of the Bedouins or the rest of our people, except a sailor named Lord, who was lying on the sand some distance from the trench most brutally wounded by both bullet and bayonet. He said that the others, ten of them, had been carried off as prisoners by the Bedouins, after having had everything of any value taken off them : they were taking him also, but he thinks they thought that he was so wounded that he would be a hindrance to them, and so tried to finish him off on the spot and left him for dead.

“When the boat landed, the commander of the Fort of Marsa Susa came ashore with a party of his Arab soldiers, who quickly ran to the tops of the nearest hills to look for the Bedouins, but they had had too long a time and had got out of sight. The soldiers then made a thorough search in the vicinity, but found no trace of the Bedouins or their captives. The commander of the Fort of Marsa Susa then took us aboard the little steamer, also the bodies of the steward and messroom boy, and our wounds were washed and bandaged as well as was possible. The carpenter died just as we were starting to wash his wounds.”

What had happened to the men whom the Bedouins had carried off ? The captors had lined up the survivors of the seamen, taken from them everything of value which they possessed, and then driven them off into the hills, using their bayonets and shouting vigorously. They



afterwards kept these unhappy men at the jog-trot for about an hour until they reached a valley, where they found, to their satisfaction, tiny pools of water among the rocks. The water was very lively with little hairy, red, crawling "bichos," but nevertheless the thirsty men were very thankful for it. After about a quarter of an hour's rest, the Bedouins set off again, and their prisoners were forced to imitate mountain goats all day until about 9 p.m., when the party came to a few caves which were being used as an encampment. There their captors brought them before a big, fat Arab, who appeared to be a chief. He could speak a little French, so some sort of a conversation was carried on through the Greek sailor.

When this pow-wow came to an end after midnight, they were given a meal, consisting of boiled goats' flesh and very fresh, heavy bread. This was the first food they had had since eating a few limpets before the Bedouins attacked them.

"Early next morning, after a tiny glass of Turkish coffee," one of the party recorded afterwards, "we set off in a heavy downpour of rain, most of us on foot, but one of our party, who had a hole in his leg as the result of a bullet, was on a camel. As it was his first attempt at imitating a Camel Corps trooper, he was quite amusing to watch until he got used to the motion. I don't mean that he was sick or anything like that, but he was nearly off several times, which added to our mirth and his annoyance. At about noon we came to a lone tent, where we stopped for refreshments, which turned up at long last and proved to be a big, flat, round bowl of boiled rice, which we ate, sitting on our haunches in true Arab style, with our hands instead of spoons. When we had eaten as much of it as we could get down, which was not very much, as one can't eat much rice at the first sitting, our host threw in what appeared to be some bones with a little meat on them, which we sucked and gnawed at until there was no meat left. We learnt afterwards that these bones were goats' ribs."

A fresh move was begun after a short rest, and a three-hours' trudge brought the party to another cave camp. As the Arab women were housed in the largest cave, which

was the only one large enough to contain all the prisoners, they had to turn out, taking their goods and chattels with them. They left very comfortable sleeping-quarters, which the seamen were very glad to occupy, having been served with another meal of meat and rice.

“ This journeying went on for another few days, until we came to quite a large native camp, where we were kept in the prison tent along with other malefactors for nearly a week. We thought we were very badly off then, but we found out later that that was the best time we had in all our sojourn.

“ One day, the big sheikh whom we had met before came to us and told us that we were going to be taken to a big town by the sea and given clothes, boots, and all wearing apparel and revolvers, amongst other things, and were going to be sent away in a ship. We were very much elated, and followed him in high spirits for several days, stopping here for a meal and there for the night, until we fell in with a large gathering of people who seemed to be going on some pilgrimage. At last we emerged into a vast plain, with what we took to be a small town in the centre, to which we came, ushered in to the strains of martial music, including the ‘ British Grenadiers,’ played by a brass band composed of Arabs, Turks, and Italian deserters.”

After a time the men were led before Sidi Idris, the legitimate head of the Senussi tribes, and through the interpreters he asked them if they would like to be sent straight home or kept to the end of the war, to which they made the obvious answer. Next day they set off once more, mounted on camels, in company with a big caravan, and travelled all that day and for many subsequent days, sometimes with the caravan and sometimes by themselves under guard, until they came to an abandoned block-house, called Sklydeema, where they remained two days to rest.

“ There a Turk took a fancy to my wrist-watch, which I had worn and kept going ever since the *Coquet* went down. He asked me what I wanted for it, and I told him eighty francs, so he gave me five to go on with. When I asked

him for the residue, he swore he had given me the fair price and I never got any more for it. I learnt afterwards that it stopped soon after he got it, so he sold it to one of Sidi Idris's stewards, whom I saw wearing it months after, but of course it was broken and of no use to him. We left one of our party, a fireman, in Sklydeema, who was dying of tetanus, induced by a bad bullet wound in his arm. He died two days after we left."

After another week's travelling these harried seamen came to their final lodgment at Jedabia. They arrived there on the evening of February 4th, exactly a month after they had left the sinking *Coquet*.

"We were first housed in a room with four walls, a roof, and a concrete floor, and were quite well looked after for a few days. A party of Italian prisoners were brought in on the fourth day, and that evening we were all put together in a compound. Our party, comprising twenty-three men, were lodged in another hut facing us across the courtyard. Of course we got into communication, as one of the Italians spoke French very well, and we could understand that. They asked us if we had been made to do any work, and were surprised to hear that we had not. Next day, however, an Arab guard came and took us all out to work together, and that was the beginning of our troubles.

"That same evening two Italians prevailed upon our Greek sailor to try to escape, to which he agreed. So about midnight they all climbed the wall of the compound, which was right on the outskirts of the fortified block-house of Jedabia. They climbed to the top all right, with much puffing and blowing, and the first man to drop down on the other side fell on some rusty tins and rubbish, making a frightful row, and we all thought that the whole lot would be caught, but nothing stirred, so they set off on foot. Of course the next day the Arabs discovered the escape, and some of them set off in pursuit on fast racing camels, and soon came up to the fugitives and brought them back.

"Then all we prisoners, British and Italian, were lined up and given a lecture by the Commandant of Jedabia upon the evils of trying to escape. He asked

who was the instigator of the attempt, and all the blame was put on the poor Greek sailor. The two Italians were given twenty lashes with the kurbash and the Greek was given fifty lashes and condemned to be chained to a six-foot chain pegged into the ground for two months, and he was also handcuffed. Whenever he wanted to move about, the second mate had to take a turn round his (the Greek's) neck with the chain and keep hold of the peg, and peg him up securely again when he came back. The Commandant also warned us that the next person or persons attempting to escape would, if caught, be shot.

"Soon after this we had to make a kind of room of corrugated iron at one end of a demolished barrack. I must mention that Jedabia was an Italian block-house, or fort, which the garrison had to evacuate and which they demolished with dynamite as far as possible before they did so. When we had finished our new prison, we moved into it, and a guard of six Arabs, under an effendi, was posted; they were housed in a small species of dug-out right alongside the only exit from the prison yard.

"From now on until the end of July we lived, fed, and had our being in this corrugated-iron room, and our duties became more or less regular. At sunrise the effendi (captain) of the guard would beat on the iron door with his kurbash (whip) and repeat the summons to rise and get to work, and we would all troop out, except the sick or exempted ones. Our jobs were various, but they all had to do with rebuilding Jedabia. Some mixed mortar; others got big and little stones; others again assisted the native masons and bricklayers. For a month or so all our food was cooked for us by Arabs belonging to Sidi Idris's retinue of servants, and at noon one of us was told to go and get the food and the rest went home. Our food consisted, for the most part, of boiled goats' meat and rice that had been boiled in the soup, which was very good, but there was never enough of that. After about two hours' siesta, we were led out again and continued our various labours till sunset, when another meal was provided of the same character, after which we usually went to bed. Our beds consisted of grass mats spread over the earthen floor, with a conveniently shaped stone for a pillow, and our covering was a number of date

sacks made of camel's hair, sewn together. We had to sleep very close together to keep warm for the first few months, as the nights were very cold; in fact, it was always pretty chilly at night time.

"We saw many instances of the Arab's love of pomp and show when any notability came into Jedabia. Sidi Idris came in one evening shortly after we were installed in our permanent prison. The whole population turned out to watch the procession of gorgeously dressed sheikhs, riding on beautifully caparisoned Arab horses, whose saddles and bridles had gold buckles, etc., with stirrups of gold. One morning in April we were surprised to see small European tents and camp equipment of green canvas and white men moving amongst them. We learnt that these were some German officers, who had just landed on the coast fifteen miles away from a submarine. On further acquaintance they proved to be very agreeable, and expressed much sympathy at our plight. With them was one Nuri Bey, brother of Enver Bey, of Turkish Army fame. He, so we learnt, had managed to escape from the English and had found his way to Jedabia. The Germans used to give the second mate five francs per week for tobacco for our party, and Nuri used to give the same for tea.

"Towards the end of the Ramadan the Italians were all marched off to another block-house, called Jalo, which was eight days' journey farther to the southward, and where there was no permanent water supply and the conditions far worse than those at Jedabia. The day after their departure we did not have to go out to work, and Nuri Bey called us to his tent and presented us each with thirty francs Turkish, as, he explained, payment for work done for the Turkish Government. The same day a small parcel came through to us from the British Consul, which proved to contain money, cigarettes, and letters. Marvellous to relate, all the money and cigarettes came through intact, which speaks well for the power of Sidi Idris, who, I believe, knew that the parcel was coming.

"The next day an Italian deserter joined our party, which was the signal for us to go out to work again. However, it was not for very long, as two nights after his appearance we were sent for while he slept and were brought before some Egyptian potentates, who said that

we were going to be sent home the next day. Next evening we were each given a complete outfit of Arab clothes, including a burnous and tarboosh. A crowd of camels having been brought round to us, we each mounted one and set off under the escort of four niggers and arrived at an inhabited Italian block-house early next morning, where we received very kind treatment for two days, when we boarded a coasting steamer going to Bengazi. Here we were given a complete European outfit and entertained by the British Consul for ten days, when we took ship for Malta."

And thus, in due course, these seamen, after a series of adventures and trials suggesting that truth is sometimes stranger than fiction, reached London on the morning of August 29th, seven months and twenty-five days from the sinking of the *Coquet*.

## CHAPTER X

### THE MERCHANT SERVICE ON THE DEFENSIVE

THE need for arming all merchant vessels in a great war at sea was foreseen in the year 1881 by the late Sir John Colomb, M.P., who had served at sea as an officer in the Royal Marine Artillery. In a lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institution in May of that year he predicted

“that the exigencies of maritime war will necessitate our arming not merely a careful selection of the best, but every ocean-going British steamer. We must prepare in peace to give them, at home and abroad, armaments and trained instructors, and then on the declaration of war bid them follow their avocations and let our enemies know that we mean to carry on our sea trade ‘in spite of their teeth,’ under the banner, if you like, of ‘Defence not Defiance.’”

Active steps were taken by the Admiralty in 1912, as described in Volume I of this history, to put a similar policy in practice on a small scale, but the vessels supplied with defensive armament in time of peace carried no ammunition. On August 5th, 1914, the Admiralty decided to make arrangements to place ammunition on board, and informed the Foreign Office as follows:

“In view of existing circumstances, My Lords have deemed it desirable to arrange for the ammunition for the Admiralty guns to be placed on board the ships as soon as opportunity offers. The names of the ships so supplied, with particulars as to their proposed destination and ports of call, will be communicated to the Secretary of State as soon as possible in each case. For the vessels so fitted, the authority to state that no ammunition is on board could no longer stand, but My Lords trust that in

issuing instructions to the Diplomatic and Consular representatives on the point, directions may be included that every assistance should be afforded to the masters of ships so as to avoid or minimise inconvenience or delay."

On the same date the Board of Customs and Excise were notified to the same effect, and asked to do everything in their power to avoid inconvenience and delay. Arrangements were also made for the necessary order of a Secretary of State for explosives to be carried in emigrant ships, and the Board of Trade, in view of the fitting of cooled magazines to Admiralty specification, waived their pre-war objection to explosives being carried in passenger vessels. It is interesting to note that, out of the thousands of British merchant vessels which were subsequently armed without being fitted with proper magazines, not a single case of spontaneous combustion occurred amongst all the ammunition carried.

On September 3rd, 1914, the Government decided to abandon running defensively armed merchant ships to United States ports, without in any way waiving the principle involved. The Admiralty accepted the Foreign Secretary's view that the position must be reconsidered, and they were prepared to concur with him that, under protest and without surrendering the principle of international law on which they had acted, H.M. Ambassador should be instructed to inform the United States Government that, under the existing conditions, defensively armed merchant vessels would not be employed in trading with United States ports.

Between the outbreak of war and September 3rd, the date of the Government decision, ten large vessels, in addition to those already armed, had been selected by the Admiralty to receive defensive armament of 6-inch guns. These vessels were the *Grampian* and *Scotian* (Allen Line); the *Montreal*, *Manitoba*, and *Montezuma* (C.P.R.); the *Arabic*, *Adriatic*, and *Baltic* (White Star); and the *Haverford* and *Merion* (International Navigation Company). The armament of these vessels was either in place, or in process of being mounted, at the time, but they were then disarmed or work was suspended on them. Three of the ships armed before the war, the *Idaho*, *Colorado*, and *Francisco*, were also disarmed for the same reason.



In January 1915 the developing menace of submarine attack wrought a revolution in the problem of defending merchant shipping at a time when the utmost pressure was being put on the armament firms for guns for the naval and military forces. On February 4th, 1915, the Germans issued the proclamation declaring certain waters to be a "war-zone," within which all merchant vessels would be destroyed. This action raised an imperative need for additional protection for British merchant shipping; but although the proclamation modified in detail the problem of defensive armament, the essential principles were unchanged. The origin of defensive armament was to enable merchant ships to defend themselves from the attacks of enemy armed merchantmen, improvised as raiders. The additional danger, after the proclamation, arose chiefly from the fact that submarines carrying guns could approach without being seen and disappear at will. Even with a very light gun, a submarine could force an armed merchant ship to surrender, unless the merchantman could either outstrip the enemy or could be protected by an armed vessel. It was still the problem of a merchant ship attacked by a lightly armed raider of a different description. If the merchant ship could be armed, even lightly, the submarine would be faced with difficulties in attacking an unarmed enemy with a higher and steadier gun-platform and better facilities for observation. The merchant ship, it is true, presented a larger target, but a single hit on the submarine stood a good chance of sinking her, or of making it impossible for her to dive. Another advantage of defensive armament was that it prevented the submarine from approaching to close range, and it is not easy at long ranges to sink a merchant vessel by light gunfire. For such reasons the defensive armament of merchant ships necessitated an increase in the size and weight of armament carried by the submarine, in order to ensure superiority. This margin could only be obtained at the expense of other fighting qualities of the submarine, such as speed. It was not until 1916, when a year's experience had been obtained, that all these advantages were fully realised. Statistics showing the rapid extension of the policy of armament are given in the succeeding chapter, on training the Merchant Service to fight.

An explanation of the Admiralty policy of extending

the defensive armament of merchant shipping in February 1915 was sent to shipowners in the following secret circular :

“ It has been decided to arm defensively vessels engaged in local trade, with one 12-pounder gun aft for defence against submarine attack. The Admiralty will pay for the cost of mounting the guns, providing the magazines, and for any movements of the ships necessary for the work to be done. They will not pay any compensation for delay in resuming trade.

“ A gun's crew of two men will be supplied by the Admiralty for each gun ; these men will be paid by the company, the money being refunded by the Admiralty.

“ The status of these ships will be the same as defensively armed merchantmen. They will not be commissioned and will fly the Red Ensign.

“ About one-half of these ships will be selected from Admiralty chartered colliers and store-carriers running between east and west coasts and France. The remainder will be selected from local coast trades. The Admiralty will pay for replacement after the removal of the gun.”

When, in April 1915, a few more guns were available, it was decided to extend the principle of defensive armament from vessels on coastal voyages to some of the larger classes of merchant ships engaged in oversea trade. A similar circular was then issued to shipowners, containing additional information about the method of transferring guns from one ship to another. As far as practicable, arrangements were made to prepare the vessels thus affected before they left the United Kingdom, or their terminal ports abroad, for receiving their guns. The general situation in July 1915 was that British vessels trading in the Mediterranean had at their disposal, at Gibraltar and Port Said, fifty-two guns of 4·7-inch calibre, which were embarked on entering the station and disembarked for the use of other vessels before leaving. Guns of the same calibre were mounted permanently in 8 colliers, 59 meat-carrying vessels trading with the Argentine, Australia, and New Zealand, and 9 supply ships and transports carrying military stores. Twelve-pounder guns of 12 cwt. or of 8 cwt. were mounted in coastal vessels

trading around the coast of the United Kingdom and to ports in the North of France, and similar guns in collier transports and in transports with military stores. The system of armament was gradually extended, as guns and mountings became available by the methods subsequently described.

From the outset, the instructions issued to the masters of defensively armed vessels contained a clause to the effect that the guns were placed on board for defence, not for offence, and that they were intended as an effective help in the prosecution of the voyages, the main object in view.

On October 20th, 1915, the instructions were amplified. The defensive nature of the armament was further emphasised, and the following principles were laid down :

*“ The Status of Armed Merchant Ships ”*

“(1) The right of the crew of a merchant vessel forcibly to resist visit and search, and to fight in self-defence, is well recognised in International Law, and is expressly admitted by the German Prize Regulations in an addendum issued in June 1914, at a time when it was known that numerous vessels were being armed in self-defence.

“(2) The armament is supplied solely for the purpose of resisting attack by an armed vessel of the enemy. It must not be used for any other purpose whatsoever.

“(3) An armed merchant vessel, therefore, must not in any circumstances interfere with or obstruct the free passage of other merchant vessels or fishing-craft, whether these are friendly, neutral, or hostile.

“(4) The status of a British armed merchant vessel cannot be changed upon the high seas.”

*“ Rules to be Observed in the Exercise of the Right of Self-defence. ”*

“(1) The master or officer in command is responsible for opening and ceasing fire.

“(2) Participation in armed resistance must be confined to persons acting under the orders of the master or officer in command.

“(3) Before opening fire the British colours must be hoisted.

“(4) Fire must not be opened or continued from a vessel which has stopped, hauled down her flag, or otherwise indicated her intention to surrender.

“(5) The expression ‘armament’ in these instructions includes not only cannon, but also rifles and machine-guns where these are supplied.

“(6) The ammunition used in rifles and machine-guns must conform to Article 23, Hague Convention IV, 1907; that is to say, the bullets must be encased in nickel or other hard substance, and must not be split or cut in such a way as to cause them to expand or set up on striking a man. The use of explosive bullets is forbidden.

“*Circumstances under which the Armament should be Employed*

“(1) The armament is supplied for the purpose of defence only, and the object of the master should be to avoid action whenever possible.

“(2) Experience has shown that hostile submarines and aircraft have frequently attacked merchant vessels without warning. It is important, therefore, that craft of this description should not be allowed to approach to a short range, at which a torpedo or a bomb launched without notice would almost certainly take effect.

“British and Allied submarines and aircraft have orders not to approach merchant vessels. Consequently it may be presumed that any submarine or aircraft which deliberately approaches or pursues a merchant vessel does so with hostile intention. In such cases fire may be opened in self-defence in order to prevent the hostile craft closing to a range at which resistance to a sudden attack with bomb or torpedo would be impossible.

“(3) An armed merchant vessel proceeding to render assistance to the crew of a vessel in distress must not seek action with any hostile craft, though, if she herself is attacked while so doing, fire may be opened in self-defence.

“(4) It should be remembered that the flag is no guide to nationality. German submarines and armed merchant vessels have frequently employed British, Allied, or neutral colours in order to approach undetected. Though, however, the use of disguise and false colours in order to avoid

capture is a legitimate *ruse de guerre*, its adoption by defensively armed merchant ships may easily lead to misconception. Such vessels, therefore, are forbidden to adopt any form of disguise which might cause them to be mistaken for neutral ships."

These instructions were subsequently revised, amplified, and finally embodied in "War Instructions for Defensively Armed Merchant Ships."

At first, owing to the urgency of the menace to merchant shipping, it was necessary to supply merchant ships with such guns as could be obtained. Guns of eighteen different types, British, French, Russian, and Japanese, from 6-inch to 2½-pounders, were issued in the first instance. This obviously led to great complications in ammunition supply and was a most undesirable system, but the only practicable one until sufficient guns of standard types could be procured. The matter became still more urgent when the Germans used more heavily armoured submarines, carrying heavier guns of 5·9-inch calibre; but it was not until September 1917 that sufficient British guns became available to enable the Admiralty to adopt a standard system of defensive armament.

When war broke out in August 1914, the service of defensively armed merchant ships was in the hands of three officers and about twelve other ranks; 747 officers and men were employed on shore duties in connection with defensively armed merchant ships on November 15th, 1918, and 11,537 as guns' crews for the ships—the increase reflecting the lengths to which this development was carried under the compelling influence of war. The policy was originally adopted, as we have seen, as a defence against surface craft, in view of information received that the Germans intended to arm their merchant ships as commerce raiders in time of war. In February 1915 the U-boat campaign was launched against merchant shipping. By the middle of May in that year, 149 British merchant ships had been fitted with defensive armament. By November 1918 5,887 ships had been so fitted, and 1,684 of them had been lost, leaving a balance of 4,203. Of these, nearly 2,500 carried guns of 4-inch calibre or of larger size. By the date of the Armistice, 6,067 guns and 806 howitzers had been mounted in merchant ships.

On November 16th, 1918, when the Armistice was signed, 4,079 were afloat actually carrying armament. The following table shows the numbers of British merchant ships fitted for defensive armament that were afloat on different selected dates up to the end of 1915 :

Date—1915.	No. of ships fitted.
May 14th . . . . .	149
June 25th . . . . .	212
September 24th. . . . .	219
November 6th . . . . .	401
December 25th . . . . .	766

After the frozen-meat vessels, the first ships to be armed defensively, as we have seen, were those engaged in coastal traffic, and proceeding from the Irish Channel round the South Coast of England to London. Very few guns were available at first, and only a small proportion of them could be spared for vessels on the East Coast, which was then comparatively safe. The Channel was not so dangerous as it became at a later period. This was the policy up to the middle of May 1915, when the fitting of the following lines was ordered :

Orient	Clan.
Anchor	City.
P. & O.	Hall.
British India	T. and J. Harrison.
Anchor Brocklebank	Blue Funnel (Holt Line).

Defensive armament saved a number of ships at this period, some by actual gunfire, some by moral effect ; more guns were allocated as they became available, and more coastal craft were armed. At first there were not enough guns to send overseas, so all guns, by a system of transfer, were kept in the submarine zone, which was restricted at the outset, and the guns were transferred, as has been already stated, from one ship to another for the voyage. For ocean voyages one gun was then taken out of each of the thirty-seven frozen-meat ships originally armed, and transferred to others. In May 1915 some of these guns were sent out to Gibraltar and to Port Said, and in the following November to Dakar, to be mounted for the homeward voyage and replaced by returning ships, and this policy was subsequently applied to other overseas ports : Halifax, Sierra Leone, and Cape Town. The thirty-seven guns were thus made

to serve the requirements of a large number of vessels. In spite of certain mechanical difficulties, such as the designing of special deck-plates to suit both the seating and the gun when different natures of ordnance were being exchanged from one ship to another, the matter of supplying material was a comparatively simple one compared with training the Merchant Service to fight their ships and to handle the guns when attacked. The training of a sea-gunner in the Royal Navy in normal times occupies several months, and it is superimposed on a disciplinary training extending over many years. There was no time to apply such a system to merchant crews, but while skill in gunnery and facilities for enforcement of discipline were lacking in the Mercantile Marine, heroism was not wanting.

A special system of training the Merchant Service to fight their own ships when encountering submarines was established by the Admiralty in 1917. In the meanwhile tribute must be paid to the patriotism of shipowners who, in pre-war days, held out inducements to their officers to join the Royal Naval Reserve. The fruits of their efforts were apparent when the time arrived for extending the system of arming merchant ships as the submarine menace developed. For many years some companies, by cash allowances to their officers whilst undergoing drill, by giving permission to serve with the Navy for long periods (up to two years) at a stretch without loss of seniority, and by affording other facilities, were able to boast of a large number of R.N.R. officers. In July 1916 the Admiralty arranged for additional officers of the Mercantile Marine to undergo a short course of gunnery at the Naval Gunnery School at Chatham.

At first a few naval ratings were lent to fight the guns in the few merchant ships that could be supplied with armament. Two gunners, the majority being pensioners or Royal Fleet Reserve men of the Royal Marine Artillery and Infantry, were sent to each ship to carry out the duties requiring a special gunnery training, and to assist the ship's crew. These men actually joined the Merchant Service as part of the crew, and were paid by the shipowners concerned, and a small inspecting and training staff was established to superintend matters. By statistics previously given, we have seen that the number of defensively

armed merchant ships had risen from thirty-nine at the outbreak of war to 766 at the end of the year 1915; the numbers continually increased as guns became available, and from the following statistics it is easy to realise how history repeated itself, and why British merchant seamen, like their ancestors of old, were called upon to defend their own vessels from the King's enemies. The Royal and Merchant Navies, which had drifted apart during many years of peace on the high seas, were again knit together by the bond of defence against a common danger. The figures appended give the number of British merchant vessels afloat, fitted with defensive armament, on certain selected dates up to September 1916:

Date—1916.	No. of defensively armed ships afloat.
February 15th. . . . .	991
April 12th . . . . .	1,109
September 18th . . . . .	1,749

Apart from the question of gun armament, shipowners were recommended by the Admiralty from the earliest days of the war to provide their vessels with rifles for use against aircraft and submarines, and for the purpose of sinking any mines that might be sighted. Pistols were also recommended for use in emergencies. Special instructions bearing on this point were issued on April 26th, 1915. The right, under International Law, of resistance and of fighting in self-defence was explained in these instructions, which contained, amongst others, the following clauses:

“Participation in armed resistance should be confined to persons acting under the orders of the master or officer in command. . . .

“The ammunition supplied for rifles and machine-guns must conform to the requirements of Article 23, Hague Convention IV, 1907, that is to say, the bullets must be cased in nickel or other hard substance, and must not be split or cut in such a way as to cause them to expand or set up on striking a man. . . .

“Masters of ships to which rifles are issued must exercise a proper control over their employment, and are responsible for opening and ceasing fire. Fire must not



be opened from a vessel which has stopped, hauled down her flag, or otherwise indicated to the submarine her intention to surrender."

Other clauses of a general nature were similar in the instructions, specially issued on April 26th, 1915, for the use of small arms, to those issued on October 20th of the same year for defensive armament in general, as quoted *in extenso* above.

On May 31st, 1915, a special memorandum was issued to masters of transports carrying troops. This memorandum pointed out that heavy rifle or machine-gun fire would make it more difficult for a submarine to make a successful shot with a torpedo. If submerged, no injury would be done to her, but a good volume of fire falling just short of the periscope would make splashes, thus hampering an observer on board the submarine in seeing clearly through his periscope. It was enjoined that military officers should be in command of the men to control both rifle and machine-gun fire, and a military officer on watch should be in command of the troops on deck, but he should not order fire to be opened upon a hostile submarine or torpedo vessel without the previous assent of the master or his representative—the ship's officer of the watch. The use of field-guns was not recommended.

Such were the main features of the policy adopted up to the end of 1916 for employing guns, small arms, and machine-guns to enable British merchant ships to defend themselves from attack. They were supplemented, about the middle of 1916, by the supply of apparatus for the manufacture of smoke-screens to be used as an aid to escape. There remains the important question of the attitude of neutrals, without whose concurrence in the use of their harbours by defensively armed merchant shipping this policy would have lost much of its effect.

The right of merchant ships to carry defensive armament on the high seas is one of long standing, and this right has been admitted by the jurists of all nations. The subject is discussed exhaustively in a pamphlet entitled *Defensively Armed Merchant Ships and Submarine Warfare*. Owing, however, to difficulties raised by certain neutral countries to the entry of armed merchant ships into their ports, the Admiralty found it desirable to issue a special

form of indemnification to owners of the defensively armed vessels, reading as follows :

“ I am commanded by My Lords of the Admiralty to inform you that in consideration of your having, as arranged, fitted guns and mountings in your s.s. —, and of your carrying ammunition supplied by the Admiralty for the service of the same, for the purpose of providing for her defence in case of war, My Lords will keep you indemnified against all loss and expense by reason thereof to which you may be put.”

Between August 7th and 11th, 1914, telegrams were sent to H.M. representatives at all the capitals in Europe and in North and South America directing them to point out, in the event of any question being raised as to the position of British armed merchantmen, that these vessels were armed solely for defence and could not be converted into warships on the high seas, because Great Britain did not admit the right of any Power to do this. Therefore, there could be no right on the part of any neutral Government to intern British armed merchantmen or to require them to land their guns, seeing that the neutral Government's duty in regard to belligerent vessels is limited solely to actual or potential warships.

The United States, on August 8th, 1914, issued instructions about the clearance of merchant ships belonging to belligerent Powers, but these instructions made no special mention of defensively armed ships. On August 21st the State Department intimated that each case would be dealt with on its merits, and that it would be a great help if the British Minister would give a written guarantee that these vessels were armed only in self-defence, and would never attack. This was agreed to. On September 1st a difficulty arose over the s.s. *Adriatic*, which was armed at the time with four guns, and was incorrectly believed to be proceeding to Halifax for troops ; as well as over the s.s. *Merion*, which arrived at Philadelphia mounting four guns. The action taken on September 3rd by the British Government as a result, and its influence upon the defensive armament of British merchant shipping, have already been described. On September 19th, 1915, the United States Government issued detailed conditions governing

the treatment of defensively armed merchant ships, the main purpose of which was to assimilate them completely to ordinary merchant vessels. Should any doubt arise as to the defensive character of the armament, the *onus probandi* was to fall on the masters and owners.

A considerable number of vessels, under these regulations, cleared from New York with their guns mounted aft, but in August 1915 the s.s. *Waimana* was held up at Newport News. She had been chartered for two voyages from the River Plate to Marseilles with meat and general cargo. One voyage had been completed, and she was proceeding from Marseilles to Buenos Aires on the second voyage via Newport News for coaling purposes. Her speed was moderate, and she was a trading vessel with only defensive armament of one 4·7-inch gun, which had been fitted in her in London in April 1915. Two naval ratings were included in her crew. She arrived at Newport News at 8 a.m. on August 26th, was ready to proceed after bunkering at noon on August 28th, but was detained by the action of the United States Government until September 22nd, and clearance was not given until her gun had been landed.

On March 25th, 1916, the United States Government published a further memorandum on the status of armed merchant vessels, considering the subject from two points of view: firstly, from that of a neutral when such vessels enter his ports; secondly, from the point of view of an enemy when they are on the high seas. The following summary was attached:

“The *status* of an armed merchant vessel as a warship in neutral waters may be determined, in the absence of documentary proof or conclusive evidence of previous aggressive conduct, by presumption derived from all the circumstances of the case.

“The *status* of such vessel as a warship on the high seas must be determined only by conclusive evidence of aggressive purpose, in the absence of which it is to be presumed that the vessel has a private and peaceable character, and it should be so treated by an enemy warship.

“In brief, a neutral Government may proceed upon the presumption that an armed merchant ship of belligerent

nationality is armed for aggression, while a belligerent should proceed on the assumption that the vessel is armed for protection. Both of these presumptions may be overcome by evidence: the first by secondary or collateral evidence, since the fact to be established is negative in character; the second by primary and direct evidence, since the fact to be established is positive in character."

In the course of the memorandum it was clearly laid down as a principle that merchantmen of belligerent nationality, armed only for the purposes of protection against the enemy, were entitled to enter and leave neutral ports without hindrance in the course of legitimate trade, and that, as affecting the high seas, "Enemy merchant ships have the right to arm for purposes of self-protection."<sup>1</sup>

Holland, from the outset, refused to admit such vessels to her ports, and this attitude was maintained until the Armistice was signed in November 1918, although it was pointed out that all other Governments were admitting ships so armed to their ports on the same footing as ordinary merchant ships.

Spain at an early stage admitted that merchant ships might carry guns without acquiring the character of ships of war, but nevertheless the Spanish Government raised difficulties from time to time. On May 31st, 1915, however, they issued a Decree requiring the master of an armed merchant ship to declare in writing that his vessel was destined exclusively for commerce, that she would not be transformed into a ship of war before returning to her own country, and that the arms and ammunition on board had been, and would be, employed only for the defence of the vessel if attacked. This arrangement was adhered to throughout the war, each difficulty as it arose being made the subject of diplomatic correspondence.

In Norway a working arrangement was come to. Armed ships did not visit her ports at first, but by 1916 it became necessary to reconsider the position in view of the increased activity of German submarines and the extended arming of the Merchant Service.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Revised regulations were issued when the United States entered the war.

<sup>2</sup> The new arrangement was not put into writing until November 1916, and more exhaustively in 1918.

Other European countries made no objection, but some of the South American Republics raised difficulties. Uruguay, on August 7th, 1914, issued a decree which was considered satisfactory. Peru was not approached on the subject until later (May 1917). Chile made no objections, but in 1915 required the arrival of a defensively armed merchant ship to be notified beforehand to the Chilian Government. (This was cancelled in November 1918.) The Argentine Republic ordered defensively armed vessels to discharge ammunition before entering Buenos Aires or La Plata, and no armed merchantman was permitted to leave port within twenty-four hours of an enemy merchantman. (Even in normal times no merchant vessel was allowed to enter any Argentine port with ammunition on board.) Brazil, on September 5th, 1914, while not regarding armed merchant ships as privateers, saw certain objections, and suggested that the vast naval power of Great Britain could find other means of protecting her Mercantile Marine. Cuba, in April 1916, issued a special decree on the subject, much on the lines of the United States conditions of September 19th, 1915.<sup>1</sup>

Such, in brief terms, were the measures taken by the Admiralty, up to the middle of 1916, to arm the Merchant Service for self-protection, and the steps taken by the British Government to ensure that vessels so protected would be able to proceed upon their lawful occasions with the necessary access to neutral harbours. The effect upon the Mercantile Marine itself was conspicuous. The line of demarcation between the Royal Navy and the Merchant Service was more closely marked on the eve of the war than at any previous date in our naval history. Each had its own functions to perform, and each performed them in its own way. That the two services would, or indeed could, co-operate closely in defeating the enemy at sea had not been seriously regarded by either. The masters and other officers of the Mercantile Marine, excepting those who belonged to the Royal Naval Reserve, would most certainly have resented any suggestion that they should pass under the tutelage of officers whom they regarded as belonging to an entirely distinct organisation,

<sup>1</sup> A brief memorandum of the attitude and requirements of various neutral countries was subsequently issued by the Admiralty.

with which merchant seamen had little concern. The officers of the Royal Navy, on the other hand, never contemplated in pre-war days the possibility of instructing their brethren of the Merchant Service in the best methods of defeating the enemy for themselves. Owing to the policy of supplying defensive armament to merchant ships, the relationship underwent a change under the influence of war conditions. The old barriers which had arisen during the long period of peace were gradually broken down, and naval and merchant seamen, with a new sympathy for each other, worked whole-heartedly together in the common cause. Without such a sentiment inspiring both services, little success could have attended the various courses which were first contemplated in 1916, established in 1917, and constantly developed in usefulness and interest until the conclusion of the war. The nation can contemplate with pride the splendid manner in which the officers and men of the British Merchant Service, old men well advanced in years as well as young men, strained every effort to fit themselves to meet the new and unexpected conditions with which they were confronted.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE WAR OFF THE FLANDERS COAST, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE ENEMY'S MINE-LAYING ACTIVITY

THE relation of Zeebrugge to the Dover Straits resembled strategically, as has been stated, that which Cattaro bore to the Straits of Otranto. Happily during the war the enemy never succeeded in capturing the Channel ports, but it was sufficiently embarrassing that Zeebrugge and Ostend remained for practically the whole of the period of hostilities in German hands. Zeebrugge became an important base for U-craft from the spring of 1915 onward. With the introduction of the smaller types of submarines, designated UB and UC, increasingly effective use could be made of the Belgian port. The latter were mine-layers, and from the beginning of June they carried on an almost continuous policy of laying mines off the south-eastern coast of England, selecting well-known lightships, prominent headlands, narrow channels, and certain navigational buoys for their operations. In the course of the early summer, however, the Dover drifters had enforced such a measure of respect on the enemy that submarines were forbidden to attempt the Dover Straits passage. The more valuable U-boats especially were directed to go north-about into the Atlantic, usually through the Fair Island Channel.

The constriction from which the enemy was suffering was so severely felt that on August 20th another effort was made to break through Dover Straits. The submarine selected was the mine-layer UC5, which had reached Zeebrugge from Germany on July 27th and then commenced a series of mine-laying voyages to the south-east coast of England. Eventually, on April 27th, 1916, she got ashore on the Shipwash and was captured; but that is anticipating events. On August 20th, 1915, at

6.40 a.m., she left Bruges, having taken on board her cargo of mines, and proceeded through Zeebrugge loek, thence passing down the Belgian coast. At 10.20 p.m., at her utmost speed, she crossed the Dover net barrage by No. 3 buoy, on the surface, and laid a dozen mines at 6.30 a.m. next day off Boulogne. The Germans in Flanders regarded this as the first actual submarine success beyond the Dover-Calais line. Up to this date no German mine-layer had been able to penetrate the Straits. The immediate result was that the s.s. *William Dawson* got on these mines and blew up.

Had the Germans not been in occupation of the Flemish coast, much of our trouble with submarines would have never existed. Many plans, much effort, a large fleet of various types of ships (especially Auxiliary Patrol craft), and many valuable officers and men were used to check-mate the enemy's operations from these ports, and it could never be said that the door had been effectually closed, shutting in the U-boats there. Two days after UC5 had negotiated Dover Straits, Vice-Admiral Bacon left Dover with a force of seventy-nine ships to attack the harbours and defences of Zeebrugge. In this operation were included such different types as monitors, destroyers, and gunboats, as well as an aeroplane ship, four vessels carrying observation towers for spotting, nine paddle-steamers and many drifters.

The monitors were the bombarding force, the paddlers acted as the mine-sweepers, and the drifters laid their nets round the monitors as a protection against submarine attack. Four of the paddlers, including the *Brighton Queen*, were drawn from Grimsby; they met Admiral Bacon's fleet off the Galloper Lightship, took station ahead and began sweeping from five miles south-east of North Hinder Lightship to one mile south-west of Thornton Ridge. Two of the observation towers were dropped five miles N. by W. and the other two six miles north-north-east respectively off Zeebrugge pier. The five paddlers from Dover swept ahead of the eastern ships, and the Grimsby paddlers swept ahead of the western ships. When the observation towers had been placed in position and the sweepers were in the middle of turning, the enemy batteries opened fire and continued a fusillade for fifteen minutes. No damage was done to any of the British ships, but three



of the Grimsby paddlers had narrow escapes, their kites being shot away.

All the sweepers then swept round the monitors inside the drift nets until 9 a.m., when course was shaped for the North Hinder Lightship, the paddlers again sweeping ahead of the fleet. These four Grimsby paddlers performed most useful work in sweeping and piloting the observation ships into prearranged positions, and received about a dozen salvos, several of which straddled the sweepers. The drifters, to the number of about fifty, formed a kind of "zareba" round the monitors and enabled the latter to bombard Zeebrugge from 5.30 a.m. for two and a half hours at 16,000 yards, the scheme being to destroy, if possible, both lockgates and submarine base. Soon after 8 a.m., all the objectives aimed at having been either damaged or destroyed, the operation ended and the fleet returned to their bases.

On this occasion the Flanders submarines did not attack any vessel of the British force, probably because the enemy feared a landing was about to take place and, therefore, was keeping back his UB boats till a later stage in the proceedings. From the middle of August they were much used by the Germans as advance patrols off the Flanders coast owing to the disturbing effect which Admiral Bacon's continual bombardment was having on the Teuton nerves. To thwart our monitors, the UC boats had to be content to confine themselves to mining the narrow passages between the banks off the Belgian and French coasts.

On September 6th the Admiral again took his ships over to the Flemish coast. At 11.30 p.m., having reached the appointed position, sweeping operations began and went on throughout the night until five in the morning. Misty weather interfered with the scheme, but at 8 a.m. the paddlers from Grimsby proceeded ahead of the fleet to the anchorage whence the bombardment was to take place. What work for ordinary fishermen! At noon the paddlers were attacked by enemy aircraft, two bombs dropping close to the starboard sponson of one of the vessels. An hour later the fleet weighed again, and proceeded to an area off Ostend, the paddlers sweeping ahead and being subjected to heavy fire from guns of large calibre; two shells fell close under the counter of one paddler, severely jarring the ship. After not quite an hour, the fleet ceased

firing and shaped a course for the North Foreland, the paddlers sweeping ahead of them once more. Again the monitors had damaged the submarine workshops and harbour works, and again it was reported that "the assistance rendered by the auxiliary craft was most valuable."

But almost simultaneously UC5 had been at work. At 6.48 a.m. on September 7th she had laid half a dozen mines off Boulogne and another six that night off the "Folkestone Gate," which was used to regulate the traffic passing off that part of the coast. As a result the cable-ship *Monarch* next day was blown up and sunk. Here, as usual, the armed trawlers were on the spot to do their duty, and by this means seventy-five survivors were brought into Dover. Assisted by the trawler *Neptunian*, Lieutenant Alfred H. Barnes, R.N.R., commanding officer of the trawler *Macfarlane*, did excellent work in rescuing the *Monarch's* crew by his coolness and good organisation.

The result of Admiral Bacon's attacks on the Flemish coast was, as has since become known from German sources, that UB boats had to be kept as permanent outposts by Middelkerke and the Thornton Ridge buoy. In this way the UB boats were prevented from operating on the merchant shipping tracks and the enemy had to rely on his mine-laying UC boats. At the end of September severe attacks on the UBs and UCs, both outgoing and homecoming, were made by British craft, one boat of each type being damaged. On September 25th Admiral Bacon again bombarded the enemy's coast, the object being to feign a landing and thereby aid Sir John French, who was about to launch an attack on land farther to the southward. Once more the Auxiliary Patrol craft did their share of the work. The monitors bombarded Knocke, Heyst, Zeebrugge, and Blankenberghe, during which operations drifters used their nets. It was while the drifters were boarding their nets later on that the *Hyacinth* was shelled, fifteen 6-inch projectiles falling so close that they deluged the drifter with water. Notwithstanding this, Skipper Laurence Scarlett, ably assisted by his second hand, T. J. Prior, and the crew, stuck to the work and safely got all the nets and net-mines aboard before leaving. "I would submit," wrote Admiral Bacon to the Admiralty, "that this skipper's work is worthy of the best traditions of the sea service, more especially as

his instructions admitted of his slipping his nets and retiring without them." This gallant skipper was awarded a D.S.C. and Prior received a D.S.M.

During the winter it was not possible to do much off the Belgian coast owing to unfavourable weather conditions, but operations were resumed in the following April. The total number of vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol serving in the various areas and zones at sea had reached 2,236, and included yachts, whalers, trawlers, drifters, paddlers, "M.L.s," motor-drifters, and motor-boats. Of the craft a considerable proportion were based on Dover, where during the winter Admiral Bacon had been making elaborate plans for a new effort to checkmate the enemy's Flemish submarine flotilla, and his other craft. These plans began to be put into effect on April 24th, 1916, so as to restrict the movements of the Flemish naval forces to one small channel off West Capelle on the Dutch coast. Thus, instead of having to keep watch on the whole coast, the egress and ingress of submarines and other vessels could be checked at this one "gate." To the enemy these measures, it was assumed, would be inconvenient in that 120 miles would be added to the length of a submarine's round trip from Ostend to the English Channel. The barrage, it was realised, would need to be patrolled so as to prevent the enemy from damaging the line of nets, or attacking the drifters who would have to keep the nets in good condition, but that responsibility was accepted.

The mine-nets, then, were to be laid so as to restrict the activities of enemy craft, British destroyers protecting the drifters and their nets. But the enemy's destroyers had a gun-range of 2,000 yards' superiority over that of the British destroyers, mounting 4-inch guns. In these circumstances it was decided to station monitors with a view to their engaging the enemy's destroyers and acting as a rallying-point for the British destroyers. It was recognised that the enemy destroyers could always retreat under the protection of the coast batteries ashore. This would not matter, however, as the purpose in view was the preservation of the barrage. There was, of course, the possibility of the enemy's destroyers trying to rush the monitors, but the British destroyers were charged with the duty of preventing this as well as warding off

attacks by submarines. Later on "M.L.s" and coastal motor-boats were also used for patrolling the barrage.

It would have been incorrect to call this arrangement a blockade for the reason that it was not technically effective. The absence of a perpetual night patrol and the existence of an exit by Dutch territorial waters made it not impossible for enemy craft to emerge from Zeebrugge. That the barrage accomplished all that was hoped cannot, with the knowledge which has since become available, be claimed. This much, however, may be said. It caused the enemy to be on the *qui vive* all the time, interfered with his free navigation, and definitely brought about the loss of several submarines. On the other hand, it employed scores of ships, with their crews numbering hundreds of men, which might have been employed in more active operations. The net-line was examined daily, weather permitting, and whenever possible the 15-inch monitors fired a few rounds at Ostend and Zeebrugge. Our patrols were ordered to keep outside the range of 18,000 yards; the shooting of the shore batteries was excellent up to a much greater range. M.L.s were used to make smoke screens with which to hide the targets. The shore batteries, in turn, used smoke screens to hide themselves from the monitors. The conditions were those of an elaborately staged game of hide-and-seek in which the fishermen stood to suffer most.

It had been intended to lay this barrage on April 8th, but the scheme had to be postponed until April 24th. The plan of the barrage involved the use of mines and net-mines. The mines were to be laid by the mine-layers *Orvieto*, *Paris*, *Princess Margaret*, and *Biarritz*, all being merchant ships taken up for the period of hostilities. The eastern end of the line of mines was to be laid by the trawlers *Welbeck*, *Carmania*, *Osta*, *Shackleton*, *Ostrich*, and *Russell*, which could go into the shoal water which was impossible for the bigger mine-layers and could advance to within four miles of Dutch territorial waters. To seaward of, and covering, the line of mines, the drifters laid their explosive nets, while farther to seaward, still other drifters had been ordered to lay their nets parallel with the West Hinder shoal, about thirty miles from Ostend, in order to catch home-coming U-boats. The last-mentioned were indicator nets, and were not part of

the barrage, which was laid 27,000 yards from the Tirpitz batteries at Ostend. These batteries straddled the monitor GENERAL WOLFE at 32,000 yards on the very day the barrage began to be laid, an incident which conveys some idea of the dangers which were run by the men engaged on the barrage.

The preliminaries began on April 21st, when paddlers swept the channel between the Dyck and Inner Ratel, as well as other channels, on the eve of a startling move. This precaution was adopted because it was expected that an enemy mine-layer had been at work: six German mines were thus accounted for. To assist the navigation of the mine-layers, dan buoys were laid by drifters and M.L.s. The bigger mine-layers which have been mentioned laid their 1,421 mines in the line planned, beginning at 5 a.m., April 24th; they steamed at 14 knots in a smooth sea. At 10.30 a.m. the six trawlers began to lay their mines at 6 knots, each trawler laying twenty-four. During the month of May these ex-merchantmen and trawlers prolonged the western end of the double line of mines laid on this day, and filled in the gaps between the shoals southward to the Belgian coast off Furnes. The general effect was thus to make a barrage from La Panne to the Dutch waters. It was a great undertaking—daring and original—but it required a great deal of constant attention to maintain it in an efficient state. The weather was not helpful in this respect, and there was always the possibility of the enemy coming out and tampering with nets or net-mines, so that constant vigilance had to be observed.

Two submarines, UB3 and U10, were destroyed by this means, in addition to UC5, which was caught in a mine but extricated herself. The loss of UB3 was solely and entirely due to the drifters. On April 24th, Sir Reginald Bacon had placed a number of drifters about thirty miles off Ostend, parallel with the West Hinder shoal. Here they anchored with their indicator nets out, flanking the lines of mines and mine-nets which were being laid a little nearer the shore, the intention being to entrap any Flanders submarines that might be making for Ostend or Zeebrugge. At 2.51 p.m. the drifter *Gleaner of the Sea* was lying at anchor in lat. 51° 31' N., long. 2° 50' 20" E., with her nets out astern. To the north-east and south-west of her were other drifters similarly disposed, the whole line

extending about fourteen miles. At this precise moment UB3 endeavoured to get through the line, but fouled the cable of the *Gleaner of the Sea*, which was riding to fifteen fathoms of chain with twenty-five fathoms of wire shackled on, as drifters often did, the water at this spot being about ten fathoms. Suddenly the watch on deck heard an unusual noise—the sound of something grinding on the wire, and at once went forward to see what was the matter.

Then UB3 was observed on the wire. Skipper R. G. Hurren was called from below and rushed up on deck. He seized a lance-bomb and threw it on the foredeck of the submarine, causing a great explosion, the water flying over the drifter's deck forward. The submarine sank at once down the wire, which parted, and then she went to the bottom, a hole having been blown in her. Skipper Hurren immediately ordered "Full speed ahead" and fired a signal rocket, his idea being to tow his nets round the spot where the submarine had sunk, and thus imprison her. But on looking astern and seeing a large "boil of water," he thought UB3 was coming up to the surface. He therefore ordered the nets to be slipped, as he was going to ram the enemy. On steering over the spot it was obvious that the German had settled down, and that air was coming up. He therefore dropped another lance-bomb and marked the place with a dan buoy.

Presently the drifter *E.E.S.* (Lieutenant R. J. Harland, R.N.R.) arrived and dropped four more bombs, one of which exploded. After the explosion oil and bubbles came to the surface. At 3.55 p.m. Destroyer *AFRIDI* arrived on the scene and fired her explosive sweep over the spot where the oil was still coming up. Thus ended the life of another submarine, thanks to the Auxiliary Patrol. The Admiralty awarded Skipper Hurren a D.S.C., and a D.S.M. was given to one of his crew. The sum of £1,000 was also awarded to the fishermen, of which a special share was apportioned to Skipper Hurren for his prompt action. This share amounted to £389.

In addition to the actual destruction of one submarine, the day's operations had been successful, for a double line of mines fifteen miles long had been laid, and thirteen and a half miles of moored nets besides fourteen light buoys which were to define the barrage for the safety of the craft ordered on patrol during the ensuing months.

This Belgian barrage was completed later on. If the officers and men who had been employed in laying and maintaining the barrage required encouragement, they obtained it from the destruction of U10. A fleet of mine-nets had been laid by drifters on May 7th, 1916, reinforcing this barrage line in a position due north of Ostend. There they remained until July 15th, when the drifters were sent to replace them with new ones. While the original mines were being hauled aboard, the eighth net was found to be missing, the mines in it having been fired. It was evident that a submarine had tried to break through, fouled the net, and been blown up by the net-mines. As the drifter's crew went on hauling the remaining nets, there came to the surface the body of a German petty officer, dressed in a double-breasted coat with white metal buttons. He was a naval telegraphist. Together with the body were found the man's pass issued by the harbour-master at Bruges, his identity disk, and so on. The name of the man was thus discovered. Three days after this the German naval casualty list of July 18th contained the name of this man as well as twenty-nine others as "missing, probably dead." It is now known that this submarine was U10, though it is impossible to say on which of the days between May 7th and July 15th she actually succumbed to the drifter's nets.

By May 26th the whole of this barrage had been laid. Thirty little drifters, most of them built of wood and able to steam not more than 8 knots, or 9 at their very best, had gone shooting and repairing these nets within fifteen miles of the enemy's coast with its powerful batteries. It was a great achievement, and one which exactly suited the training and temperament of these fishermen. Losses, of course, there were, both this year and during the preceding autumn. Having regard to the proximity of the enemy's naval forces, his well-placed shore guns, and his mines, this was to be expected; the surprising part is that so few ships were lost. On the occasion of the bombardment of September 25th, 1915, already referred to, the armed yacht *Sanda* was struck by gunfire and sunk with the loss of four officers and eleven men. Her crew belonged to the Mercantile Service, but her captain was Lieutenant-Commander H. T. Gartside-Tipping, R.N., who had been retired from active service in

the Navy many years before the opening of the war. In his retirement he had shown an enthusiastic interest in the Royal National Lifeboat service. On the outbreak of war he had come back to sea, in spite of his advanced years, and served in the Auxiliary Patrol in command of this yacht, being the oldest naval officer afloat. Thus perished a very gallant and patriotic gentleman.

The operations off the Belgian coast for 1915 had ended on November 19th. In summing up what had been accomplished, Admiral Bacon remarked :

“ . . . But more remarkable still, in my opinion, is the aptitude shown by the officers and crews of the drifters and trawlers, who in difficult waters, under conditions totally strange to them, have maintained their allotted stations without a single accident. Moreover, these men under fire have exhibited a coolness well worthy of the personnel of a service inured by discipline. The results show how deeply sea adaptability is ingrained in the seafaring race of these islands. . . . The mine-sweepers under Commander W. G. Rigg, R.N., have indefatigably carried out their dangerous duties.”

Such was the verdict upon the part taken by the fishermen in the 1915 campaign. We had lost, unfortunately, the paddler *Brighton Queen*. At two in the morning of October 6th, 1915, when mine-sweeping off Nieuport, she was about to head for Dunkirk when she struck a mine which exploded under her paddle-box. Boats were at once lowered from all the other ships, but seven lives were lost. Mine-sweeping during the hours of darkness always proved an intensely nerve-wracking and perilous operation. On different occasions long-distance torpedoes were fired at these paddlers while sweeping, and on this particular night several star-shells were discharged from the shore, brilliantly lighting up the ships and rendering them easily recognisable targets.

The loss of the *Brighton Queen* was a matter of peculiar regret. This excursion steamer had been the first paddler to be taken up in September 1914, and had during the following months assisted in the destruction of mines whose total value was much greater than her own. She had been the means of saving a considerable amount of



shipping as well as many lives, and had been most busily employed in many parts of the North Sea—wherever, indeed, a new mine-field had to be swept up. As the Admiral in charge of the mine-sweepers remarked: “With mine below and bombs from above, in addition to torpedoes from submarines and heavy gunfire from the shore, these sweepers have so far borne somewhat of a charmed life which could hardly be expected to continue indefinitely.” The *Brighton Queen* was called upon to pay the price.

In the laying of the barrage on April 24th, 1916, one drifter was also lost. A division of these craft, under Lieutenant Crafter, R.N.R., had been engaged laying their mine-nets at the eastern end of the line so as to catch any submarines which might try to work round the flank of the light buoys and attack the forces operating. The division consisted of eight drifters which, owing to a mistake, were left during the night at the far end of the line without support. The result was that they had to steam forty-five miles down a hostile coast to Dunkirk. During this passage they were chased by three German destroyers. One of the drifters, the *Au Fait*, was severely damaged by shell-fire and was captured, the crew being taken prisoners. The drifter *Clover Bank*, whilst laying nets on the same day, ran over some of the mines which had just been laid, and was blown up. A mistake had been made, for the nets should have been laid half a mile seaward of the lines of mines.

The Belgian coast barrage was maintained until the bad weather set in during October 1916. In the meantime it had been reinforced by mine-fields and mine-nets. It had been patrolled except when weather conditions were unfavourable; but notwithstanding it was a great inconvenience to the enemy, it had not assisted the Allied cause very materially. Admiral Bacon realised this, and in his appreciation of the situation informed the Admiralty:

“The situation on the Belgian coast can be summed up briefly by saying that we can do no real good from the sea until backed up by an advance on land . . . no permanent damage can be done by gunfire; it can only be looked on as a preparation to assist a force which will permanently occupy the damaged positions.”

This lesson in strategy had been expounded years

before the war, and the difficulty as perceived afresh off the Belgian coast was identically that which made of no avail the work of our naval forces at the Dardanelles. It is appropriate to add that it had been realised, as soon as the enemy captured the Belgian coastline, that the eventual success of any naval operations depended on the co-operation of the Army. Unfortunately the Army was not free to take its share in the work, and so the auxiliary craft, in association with the vessels of the Dover Patrol, had to do as best they might under adverse conditions. "The drifters," Admiral Bacon remarked, "have laid out, weighed, and dealt with the moored nets off the enemy's coast partially under the range of their batteries, and have watched the nets under conditions when it was possible to afford them little support, but their duties have always been well and promptly carried out."

From October 1916 the barrage remained unpatrolled; the nets were left to look after themselves; and the enemy could, and doubtless did, interfere with it and make gaps for his submarines to pass through. It was not until the summer of 1917 that it was once more rendered efficient. To criticise this campaign off the Flemish coast would be easy enough, and in the light of later study of the plans and operations there are lessons to be learned and faults to be avoided. But the situation was a difficult one and the general outlook was none too hopeful. The Allied armies could not advance along the coast, and therefore the defended base of the enemy submarines could not be destroyed. Even if the barrage had been made of solid concrete instead of more or less frail nets, the submarines could never have been contained within Flemish waters. They had to go a long way out of their way close to the south-western coast of Holland, and these submarine tracks became known to the naval authorities. In the later stages of the war an attempt was made to mine this exit just short of neutral seas; but it was just this neutral stretch of Dutch waterway which made the whole idea of the barrage impracticable. In pre-submarine days it would not have mattered much. In the case of any surface ship using territorial waters she could have been seen. But the U-boats at Zeebrugge could negotiate the Dutch channels between the sandbanks, either by day or by night. If by day, they would be submerged and unseen; if by

night they would be very difficult to observe, and at any moment could dive to periscope depth and evade the neutral patrol, however vigilant. Thus a German advanced base existed almost at the eastern mouth of the English Channel: it was like bringing Heligoland so many miles nearer England. The base could not be wiped out; it succoured, refitted, revictualled, replenished with mines and ammunition, and refreshed the tired crews of the U-boats, UBs, UCs, just as often as they had orders to come in and out of Zeebrugge and up to Bruges. Strategically this base was well placed for offensive operations, either by mine or torpedo, or by machine-gun or heavier armament upon the swept channel which began at the Downs and extended north to about the Firth of Forth. It was difficult enough to prevent such attacks, for the reason that the naval authorities were short of ships. The demand for destroyers and craft for the Auxiliary Patrol went on incessantly: the most that could be done in those critical times was to carry on with exiguous forces.

The Auxiliary Patrol was concerned with mines as well as submarines. The enemy's mine-laying operations throughout the war may be divided into two periods. From August 1914 until June 1915 all the mines were laid by surface ships. From June 1915 to the end of hostilities practically all the mine-fields were laid by submarines, though there were several important exceptions. The Southwold mine-field had been allowed to remain practically intact except for certain passages through it which were swept, unknown to the enemy, as a matter of convenience. The Humber mine-field continued to exist, though parts of it were swept in the spring and early summer of 1916, the trawlers *Orcades* and *Alberta* being mined and sunk in the process. The Tyne mine-field remained as before. On June 11th, 1915, the Outer Silver Pit mine-field was discovered by the foundering of the fishing-trawler *Dovey*. It was wrongly supposed, at first, that this was part of the Humber mine-field, the north-west portion of which was swept up in June 1915.<sup>1</sup> The Tory Island mine-field, laid in the autumn of 1914, continued to give a good deal of trouble to the sweepers, and it was not until March 1916 that it was declared clear. The Scarborough mine-field

<sup>1</sup> The south-east end was swept up a year later, by which time several other fishing-trawlers had been blown up in the field.

had long since been dealt with, though an odd mine was found off that part of the Yorkshire coast in September 1915. The Swarte Bank mine-field continued in existence during the summer of 1915, but was cleared by the middle of August. The Dogger Bank mine-field, laid fork-shaped in the middle of the North Sea towards the end of May 1915 and discovered by fishing-trawlers, had been defined by the sweepers, and as late as September 1915 the Dutch s.s. *Eemdijk* foundered on it. Thanks, however, to the work of the trawlers, the enemy's object—the entrapping of the Grand Fleet—had been frustrated.

On either August 7th or 8th, 1915, a big mine-field was laid across the Moray Firth by the German armed auxiliary *Meteor*, which sank the armed boarding-steamer *The Ramsay*. Nearly 400 mines were laid in zigzag lines. The mine-field was soon discovered and no harm came to any portion of the Grand Fleet. It involved, of course, heavy and dangerous work for trawlers, paddlers, and sloops, but by the middle of October of the same year 249 mines had been destroyed—a very fine record! On New Year's Day 1916 the raider *Möwe* laid about 200 mines between Sule Skerry and Cape Wrath in a rough semicircle, thus fouling the western approach to Scapa Flow, and causing the loss of the battleship KING EDWARD VII five days later. In this instance also the mine-sweepers had the difficult job of carrying out their work exposed to the full force of the Atlantic, as had been the case off Tory Island. It was a slow, tedious process.

The proceedings of the mine-laying craft became so persistent and thorough, when once they had begun in June 1915, that it is impossible to deal with them in detail. With the regularity almost of a freighter, the UC-boats would load up with mines at Bruges, pass out through the Zeebrugge locks, cross the North Sea, and lay the mines off such positions as the Shipwash, Sunk, South Goodwin, Kentish Knock, Stanford Channel, Elbow Buoy, Le Havre, Boulogne, Black Deep, Edinburgh Lightship, Aldeburgh Napes, and so on. Having deposited their cargoes, they would go back to Bruges and come out with another lot. In this way not only were heavy losses caused to British and neutral shipping, but the demands on the trawler and paddler mine-sweepers rapidly increased. The neighbour-

hood of important lightships and headlands had to be swept regularly ; long traffic lanes up the coast had to be maintained in a swept condition ; and the casualty lists of the sweepers and crews began to mount up. The loss of life came with appalling suddenness. Dutch mail-steamers, Trinity House pilot-ships, British lightships, steamers of all sizes, including the P. & O. liner *Maloja*, were blown up and many lives sacrificed.

All sections of the Auxiliary Patrol, which were not employed in sweeping, were necessarily engaged in locating these mine-layers. Drifters laid their nets in likely areas, and occasionally the enemy would either be destroyed or he would founder on his own mines, as was the case with UC9 in October 1916. Mines are blind ; they have no respect for one particular ship more than another. On November 17th, 1915, the hospital ship *Anglia* foundered on mines laid off Dover by UC5. This had the effect of stopping for a while all cross-Channel traffic, and the enemy thus assisted his own armies. On the same day that the *Anglia* blew up, a Greek steamer and a Norwegian vessel hit mines off the Galloper Lightship.

The essential effect of all this intensive mine-laying by the enemy was that patrol-tractors had to be ready to turn over to mine-sweeping when required and thus " work double tides." Gradually the mining areas spread as far north as the Humber and as far west as the Needles. Then from April 1916 there appeared the first U-boat mine-layers, who could go farther afield and carry more mines than the Flanders boats. Mines were now laid off the Firth of Forth, off the Orkneys (causing the loss of H.M.S. HAMPSHIRE with Lord Kitchener on board). Thence onwards the campaign extended to almost every area of the British Isles where shipping was wont to voyage. The north of Scotland, west and south of Ireland, and the Irish Sea were affected ; mines were laid off the port of Liverpool ; the Isle of Man ; in the Bristol Channel ; off the various headlands and harbour entrances of the English Channel ; the overseas submarines were able to deposit their explosive cargoes even off certain ports in the Bay of Biscay as well as in the Mediterranean, whereas at one time the UC-boats based on Flanders had been limited to the south-eastern ports of the English coast. The latter had begun by carrying only a dozen mines,

but the U-boat mine-layers which made their appearance early in 1916 had space for as many as thirty-four. Eventually they were able to lay mines in districts so far apart as the White Sea in the north and the west coast of Africa in the south.

The Admiralty had good reason to commend the persistent work of the mine-sweepers during the first two years of the war; for in this period they succeeded in destroying 3,567 German mines. By the end of the year 1916 the number had been increased to 4,574, figures which indicate sufficiently the thoroughness of the mine-sweepers' operations; but nearly 400 vessels had been sunk or damaged in carrying out the work. Some idea of the enemy's persistency can be formed when it is stated that between the Sunk and Cross Sands Lightships—a regular traffic lane where ships were passing at almost every hour of the day—thirty-one German mines were destroyed. In the Harwich area the enemy was, of course, aiming, not merely at the merchant shipping, but at Commodore Tyrwhitt's light cruisers and destroyers. The Germans therefore plastered these shallow waters pretty thoroughly as soon as suitable submarine mine-layers were available, and during the year 1916 the sweepers in this area alone destroyed over 400 mines; U-boats during the same year laid exactly seventy-two mines in the White Sea, and all but thirty of them were located by trawlers and destroyed during the same season before the ice froze in. Operations had to cease on December 1st, some of the trawlers and colliers going to Romanoff, while the rest crossed the North Sea to Lerwick. The traffic in the White Sea was heavy at this stage, as the enemy had surmised, and the trawlers well deserved the extra week's leave which was awarded them on their return for their good service.

Before the end of the year, an alteration had been made in the administration of the mine-sweeping. Originally Admiral Charlton had been in charge of the mine-sweeping department at the Admiralty. He had been succeeded by another Admiral; but from December 18th, 1916, these operations were delegated to a Captain of Mine-sweeping under the new Anti-Submarine Division. The title "Captain of Mine-sweeping" was later on altered to "Superintendent of Mine-sweeping," and in October 1917 the mine-sweeping operations came under a "Director of

Mine-sweeping," who controlled all mine-sweeping in home waters, was responsible for the distribution of mine-sweeping vessels, and advised the naval staff at the Admiralty on the subject of mine-sweeping abroad, for during 1916 the enemy submarines had been laying mines off the Italian and French ports, especially off Genoa, Marseilles, Taranto, Gallipoli (Italy), Brindisi, Venice, Valona, Corfu, Bizerta and Oran. Similarly off Cretan ports, off Milo, in the Zea Channel, off Salonika, Mudros, Port Said, Alexandria, and Malta these unwelcome cargoes were deposited with disastrous results to merchant shipping. Paddlers and trawlers and M.L.s, as well as drifters, were being dispatched from England, but the enemy was also replenishing his forces by sending out more submarines from Germany.

At home serious losses of mine-sweeping craft were being sustained. Trawlers are comparatively deep-draught vessels, especially aft, and risks had to be accepted as inevitable. Paddlers were being employed more and more because of the shallowness of their hulls, and they were on the whole not unlucky. But this is not to say that they did not suffer; when the fatal moment came for them it arrived quickly, as in the case of the two paddlers *Totnes* and *Ludlow*. Four days after Christmas they were sweeping off the Shipwash Lightship when both were mined within a few minutes of each other. The former had her bows blown off and the latter lost her stern. The *Totnes* was towed into Harwich, but the *Ludlow* sank during the night.

The bravery of the mine-sweepers constitutes a fine record of the war. From the moment that the ship put to sea in the early morning before the other craft were allowed to move, she was really in action. When and where or at what depth below the surface mines would be found it was impossible to say. There was no preliminary bombardment to announce the enemy's oncoming; there were no scouting forces to foretell an engagement. The trawlers might sweep for a week and not find a mine, and then of a sudden, in an unusual place, they would come upon a little patch; some of the mines would be caught in the wire sweeps, but others, or perhaps a stray mine, would just be close enough to catch the trawler's heel, and up she would go, and after the column of black smoke had

disappeared to leeward, there would be no trawler ; only a few bits of wreckage would remain with two or three of the crew in life-saving belts swimming near them ; a stray corpse or two would be seen going silently down with the tide. To see such things happen, and to go out day after day, for months on end, doing the same risky work, perhaps being fired at by a submarine in the distance, required courage and grit. But it did not end there. At times more than this was required, and this little bit more meant a good deal to the winning of the war. In the first part of the campaign the British mines were not satisfactory, and a good deal could be learnt from the enemy. Orders were issued, therefore, that, if possible, a German mine was to be removed whole so that it might be examined by the British experts. The recovery of such a dangerous thing as a mine is a very different thing from merely destroying it, especially as it was known that about the only inefficient thing about a German mine was the safety device. Nevertheless the task had to be done, and the following incident illustrates the way the mine-sweeping personnel furnished knowledge to the Admiralty.

In the course of sweeping the Moray Firth in September 1916, a mine was caught in Cullen Bay and buoyed. The next procedure was to get it into shallow water. This was accomplished by employing rowing-boats, which passed a wire with a long loop of chain round the mine and thus swept it up to the surface. Then, with considerable risk and no little skill, the mine was cut from its moorings and, in spite of a heavy autumn swell, was towed into Burghead Bay and moored. After darkness had set in, the paddler *Glen Usk* kept her searchlight playing on the mine and warned off approaching vessels. On the following day the mine was safely towed towards the shore by the boats of the two paddlers, *St. Elvies* and *Glen Usk*, and beached. The whole operation of lifting the mine on to the shore was very dangerous, especially when it was discovered that the detonator was jammed, but both mine and sinker were recovered complete. This was a notable achievement, inasmuch as many attempts had previously been made to salve sinkers, but without success. The naval authorities, as a result of this successful and plucky operation, were able to carry out some highly satisfactory experiments.







**THE MINE PERIL IN HOME WATERS.**  
**MINES & CLEAR CHANNELS IN THE**  
**AUTUMN OF 1915.**

“ I beg respectfully,” wrote Commander Gervase W. H. Heaton, R.N., who was in charge of these paddlers, “ to bring to your notice the magnificent work of the individual boats’ crews, who when within feet of the mine carried out their work jokingly—and especially the names of Temporary Lieutenant William Highton, R.N.R., of the *St. Elvies*, and William Westborough, C.P.O., of the *St. Elvies*. This officer and petty officer never left the mine for a moment, and by their resource and endeavours were mainly responsible for the safe accomplishment of the undertaking.”

“ Much ingenuity, pluck, and good seamanship were shown,” wrote Admiral Jellicoe to the Admiralty, “ and all parts of the mine and sinker were recovered.” “ The general tone of those present,” reported Captain L. G. Preston, R.N., who was in charge of the Fleet Sweepers, “ struck me in the light of a picnic-party.” The Admiralty sent a letter of appreciation to these gallant mine-sweepers, who, had they been asked, would have stated that they preferred this sort of dangerous “ picnic ” every day of the war rather than the uneventful monotony which was the main characteristic of their routine, week after week.

## CHAPTER XII

### FISHING-CRAFT ON WAR SERVICE, 1915-16

IN an earlier chapter particulars were given of the development before the war of the Royal Naval Motor-Boat Reserve. By February 1915 188 of these craft had been pressed into the national service. Scotch motor fishing-boats were also included in the force. With it were associated 272 R.N.V.R. officers and about 450 motor mechanics ratings and skippers. They were employed at such different stations as Seapa Flow, Cromarty, Firth of Forth, Humber, Great Yarmouth, Harwich, Dover, Portsmouth, Plymouth, on the seaward end of the army's line in Flanders (based on Dunkirk), and eventually in Egypt, Malta, and Smyrna. Originally they were intended to examine the coasts and inlets, but it was realised in March 1915 that not in every case were they so employed. Being built originally for summer yachting, they were not seaworthy enough at sea, fast enough for offensive work, nor sufficiently stoutly built to carry armament even if such had been available. For the most part they were being employed during these early months for such duties as dispatch-carrying, harbour-policing, traffic control, boarding, and so on. These amateur sailors had created a most favourable impression and were obviously suited for better craft. In July of this year it was decided that the Royal Naval Motor-Boat Reserve, which had been administered by a separate committee at the Admiralty, should be amalgamated with the organisation known as the Yacht Patrol, which, in turn, presently changed its official name to the Auxiliary Patrol.

The need for more seaworthy, faster, and better-armed motor-craft began to be considered in the spring of 1915 during Lord Fisher's regime as First Sea Lord. The result was that on April 9th, 1915, a contract was signed for fifty motor-launches—to be built on the other side of the North

Atlantic. Three months later the number on order was increased to 550. The pattern boat was built at Bayonne, New Jersey, U.S.A., where all the initial work was carried out. The twin sets of engines were also made in the United States, but the assembling of the craft was done at Quebec and Montreal. The later M.L.s (after the first fifty had been begun) were slightly longer, being 80 feet long, and each boat was fitted with a pair of 220-h.p. motors, twin screws. The M.L.s were afterwards put in cradles and shipped to England, four at a time, on the decks of transports. It is a notable fact that the whole 550 M.L.s were built in 488 days. As these craft began to arrive, they found their crews awaiting them. By the end of August 1915 R.N.V.R. officers were being recalled from the R.N. motor-boats for courses of instruction at Portsmouth for service in the M.L.s.

On September 1st six of these M.L.s reached Portsmouth from the other side of the Atlantic. The engines were overhauled, and a fortnight later the trials of the 13-pounder guns mounted in them took place. Experiments were made with these M.L.s at sea soon after arrival, and it was ascertained that with careful handling they could keep the sea in fair weather, but that with a following sea great caution would be required. Their fine form forward and the flat transom stern aft caused them to bury their bows and broach to. However, the primary aim of the design was speed—to rush towards a submarine—and it is not easy to obtain in an 80-foot boat accommodation for officers and men, extreme mobility, good sea-keeping qualities, and the stoutness requisite for mounting a gun forward. Like all other ships that have ever been built, the M.L.s were a compromise. They were not ideal craft, but in the hands of trained yachtsmen, with crews of fishermen and others, they performed really excellent work during the war. They were able to sweep up mine-fields where deeper-draught craft dared not venture: they maintained a patrol all round the coast, as well as in the Mediterranean, in the Otranto Straits, in Egyptian waters, in the West Indies, and so on; they assisted in convoying merchant ships; when organised into hydrophone hunting flotillas, they harried the U-boats, and, as is known from enemy sources, were much feared by the German seamen. Apart from

contributing indirectly to the destruction of various submarines, the M.L.s on more than one occasion did definitely and directly send enemy submarines to their doom. On October 14th M.L.s 1, 2, and 3 were commissioned at Portsmouth. On the 21st M.L.4 left Portsmouth, reached London the following day, and was inspected off the Thames Embankment by representatives of the Admiralty. During that autumn and the early months of the next year, Portsmouth continued to fit out these craft, and gradually every base in the Auxiliary Patrol areas had its own M.L. flotilla. Some were shipped again aboard transports and sent out to the Suez Canal and Adriatic. Others proceeded on their own power, by way of the French canals, to the Mediterranean. In these various ways a new force was added to the Royal Navy in home as well as distant waters.

In no area were M.L.s more useful than in the Dover Patrol, especially in connection with the Belgian coast barrage and the Dover barrage. During the autumn of 1914 British and French mines had been laid in the southern part of the North Sea for the protection of the Dover Straits and English Channel against possible attack on the cross-Channel transports by means of surface vessels. At that time the British mines were not very satisfactory, and many of these so-called mine-fields had broken adrift owing to the weak character of the mooring wires. In January 1915 Lord Fisher advocated further mining of the Dover Straits, and on the 4th of the following month the laying of the first Dover barrage was begun. The scheme was that mines should stretch irregularly from north of Dunkirk across the Straits to a little east of Elbow Buoy, near Broadstairs. The operation was completed by February 16th. This barrage was well to the north-eastward of the Straits. Nominally it existed until the spring of 1918, but on sweeping over it the barrage was found to be non-existent, and it may be assumed now that, for the reason just mentioned, it existed only on paper except for a very short period. To the south-west of this barrage was the line of Dover drifters riding to their nets across the Straits. Although for a time these nets did actually foil the enemy submarines and deny to them the passage of the Straits, yet, by the autumn of 1915, the enemy had learned the trick of dodging these nets at night ; he



DRIFTERS HOISTING IN A TORPEDO.





succeeded, in fact, in finding gaps, of which he made use. It was all very well to take a chart and draw a line across the Straits and point to the fact that the straight line represented an obstruction of nets. In practice this did not exist. The tides in the Straits are strong, and the nets had to be towed across the tide; therefore, what with this natural disadvantage, and the fouling of nets on submerged wreckage which had existed for many years, in association with the difficulties caused by darkness and bad weather, it was not possible to regard this net barrage as a rigid, inflexible, impenetrable barrier.

The first really effective cross-Channel barrage was that which was laid between December 17th, 1916, and February 8th, 1917. This extended from the South Goodwins to the Snow and consisted of moored mine-nets and deep mines. The mine-nets, instead of being towed by the drifters, were secured to buoys and were thus securely sustained. These buoys were numbered 0A, 1A, 2A, and so on, smaller buoys being laid in between them. On the southern side were placed a line of light buoys every three miles, the object being to prevent the patrols getting foul of this barrage. Secret gaps were left to permit craft to go across to the Belgian coast in safety, and these were frequently changed so as to deceive the enemy. The laying and maintaining of this net barrage was the work of the Dover drifters. It was kept patrolled by about twenty-four drifters, by the Dover M.L.s, and by other craft. Thirty more drifters were used for laying the nets. Thus, theoretically, by the use of lines of mines, lines of nets, and patrol-vessels the Dover Straits were rendered impassable to enemy craft.

In actual experience, it should be added, this Dover barrage was not a complete success. Owing to bad weather and the strong tides, the nets could never be maintained in an efficient condition. Moreover, the German submarines were able, by picking their way at night, to cross the nets, usually by drifting over them at high water. Secondly, the mines unfortunately dragged their moorings and fouled the nets, and by the spring of 1917 became a serious danger to our vessels working about the nets. When, eventually, in the early part of 1918, it was established beyond all manner of doubt that this cross-Channel barrage was not stopping the submarines,

it was abandoned. The buoys and nets—or as many as still existed—were left in position and not replaced when they broke adrift. This decision naturally released a large number of small craft for other work. “There is no doubt,” Admiral Bacon has stated in *The Dover Patrol 1915-17*, that “this barrage never stopped submarines passing . . . it was an undoubted deterrent to destroyers.” It may be added that it was not until we became possessed of efficient mines and gear that it was possible to make the straits a terror to German submarines. When improved mines were available, the laying of the Folkestone-Grisnez deep mine-field was undertaken—in the winter of 1917-18. It had not been quite completed by the time the Armistice arrived, but it may be said at once that, owing to this very thorough barrage and the restless activity of the vigilant destroyers and small craft of the Auxiliary Patrol, the passage of the Dover Straits by enemy submarines was made as nearly as possible a superhuman task.

On the other side of the Channel, vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol were assisting the French Navy and protecting from submarines transports which were sustaining the Allied armies. The approaches to Le Havre, for very obvious reasons, were a favourite region for German submarines. It was their practice to lie about in this area, lay mines, and attack incoming steamers carrying stores for the Western Front. A number of British drifters had therefore been based on this harbour. Just before 5 o'clock on the morning of April 5th, 1916, Lieutenant J. McLoughlin, R.N.R., who was in charge of half a dozen British net drifters at Havre, was informed by the French authorities that a submarine had been sighted in the Roads near the Whistling Buoy. He immediately ordered the *Endurance*, *Welcome Star*, *Stately*, *Comrades*, *Pleiades*, and *Pleasance*, to proceed to sea as soon as the tide served. At 7.40 a.m. they left port and at 10.15 a.m. the *Pleiades* shot her net two miles west of the Whistling Buoy, the other drifters following suit.

Just as the net drifter *Endurance* was shooting her nets, there were indications that a submarine had fouled the nets. She therefore sent up a rocket distress signal to that effect. Immediately before this incident occurred, the *Comrades* had felt a shock underneath her hull, accompanied by a bumping on the ship's bottom. It was

evident that a submarine was in trouble, for the next incident was the periscope of a submarine striking the rudder of the *Endurance*, so heavily as to put the rudder out of action. Still bungling on her way, the submarine ran foul of so much of the *Endurance's* net as had been shot. Like a skilful angler playing a fish at the end of his line, the skipper of the *Endurance* now paid out the rest of his nets as rapidly as the submarine was taking them. The result was that the German craft became completely enveloped in the nets, heading off in a north-easterly direction. The *Endurance* was compelled to let go the last of her nets, as, owing to her damaged rudder, she was unable to manœuvre.

On hearing the rocket distress signal fired, the rest of the drifters had closed on the *Endurance* so as to encircle the submarine. The enemy was now caught in a trap and the prisoner of these fishermen. Not all his wiles could avail him, for he had been definitely outmanœuvred. All that remained was to give the death-blow. The French torpedo-boat *LE TROMBE* was soon on the scene and quickly got into position close to the *Endurance*. Having sighted the indicator buoy of the net marking the submarine's apparent position, the *LE TROMBE* dropped three bombs, which had the desired effect. The enemy decided to come to the surface and surrender. Some of the German crew jumped overboard, but they were picked up by the *Welcome Star* and the *LE TROMBE*. The former saved five Germans by means of a line and buoy, and then, launching her boat, took three German officers from the submarine and put them on board the torpedo-boat. Seven more Germans were saved by the drifter *Stately*. This saving of life of a defeated enemy was, of course, only in accordance with the humane traditions of the brotherhood of the sea, and the action of the Allies in this respect contrasted with the callousness of certain commanders of German submarines in allowing non-combatant passengers as well as crews of merchant ships to perish.

But, to conclude this inspiring story, after the German prisoners had been accounted for, the *Stately* and *Welcome Star* remained with the submarine until French trawlers arrived to take the German prize in tow, assisted by the *Comrades*. The *Endurance*, owing to her damaged rudder, had to be towed in by the *Pleasance*. On the way

the submarine sank, but in shoal water, so that that misfortune was of little account. It had been a great day for the drifters, and both the British and the French naval authorities took favourable notice of the exploit. The former highly commended "the excellent work done by the drifters" on this occasion, and referred to the destruction of the submarine as having been due entirely to the promptitude of Lieutenant M'Loughlin and the skill of Skipper T. C. Wylie, who had so handled the *Endurance's* nets that the submarine could not tear her way through. The Admiralty decorated both these officers with the D.S.C., whilst two ratings received the D.S.M. In addition, the Admiralty awarded the sum of £1,000 to be divided between the six drifters, to which the French Government contributed a further sum of 8,000 francs. These drifters had arrived on the station but a day or two previously, and were a distinct asset at a most important point along the lines of communications. The submarine sunk was UB26. She had left the Ems in the afternoon of March 19th, kept two or three miles off the Dutch coast, and reached Zeebrugge on the morning of March 21st. At the end of the month, being based on Flanders, she had set out from Zeebrugge and begun operating in the English Channel. In her were found German charts which showed among other things that the enemy knew the position of the net barrage across Dover Straits—from the South Goodwins to the Snow. The submarine had crossed this barrage about midway between the South Goodwins and the Outer Ruytingen.

It must not, however, be assumed that the vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol were active or efficient only in those areas where they succeeded in fighting and sinking the enemy. "Happy," it might have been declared, "was the patrol area that had no history." For, if the patrols were absolutely and entirely efficient, they should at all times have succeeded in keeping the submarine under water; no ships would have been sunk and none attacked. There were, however, for certain geographical or strategical reasons, certain areas which were bound to come into prominence. The Dover Straits have been specially mentioned, because that was the eastern entrance to the highway leading from Germany to the Atlantic. Another way was across the North Sea and round the north of



ARMED TRAWLERS IN THE NORTH SEA.



Scotland, and for that reason the north-east coast was also a busy sphere. In trying to forestall an enemy's movements and intentions, it has been regarded as a good rule "to put yourself in his place." There was reason, for example, on examining the north-east coast situation, to expect that submarines would operate on or near the Tyne-to-Bergen trade route. That was a reasonable supposition, because the enemy knew well how important in the prosecution of the war this particular trade route was. In the month of May 1916 Rear-Admiral Simpson, the Senior Naval Officer at Peterhead, was directing his trawlers on patrol to pay especial attention to that area. Thus it occurred that on May 27th, when in lat.  $57^{\circ} 10' N.$ , long.  $1^{\circ} 20' E.$ , half an hour after noon, the trawler *Searanger* (Lieutenant H. J. Bray, R.N.R.) was patrolling when the commanding officer sighted a sail and smoke to the northward, proceeding eastward. Lieutenant Bray ordered full speed ahead and, on proceeding to investigate, found that the sail and smoke had revealed the presence of a submarine. This stratagem had been tried before, and under certain atmospheric conditions it was successful if the patrols were not particularly watchful and inquisitive. By 12.45 p.m. events had happened so quickly that the *Searanger* and two accompanying trawlers, the *Oku* and *Rodino*, had opened fire on the submarine at a range of 4,000 yards. The sea being smooth, it was not long before the exact distance was found and one shot was seen to strike the submarine aft. She was a big craft, with a large conning-tower and wireless installation.

The submarine presumed that these trawlers belonged to the group of Hull fishing-fleet which had scattered earlier in the day on her approach. In accordance with Admiral Simpson's orders, the patrol unit was cruising in no formation, but was dispersed as if fishing. The enemy, taken by surprise by the gunfire, at once lowered sail and, having one gun forward and one aft, returned the trawlers' fire. The submarine began by concentrating the shells from both guns alternately on a trawler, but all the time the trawlers were closing in upon their prey. In a little while the enemy's after gun had apparently become damaged, for fire ceased and reopened only with the forward gun, the shots falling short. It was observed on board both the *Searanger* and *Rodino* that the periscope

had been partially shot away. It was soon evident that the enemy was already tired of the engagement, for he ceased fire altogether, and made an effort to escape by submerging.

By this time the unit of trawlers had more than half encircled the submarine and shell after shell was being placed with admirable accuracy. The submarine at length rose well out of the water with a heavy list to port, like a wounded thing, and an endeavour was made to finish her off. Both the *Oku* and *Searanger* did their best to ram her, but she was making an erratic course towards the centre of the unit, apparently trying to get alongside the trawler *Kimberley*, the fourth vessel of the group. As the submarine came within eight feet of the latter, it was impossible to ram, but as she passed the *Kimberley* fired three shots into her. By this time the submarine was heeling over to port and sinking stern first. Finally, after a shot from the *Kimberley*, she sank out of sight, leaving a large quantity of oil on the surface.

It was now 1.30 p.m., and the unit continued to cruise about in the vicinity until 3 p.m., when the quantity of oil on the surface had considerably increased. In this way the career was ended of U74; having been seriously damaged by the first three trawlers, she was given the *coup de grâce* by the *Kimberley*. It was an almost ideal engagement, the fighting trawlers utilising their guns in association with the courage and plain common-sense tactics of the crews against the German U-boat, with her superior gun-power and her torpedoes. It was well, indeed, that U74 had been destroyed, for this was the craft which had but a few weeks before laid a dangerous mine-field in the Firth of Forth, and would doubtless have continued her mining warfare at a later date.

This engagement occurred four days before the Battle of Jutland, and it may be asked: Were the vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol able, on that historic day, to render any service? Obviously such craft could have no part in a fleet action, nor could they operate so far from their base as the coast of Jutland. The duty of the vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol were carried out within easy distance of the British coast, and it was just when the Grand Fleet would be making the land on its return from battle, probably with some ships badly wounded, that the smaller



craft might be useful in repelling the attacks of submarines lying in wait. Thus, on June 1st, three armed trawlers from Granton were dispatched on the information that three torpedoes had been fired at an incoming ship. Later in the same day submarines were reported off May Island, and the yacht *Mingary* sighted a submarine that was trying to intercept H.M.S. *WARSPITE* returning with her scars received in the Jutland battle. The *Mingary* and her unit at once gave chase to the submarine, but it submerged and escaped. On the night of May 31st, in consequence of the news which he had received, Admiral Startin dispatched from Granton every available armed yacht, armed trawler, and mine-sweeping trawler to positions which these craft were ordered to occupy in the event of a fleet action. He sent also fourteen of his drifters up the Forth to Rosyth with cots ready to land the wounded from the men-of-war as soon as they should arrive. So carefully, indeed, had everything been foreseen that during the previous weeks Admiral Startin had instituted special classes at Granton for the instruction of the drifter men in the transport of wounded and in general first aid. Thus a fortnight before the Battle of Jutland forty-four skippers and second hands had qualified for certificates.

The loss of U74 mentioned on the opposite page was important not merely because she was a submarine, but because she was probably the first to operate according to a new plan. At the beginning of the war, as has been stated, enemy mine-laying was done by surface ships. Then came the UC-boats which, based on Flanders, laid their mines off the south-east coast of England. As the commanders of these craft became more daring and efficient, they laid the mines as far north as Flamborough and as far west as Land's End. Such was their success that a bigger type of mine-layer was evolved, which could go farther distances. These were the U-mine-layers and belonged, not to the Flanders Flotilla, but to the High Sea Fleet. From about April 1916 until the end of the war, these U-mine-layers, based on the Elbe, laid their mines off various parts of the British Isles, including even the west of Ireland, but not in the Flamborough-south-east coast-Land's End area, which was reserved for the UC-boats from Flanders. It is not possible to state which was the first mine-field that can be attributed to these U-boats, nor on what date

it was laid. But it is certain, however, that the Firth of Forth mine-field was the first and that it was laid on or about April 18th, 1916, by U74. Other U-boat mine-fields were laid soon afterwards, as for example that of the Brough of Birsay causing the loss of H.M.S. HAMPSHIRE and the death of Lord Kitchener; the Moray Firth, Southern Channel, Tyne, Skerryvore, South of Ireland, Bristol Channel, Clyde approaches, Isle of Man, and off the north-east English ports. The effect of this increased mining activity was to scatter the mine-sweeping forces by causing a unit of mine-sweepers to be located at every port. Seeing that the number of Auxiliary Patrol ships and men was limited, and the more of them were employed in mine-sweeping the fewer could be employed in the purely offensive duty of harrying submarines, this was sound strategy on the part of the enemy. What happened was that a large part of the available force was diverted to defensive duties—into sweeping clear passages for merchant ships; whereas the U-boat, having once deposited her cargo of mines, could begin to torpedo shipping at will and without so much interference by armed trawlers and M.L.s.

How consistently and persistently this policy was carried out in the summer of 1916 is revealed by the bare record of the attacks on fishing-trawlers. During the night of July 5th-6th a German submarine sank no fewer than seven Scotch drifters off the Tyne. During the preceding week a large fleet of Scotch drifters had been working off this coast, following the herrings. On this night the fleet was very much spread when first attacked, and the Senior Naval Officer at the Tyne had allotted every available vessel of the newly armed drifters as well as some armed trawlers of the Auxiliary Patrol to go to sea with the fishermen and bring them home in safety. These methods appeared to be successful in stopping raids on fishing-fleets, but some trawlers and drifters afterwards fell victims to the enemy. Two torpedo-boats also operated in the fishing area, and visited the fleets every morning and evening. Another fishing-vessel was sunk on July 10th; three days later four more were sunk off Scarborough and Whitby; next day five more off the Tyne; three more on July 27th; six on the day following; and three more on the last day of July. Thus in one month a total of

twenty-five fishing-craft were sunk off the Tyne alone. It was reported that the submarines concerned were large, possessing a couple of wireless masts and a gun. The situation was so serious that at the beginning of August the area had to be patrolled by H.M.S. *ACTIVE* or *LIGHT-FOOT*, with six destroyers of the Fourth Flotilla. In spite of the *ACTIVE* and destroyers, the enemy began by setting fire to a steamer off Coquet Island. On August 6th twelve armed trawlers and twenty-four drifters with mine-nets reached the Tyne. Until their arrival the work of escorting shipping had been so heavy that practically no patrolling could be done by trawlers; whatever armed trawlers were available were sent to protect the drifter fishing-fleets. These newly arrived drifters were at once employed as a disguised fishing-fleet and sent to a position fifteen miles east-north-east of the Tyne, convoyed by armed trawlers. This was about the position where the fishing-drifters had been sunk at the end of July. The attacks now ceased, but began again on September 23rd.

A dead-set was clearly being made on all trawlers and drifters, whether of the fishing-fleets or of the Auxiliary Patrol. Perhaps this development was due to the annoyance of the enemy at the splendid way in which fishermen, enrolled in His Majesty's service, were helping the Navy and fighting the submarine as well as the mine; perhaps it was mere "frightfulness," fed by a desire to intimidate men who had been using the sea all their lives, from leaving port again. In any case, it had no permanent effect. On July 7th, farther up the North Sea, a unit of armed trawlers from Peterhead, consisting of the *Martin*, *Glamis Castle*, *Ibis*, *Editor*, *Albatross*, and *Consort*, were at 7.15 a.m. in lat.  $58^{\circ} 20' N.$ , long.  $0^{\circ} 48' E.$ , when a submarine was sighted to the north-west. Twenty-five minutes later a second submarine was sighted to the north-east. The first was now chased by the *Consort* and *Glamis Castle*; whilst the *Martin*, *Albatross*, and *Editor* pursued the second, opening fire on her and causing her to submerge. At 11.30 a.m. the *Consort* and *Glamis Castle* returned from their chase, having lost sight of their quarry after twenty miles. But at 7 p.m. the unit again sighted a submarine about six miles south of the position where the enemy had been fired on during the morning. At 8 o'clock the *Albatross*, which was ahead, opened fire. The submarine returned

the fire, closed the *Albatross*, and subjected her to a heavy bombardment until the *Martin* came up and started firing. This caused the submarine to direct her fire on the *Martin*. She used both guns, the projectiles falling close around both these trawlers. The seventeenth round from the *Albatross* appeared to strike the enemy craft forward. The submarine then made a black smoke-screen, turned end on, and still firing from the after gun, made off quickly to the eastward and was lost sight of about 9.40 p.m. Next day, not far from that locality, a submarine, with one gun, was sighted with her wireless masts up. This was at 2.30 a.m., but when the unit closed her she made off to the eastward and, when shells from the *Martin*, *Consort*, and *Editor* began to fall around her, she submerged.

Four days later another Peterhead unit, consisting of the armed trawlers *Onward*, *Nellie Nutten*, and *Era*, fought a most gallant fight, a fight against overwhelming strength which ended disastrously. It was, however, a fishermen's battle that will certainly be long remembered. These three trawlers were but poorly armed; the *Onward* had a 12-pounder gun, the other two had one 3-pounder gun apiece. Events suggested that the enemy had been making a concentration in order to wipe out these Peterhead trawlers which had shown such complete disrespect for the superior armed submarines, causing them to seek flight when encountered separately. For on July 11th, at a quarter-past five in the afternoon, when about 120 miles east-south-east of Girdleness, the *Onward* (Lieutenant Claude Asquith, R.N.R.), leader of the unit, hoisted her signal that a submarine was in sight. Thereupon the *Nellie Nutten* (Skipper C. Angus) bore down towards his leader. The *Onward* had already opened fire, and now the *Nellie Nutten* began, but after firing a considerable time, her little 3-pounder being utterly outranged by the enemy, she saw a second submarine approaching from the north-east and a third coming up from the south-east. The *Onward* then altered course to port and the *Nellie Nutten* to starboard.

The three submarines, which were now keeping to port and starboard of the unit, maintained a fire at long range. After proceeding in a west-south-westerly direction for an hour, the *Nellie Nutten* received a shot through her stern

and the next shot disabled her altogether. In the distance the *Era* was seen to be on fire with a couple of submarines alongside her. Owing to the long range, all three trawlers had been firing at the enemy without effect, and the action was rapidly coming to its inevitable conclusion. Finding herself in a helpless condition, the *Nellie Nutten* steered towards a Dutch lugger, and just as the maimed trawler sank, all the crew jumped overboard and were picked up by the Dutchman. When last seen the *Onward* was obviously out of control and in flames. The *Era*, too, had been sunk, but all three had made an heroic fight. The Dutch lugger (the *Doggerbank* of Scheveningen) brought the *Nellie Nutten* into Aberdeen. The Dutch skipper stated that four German submarines, painted grey, and each armed with two guns, had been engaged; and that they opened fire on the trawlers at a distance of three miles. Not even this exhibition on the part of the enemy kept the Peterhead patrols from performing their duty, though they thought that their craft should have been better armed. Admiral Jellicoe suggested that this should be remedied and, as a result, fifty-seven 12-pounder guns were forthwith supplied to East Coast trawlers.

Of the *Nellie Nutten's* crew eleven were saved; the chief engineer was killed, and one trimmer seriously wounded. One of the "hands" was also wounded. The whole of the *Onward's* crew, numbering sixteen, were taken prisoners, including Lieutenant Asquith, who was awarded the D.S.C. for his gallantry during the action. It was evident that in chasing the first submarine he was led into the vicinity of the other three and completely outmatched. Skipper Angus was commended for the skilful and seamanlike manner in which he had manœuvred his ship when disabled, thus saving practically all his ship's company. The whole of the *Era's* crew were taken prisoners. In peace-time, both she and the *Onward* belonged to Hull; the *Nellie Nutten* was a Grimsby trawler before the war. It is now possible to state that the four submarines were U46, U49, U52, and U69. Of these four U69 was sunk just a year later—on July 12th, 1917—by H.M.S. PATRIOT; U49 was sunk by the steamship *British Transport* on September 11th, 1917; and the other two surrendered at Harwich in November 1918.

At the time when the enemy was sinking the Scotch

drifters off the Tyne, another submarine—from Flanders—was operating off Lowestoft. This was UC10. A little before midnight on July 6th a small motor-boat named the *Salmon*, under the command of Sub-Lieutenant E. T. West, R.N.V.R., was on patrol off Lowestoft. The *Salmon* was not a M.L., but a day-boat without a cabin. She was 40 feet long with 8-foot beam, with a cockpit aft and a certain amount of space forward of the engine-room where a couple of men could turn in. She had, however, a very powerful Stirling motor, developing 135 h.p., which gave her a speed of 20 knots. The *Salmon* was one of six boats which had been presented to the Admiralty by Mr. Cochrane, an American yachtsman, who had formerly owned the celebrated schooner *Westward*. The *Salmon* was a comparatively new boat, having been built in 1915. To many it might have seemed that such a frail boat could scarcely expect to be of much use in a naval war. However, there were many things which had to be unlearned during those fateful years, and this was another instance. At this period the *Salmon* was on the lookout for a submarine, which was suspected of being near the "War Channel." For about an hour she kept hearing buzzing sounds at intervals on her hydrophones. At 1.30 a.m. (July 7th) the buzzing recommenced. It was apparently much nearer and was rapidly approaching, the sound resembling that of a dynamo running. Within a few minutes it seemed to be right under the boat, so the *Salmon* put her engines full speed ahead and dropped a depth charge, which exploded. Almost immediately a much more violent explosion followed, throwing up a column of water 50 feet high. A large number of bubbles came to the surface together with wreckage, consisting of pieces of wood painted white and a grating. A strong smell of gas was also noticed. What had happened was that the mine-laying UC10 had been bombed and her own mines had then exploded. She and her crew were thus prevented from doing further damage to merchant shipping.

Determined to deal British fishing-craft a heavy blow before the autumn, Germany made a heavy submarine raid on the fleets on September 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 1916. On September 23rd there was an airship raid on the East Coast and London involving serious casualties, and on the morning of that day, about 10.30, began the East Coast

fishing-raid which resulted in the destruction of thirty craft, a disaster involving a financial loss, to speak of no other, of £100,000. This raid resolved itself into two periods. The first was from 10.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. of September 23rd, during which fishing-vessels were sunk in an area from thirty to sixty-five miles south-east of the Humber. There followed an interval during the night, which was apparently occupied by the submarine steering northwards up the Yorkshire coast, but a good way off the land. The second period began on September 24th at 8 a.m. and closed at 11 a.m. on the following day. At 8.30 p.m. on the former day the enemy craft captured the steam fishing-trawler *Fisher Prince*, belonging to Scarborough, the capture taking place about twenty miles to the north-east of that port. A German lieutenant and a prize crew of eight men then boarded her, and the two cruised in company. A number of other fishing-craft were captured, including the Scarborough steam fishing-trawler *Otter*, the crew being put aboard the *Fisher Prince*. The submarine continued to sink other craft until 9.50 a.m., when the Norwegian s.s. *Tromp* came in sight and was stopped. All the fishing crews were put aboard the Norwegian vessel, and the *Fisher Prince* was sunk, together with the trawler *Seal*.

In a period of forty-eight hours the raid had taken place over an area between sixty-five miles S.E. by E. of the Humber and thirty-three miles E. by S. of Hartlepool. It is true that on the night of September 24th, whilst escorting a drifter fleet, the trawler *Rigoletto* heard heavy firing to the eastward, but she rightly decided that her first duty was to stand by her own craft and she refused to be enticed away. It was, indeed, fortunate for the enemy that no destroyers or patrol-craft had been met with, but the misty weather, so typical of the month of September, had assisted him greatly. The whole situation from the British point of view was most difficult. So many patrol-vessels were required now for protecting fishing-fleets, for patrolling on the lookout for lurking submarines, for convoying merchant ships, for sweeping up mines, and for various special services, that it was quite impossible to prevent these raids occurring now and again. To be strong at every point was not practicable, any more than the Grand Fleet could prevent the coast from being

bombarded by German battle-cruisers occasionally. The most that could be done was not to allow the enemy, by his exasperating pin-pricks, to upset the general strategic scheme. Men and ships were being overworked, there was another long, trying winter just beginning, the conditions on the various fronts were not too favourable, but satisfaction was to be extracted from the knowledge that we were grappling with the submarine menace. Enemy craft were being sunk now by all sorts of Auxiliary Patrol vessels, and the depth charges and hydrophones were revealing their usefulness. At the Admiralty fresh schemes were being adopted for intensifying the war against submarines. Fishermen and yachtsmen and men of the Mercantile Marine were showing that they could be depended upon in all emergencies to exhibit undaunted spirit. Fishermen, too old to fight, whose sons and brothers and sons-in-law were either serving afloat or in the trenches, refused to be frightened off the sea even when their ships were taken from them. With this fine British courage animating all ranks and ratings there was ground for confidence.



## CHAPTER XIII

### RAIDS ON DOVER STRAITS AND OTHER INCIDENTS

SOME details have been given of the evolution of the Dover barrage, with its mines, its mine-nets, and its system of buoys. It was patrolled by drifters, and each Drifter Division was commanded by a Lieutenant R.N.R. Owing to the shortage of guns at the period, most of these drifters were unarmed, and none had wireless telegraphy, but they were supported by armed yachts and trawlers. Towards the end of October 1916 a German flotilla of destroyers reached Zeebrugge to reinforce the Flanders flotillas. On the night of the 26th-27th these destroyers made a raid on the Dover Straits, which had a serious effect on the drifters. Between Buoys 0A and 20A were disposed the eight, tenth, sixteenth, and twelfth divisions of Dover drifters, a total of twenty-three craft. They were supported by the trawler *H. E. Stroud*, armed with a 3-pounder and fitted with wireless; by the armed yacht *Ombra*, armed with a couple of 3-pounders; and by the M.L. 103 and M.L. 252, each of which had a 13-pounder. Of the twenty-three drifters five alone were armed, each with a 3-pounder. The barrage was, therefore, held entirely by Auxiliary Patrol vessels, the destroyer forces being required to defend the Downs and to protect Dunkirk, an essential reserve force remaining in Dover Harbour for contingencies.

The night of October 26th-27th was very dark, and it was just half an hour before high water in Dover Straits when suddenly the Tenth Drifter Division, at ten minutes past ten, sighted destroyers coming up astern, steering about west-north-west and parallel with the barrage. The first four destroyers passed close to the leader of the Drifter Division. The drifters made the challenge and fired a couple of rifle shots at them, but the four destroyers passed on without reply. But immediately astern came more

German destroyers, which opened fire on the Tenth Drifter Division, hitting all the drifters except one, which made off to the north-west. The drifters *Spotless Prince*, *Datum*, and *Gleaner of the Sea* were sunk, and the *Waveney* set on fire. Later on the *Waveney*, shattered by shell-fire and a mere derelict, was towed into the Downs, but owing to bad weather coming on could not be salvaged.

At about 11.10 p.m. the next attack occurred. This was directed against the Eighth Drifter Division, which was off the west end of the barrage. Of these six, the *Roburn* was sunk and the *Pleasants* damaged; the rest escaped towards the Goodwins, their leader firing several rockets to give the alarm. Meanwhile the armed yacht *Ombra* sent wireless signals into Dover and proceeded to get into touch with the Sixteenth Drifter Division, which she ordered into Dover. But shortly afterwards—about 11.15 p.m.—this division ran into the enemy, with the result that the two drifters *Ajax* and *Launch Out* were sunk, and the *E.B.C.* damaged. The Fifteenth Division was not attacked. The transport *Queen* happened to be on her way at this time from Boulogne, and three of the German destroyers came up on her starboard and another three on her port side, made her stop, boarded her, destroyed her wireless, and caused her to be abandoned, eventually shelling her so that she sank.

The entire German force had consisted probably of eleven destroyers, which when near the north-east end of the barrage had separated into two divisions. Both divisions appear to have found the east end of the net barrage, which at this date extended no farther east than the Ruytingen Shoal. One division of five destroyers then proceeded south-west towards Grisnez, the other going towards Dover. The first division boarded the *Queen*, and the second attacked the Tenth and Eighth Drifter Divisions, then turned east and met the Sixteenth Division and went off to the north-east. The *Ombra's* signal at 10.30 p.m. caused Admiral Bacon to send out six of the TRIBAL class of destroyers from Dover. Of these six, the NUBIAN fell in with five German destroyers who at short range shelled the NUBIAN's port side. In vain the NUBIAN attempted to ram the last ship of the enemy's line, but was torpedoed and caught on fire. Another of the Dover destroyers, the AMAZON, was struck in the



RELEASING A DEPTH-CHARGE FROM A DRIFTER.



boiler-room by a shell, and a third, the MOHAWK, was hit so that her helm jambed.

As for the trawler *H. E. Stroud*, she had been ordered by wireless to send into Dover all drifters and M.L.s, and was proceeding at full speed to carry out these orders when she met four German destroyers, each enemy craft giving the trawler one round in passing. The *H. E. Stroud's* commanding officer, Lieutenant J. R. McClory, R.N.R., was killed, as well as the helmsman, two of the crew were wounded and the bridge wrecked. Six drifters had been sunk, three severely damaged, fifty-five officers and men killed or missing, and five wounded. Such was the toll of the enemy's night raid! Of these fifty-five seamen, ten were subsequently found to have been taken prisoners. It was a heavy blow; nevertheless the sudden fierce onslaught, devastating as it had been, in no way disheartened the fishermen crews of the Dover drifters. The most formidable weapon which most of these ships possessed was a rifle with a few rounds of ammunition, but in spite of this disability for a contest against modern destroyers the men were undaunted. A report got about in Dover that in future the drifters would not care about watching their nets at night. Thereupon the drifter skippers, Admiral Bacon has recorded, went in a body to the Captain of the Dover Patrol and stated that, so far from not liking to do night patrolling, they were ready, should the Admiral wish it, to lay their nets and watch them off Zeebrugge.

"I have already had occasion," wrote the Admiral to the Admiralty a few days after this raid, "to call Their Lordships' attention to the steady courage and gallantry with which the men of our little auxiliaries constantly face dangerous positions and difficult situations. The conduct on Thursday night was again a brilliant example."

About a month later, on the night of November 23rd, the enemy, doubtless pleased by his success against the drifters, essayed another raid on the Straits. It was about an hour after high water, there was a south-westerly breeze with mist and slight rain when, at 10.40 p.m., six German destroyers appeared at the northern approach to the Downs, where they were sighted by the armed

drifters, who were based on Ramsgate. These craft, with a 6-pounder each, performed the duty of guarding the area from the North Foreland to the North Goodwin Lightship. A division of Dover destroyers was also anchored in the Downs ready for an emergency. The enemy appear to have come on a south-easterly course from a little distance off Broadstairs to between the north-eastern edge of the Downs and North Goodwin Lightship. They were sighted at 10.50 p.m., when a mile north-east of the Broadstairs Knoll buoy, by the drifter *Acceptable* (Sub-Lieutenant W. F. Fitzgerald, R.N.R.). The enemy passed under the *Acceptable's* stern only a hundred and fifty yards away, and the last destroyer fired. So the *Acceptable* went full speed ahead to the north-west to get clear, but her starboard sidelight and stern light were blown away by the enemy's ten rounds, which smashed the dinghy, damaged the mast, the gallery and engine-room casing, though fortunately there were no casualties. The drifter *Buckler* was also fired on. The *Acceptable* sent in a message by her wireless, but, the alarm having been raised by the drifters and a warning rocket fired, the Germans realised that their plan had miscarried and that it would be useless for them to try and break through the Straits that night. They therefore decided to retire before the Downs destroyers could arrive on the spot. Thus the raid was futile, though the enemy claimed to have bombarded Ramsgate. It may be added that no shots fell on shore.

Thus the work of the Auxiliary Patrol went on through another winter. More and still more trawlers were required, and the demand was never completely met. New trawlers were being requisitioned as quickly as they were built, but what with the sinking from mines, submarines, and the ordinary perils of the sea, there was little or no surplus after losses had been made good. In December 1916 began the system of protected sailings for the Scandinavian ships, whose cargoes were so essential at this critical period. These vessels would have refused to cross the North Sea but for protection, and this had to be afforded by vessels of the Shetlands Auxiliary Patrol Area. Owing to the demands on trawlers for mine-sweeping and for patrolling the Fair Island passage (a regular highway for U-boats) and for various other reasons, there remained

few trawlers available for a regular escorting system. The result was that the dispositions of the vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol in both the Shetlands and Orkneys areas had to be reorganised in February 1917 so that trawlers and whalers might be available to escort neutral traffic for Scandinavia to three selected rendezvous midway between the Shetlands and Norway. The German response to this arrangement was to concentrate their submarines off the entrances to Norwegian ports. Finally, in April 1917, an escort of destroyers had to be provided right up to Norwegian territorial waters so as further to ensure the safety of merchant shipping.

By December 1916 the peril arising from the destruction brought about by the U-boats had attained such magnitude that the Admiralty were driven to creating a special department called the Anti-submarine Division to co-ordinate existing measures and devise new ones for combating the enemy's campaign. At the head of this section of the naval staff was placed Admiral A. L. Duff. Among other things this organisation sought to increase the supplies of depth-charges, develop the hydrophone, arm defensively the whole Mercantile Marine, and provide ships with trained guns' crews; to extend the supply and use of smoke-screen apparatus; to concentrate the patrols on the traffic routes and reorganise the work of the Auxiliary Patrol throughout all the areas on one system; and later to institute the convoy system. Admiral Duff recognised that the vessels of the Auxiliary Patrol had so well protected merchant shipping on coastwise passage and approaching bases that the U-boat had now found it more profitable to operate outside the normal patrol limits. In the northern part of the North Sea, for instance, enemy submarines no longer approached close to the coast, except for mine-laying and to waylay crippled ships returning to their bases after a Fleet action. Trade in the English Channel was confined to a route passing close to the coast, guarded by these patrol-vessels, and the crossing of the English Channel was limited to the hours of darkness. From Queenstown Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly reported that "an immense quantity of traffic to and from the English Channel, Bristol Channel, and Irish Sea is now passing along the south coast of Ireland."

Everywhere round the coasts the trawlers and yachts,

the drifters and M.L.s, the paddlers and other craft were hard at it patrolling, sweeping, convoying, salving, and doing a multitude of jobs throughout the third winter of the war. Whilst the small craft and their crews were doing all that could be done, scientific minds on shore were seeking to devise or improve anti-submarine methods. This meant a series of experiments, which in turn meant months of delay before the Auxiliary Patrol could avail themselves of such aids. While in the Mediterranean and Adriatic the patrols were toiling with their peculiar phase of the submarine problem, each area of the British Isles was using its scant forces as best it could. Irish waters, by reason of the approaches to our western ports being so tempting a bait, were being patrolled by sloops and trawlers, drifters, an armed yacht or two, flotillas of M.L.s, and decoy-ships. The English Channel, in view of its contiguity to France, presented special difficulties. From Le Havre worked six armed trawlers, four mine-sweeping trawlers, and twenty-six net drifters. The last named were eventually based on Trouville and rode to their nets on the flank of the transport channel off the entrance to Le Havre. In the North Sea the routine was adapted to the special needs. Grimsby mine-sweepers, for example, were always at sea sweeping the "War Channel" from the Spurn to Whitby. Every day the paddlers swept the Humber, its approaches, and the Inner Dowsing Channel. Armed trawlers were patrolling from Scarborough to the Haisborough; net drifters with their nets were ten miles seaward of Flamborough to harass submarines making their land-fall thereabout; south of Flamborough head and north of Cromer other armed trawlers were stationed to look out for Zeppelins, and M.L.s were off the Spurn doing their patrol and regulating traffic.

The year 1917 did not open auspiciously for us. Almost as soon as it began a submarine sank by gun-fire six fishing-smacks and one Ostend trawler off Trevoze Head, Cornwall, and two more smacks were sunk a couple of days later. Off the north-east English coast the enemy still made his assaults on our fishing-fleets and on individual trawlers. Food in the British Isles, but more particularly in Great Britain, was beginning to get scarce, and the importance of fish was increasingly realised day by day. The Germans were not unconscious of the fact and devoted



a good deal of attention to the trawlers, whether commissioned units of His Majesty's Navy or peaceful harvesters of the sea. In the forenoon of January 28th the fishing steam-trawler *Alexandra* was homeward bound with her cargo of fish and in another five or six hours was expecting to make the land. When she was about sixty miles east of the Longstone, UC32 stopped her, took her skipper prisoner, placed the rest of the fishing crew on board a neutral ship and, having sunk the *Alexandra*, went on her way. A few hours later this submarine sighted a few more trawlers at their work, amongst them being the *Thistle*, *Petrel*, and *Mayfly*. She waited until daylight and then came close to the *Petrel's* boat, ordered it alongside, and put Warrant Officer Bernhard Haack into it with some bombs, a revolver, and a bandolier. UC32 proceeded to sink the *Thistle*, while Haack was rowed off towards the *Mayfly* two miles to the south-east in order to sink her with his explosives. In this plan he never succeeded; for with dramatic suddenness there now appeared on the scene the armed trawler *Speedwell*. The submarine opened fire, and the *Speedwell* replied vigorously. This was too much for the enemy craft, which hurriedly dived with a heavy list, due, no doubt, to having put her helm hard over. This left Warrant Officer Haack in a most ridiculous plight! He had a bag full of bombs, but his ship had gone without him, and he was left among a lot of trawlermen whose affection he had scarcely won. With Teutonic impudence he requested the trawler skippers to put him on board a certain Scandinavian steamer which was in sight. Needless to say this request was not granted. He was taken below on board one of the trawlers, desperately perturbed as to what fate awaited him, a hearty North Sea skipper following behind him. Then, abandoning his bombs, his revolver, and his bandolier to the *Thistle's* skipper, he became the prisoner instead of the captor. At four in the afternoon he was handed over to a patrol-boat. His fate was indeed a fortunate one, for about a month later UC32 came to her end and her crew was destroyed with her.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RESUMPTION OF THE SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN IN BRITISH WATERS

AT the beginning of 1916 controversy still raged in Germany as to the advisability of employing submarines against commerce, not only in the Mediterranean, but in British waters, alike ignoring the rules the German Government had promised to observe and the protests of neutrals. The torpedoing under peculiarly distressing circumstances of the Italian liner *Ancona* on November 7th by a submarine flying the Austrian flag had again roused widespread indignation. In the closing months of 1915 Admiral Bachmann had been succeeded as Chief of the Naval Staff by Admiral von Holtzendorf, who busied himself preparing a series of memoranda, insisting on the necessity of unrestricted submarine operations. On February 1st he assured Admiral Scheer, Commander-in-Chief of the High Seas Fleet, that the unrestricted U-boat campaign would be inaugurated on March 1st. The Germans had been watching the development of British policy of arming merchant ships, and on February 10th the Germans sent a Note to the United States stating that defensively armed merchant ships would from March 1st be regarded as warships. The argument was quite unsound. For centuries trading ships have always had the right to arm in their own defence without changing their status as merchantmen, and when the German Note was presented there was not a government in the world which would have endorsed its reasoning. British armed liners were at this time visiting the ports of every neutral country in the world, and in no case were they treated like warships. The United States Government a fortnight later informed Germany that she would not in any way

abrogate the right of American citizens in the matter of travelling by sea.

The German Emperor, as well as the Chancellor, still entertained doubts as to the wisdom of the course which it was proposed to adopt, but in the meantime, as events were to show, the submarine commanders were themselves taking action at sea. Early in March a meeting was held at General Headquarters, and, in spite of all the pressure exerted by the naval authorities, decisive action was postponed. Admiral von Tirpitz was ignored by the Emperor during this crisis, and a few days later resigned and was succeeded by Admiral von Capelle.

The month of January had proved a disappointing one for the enemy's submarines in the Mediterranean, and February was little better, but the Germans found some consolation in the early captures which were made by the *Möwe* off Finisterre. Only four ships besides the *Coquet* were sunk by enemy submarines during January. Among these was the steamer *Marere* (6,443 tons). She had been given a 3-pounder Hotchkiss gun, and when a submarine was observed on the morning of January 18th the master (Mr. P. E. Mello) determined to make a fight for his ship. Malta, the nearest landfall, was 236 miles distant. As soon as the enemy was sighted, course was altered to bring the submarine astern; all hands were called to their stations; the gun was manned; instructions were given for the highest possible speed, and a wireless call for assistance was dispatched. Within about a quarter of an hour an answering signal was received from Malta. After the position and course of the *Marere* had been given, the following reply came: "If you fire you will compel him to dive and you will be safe, as his speed under water is small: you must not surrender." Captain Mello was soon compelled to put this advice to the test.

The submarine had been gaining upon him, and at length dropped a shell one hundred yards astern. The *Marere* replied immediately with her little gun, but, owing to the superior armament of the enemy, the duel was hopeless. The 3-pounder shells fell far short of the enemy, who maintained a continuous fire. His shells fell all round the merchantman and sent spray over the bridge and deck, but failed to hit her. Immediately the *Marere's* first shot had been fired, it was noticed that the bolts

holding down the Hotchkiss gun were beginning to give. Under this handicap, the Marine gunners fired about ten rounds at the extreme range. With each shot the stability of the gun became worse, and not a single projectile dropped anywhere near the enemy. At last the corporal reported to Captain Mello that the gun was out of action, and at that moment the ship was struck. Nothing more could be done, so the boats were ordered out and every preparation was made to abandon ship. During the few anxious minutes which followed, shells continued to fall on the doomed steamer. "On observing the boats pull away," Captain Mello afterwards stated, "the submarine fired several rounds at the boats, fortunately missing."

The hospital ship *Neuralia* had by this time come upon the scene, and the loaded boats turned towards her, while the submarine, having fired two torpedoes, both of which missed, dived out of sight. The enemy, however, soon reappeared and fire was again opened on the *Marere*, which was down by the head and listing badly when last seen by her crew. The loss of this ship revealed the ineffectiveness of the 3-pounder gun when opposed by a well-handled submarine, carrying a more powerful armament. To make matters worse, this particular 3-pounder had, as events showed, a defective mounting. In contrast with the fate of the *Marere*, seven other defensively armed ships succeeded during January in effecting their escape from submarines. By this time an increasing number of merchant ships had been provided with guns, and experience was showing that an armament, if sufficiently powerful, was of considerable value, apart from its psychological influence in giving confidence to the merchant seamen when suddenly attacked by submarines.

The loss of shipping from the submarine campaign was again comparatively light in the month of February; seven vessels, of 24,059 tons, were sunk with a loss of thirty-four lives, as compared with five, of 27,974 tons, in the preceding month, when the death-roll was twenty-eight. The activities of the enemy raider *Möwe*, in association with sinkings on mines and the destruction of a small vessel off the Kentish Knock by a Zeppelin, raised the casualties to twenty-six ships, of 75,860 tons, and the death-roll leapt up to 291. For this sudden upward movement, the destruction of the *Maloja* (12,431 tons)

by a mine two miles south from Dover Pier, with a casualty list of 122, was mainly responsible. The *Empress of Fort William* (2,181 tons) and the *Thornaby* (1,732 tons) met a similar fate, the master of the latter ship, as well as eighteen of his crew, being killed.

The manner in which merchant seamen were adapting the laws of the brotherhood of the sea to the novel and unnerving situation which confronted them was illustrated by the plucky action of the master (Mr. R. Buckley) of the small steamship *Cedarwood* (654 tons). With a crew of twelve hands he was creeping down the East Coast on February 12th with a cargo of pig iron consigned to a French port, and had reached a position off Aldeburgh Napes when his eye lighted on a mine, which gleamed bright red with the rise and fall of the sea. The wind was high and the choppy sea revealed and hid it from time to time. Was this evidence of the existence of an enemy mine-field? Captain Buckley decided that, if he erred, it should be on the safe side. Over a dozen other ships were following in his track, so he hoisted signal flags to warn them of submarine mines and also had his steam whistle sounded. Furthermore, he kept the *Cedarwood* steaming round the mine he had discovered in the confident expectation that a patrol-boat would come on the scene and destroy it.

In saving the other ships he sealed the fate of the *Cedarwood*. For suddenly there was an explosion: the fore end of his vessel rose in the air and the upper bridge, on which he was standing with the mate, seemed to fall away from under his feet, and he found himself in the water, clinging to the flagstaff on the stern of the *Cedarwood*. He must have been carried right aft by the force of the water. He was sucked beneath the waves, but when he reached the surface again managed to reach a hatch which was floating near at hand. Several members of the crew had also secured pieces of wreckage, and eventually six survivors were rescued by boats of the *Binavor*, which, very fortuitously, reached them before they had succumbed to the cold and exposure. Captain Buckley's prompt signals were probably the means of saving several of the ships astern of him from destruction, and in recognition of his thoughtful action he was presented with a gold watch by the London Group of War

Risk Associations. So much for the mine-fields, which in this month, as has been stated, were responsible for the loss of a good deal of merchant shipping; but, so far as the submarine campaign was concerned, February was a poor month for the enemy.

One incident in the month, however, stands out from the official records—the destruction of the *Franz Fischer* (970 tons) by a Zeppelin south of the Kentish Knock. It was the first success achieved by an airship operating against a merchant vessel. This little ship—an ex-German collier—was making her way from Hartlepool to Cowes, when on the evening of February 1st, which was very dark, the master was warned by a patrol-boat that there were mines ahead of him. So, as it was difficult to see anything, he decided to anchor for the night. The engines had been stopped by 10 o'clock and the *Franz Fischer* anchored about eight miles north of the Kentish Knock, where a number of other ships were already lying. The chief engineer (Mr. J. H. Birch), having pumped up his boilers, closed all connections. Satisfied that everything was snug for the night, he joined the captain in his cabin and there the two seamen sat talking. Suddenly a noise was heard overhead, which it was at first thought proceeded from an aeroplane. It gradually increased. As one of the able seamen remarked afterwards, "The sound was like several express trains crossing a bridge together."

The noise attracted the attention of the two officers in the cabin, and then the mate, who had come off the bridge, knocked against the bulkhead and asked the captain if he had heard the strange sounds. "Yes; what is it?" was the reply. The mate did not hazard an opinion, but as the noise increased the master decided to go himself on deck and see what was happening. So, followed by the chief engineer, he left the cabin, but by that time silence reigned once more. The Zeppelin had evidently stopped her engines in order to take a sitting shot. Then a violent explosion occurred, due to a bomb which had hit the *Franz Fischer* amidships on the port side. The master and his companion were knocked down by a column of water which fell upon them, but shortly afterwards they succeeded in reaching the bridge deck. The ship had been shaken from end to end, but nothing

suggested that she had been mortally injured. Nevertheless, the chief engineer called the men up from below, and in a few minutes the hands—all, except those who had been on watch, practically naked—had assembled by the boats. The boats were got out, but some difficulty was experienced in cutting away the falls. A man ran to the galley for a knife, but before he returned the ship turned over on her port side and went down by her head “like a stone,” everyone being flung into the water.

Owing to the suddenness of the emergency and the darkness, it seemed as though the whole crew must be drowned, and there were indeed only three survivors. When the chief engineer rose to the surface, his eyes, piercing the darkness, fell on a lifebelt box, which had usually stood on the bridge; it was floating not far away. He swam towards it and found temporary safety. He was joined on this piece of wreckage by other members of the crew, until there were no fewer than eight of them, including the second mate, hanging on for very life. Some of the men endeavoured to climb on to the top of the box, with the result that it rolled over. This experience was repeated several times, and each time one or more of the men were missing. At last the chief engineer decided to seek some surer means of safety and he swam towards a lifebelt. He secured it, put it around him as best he could and, with this aid, swimming a little now and again, he managed to keep afloat. He afterwards lost consciousness, and when he recovered found that he was in a lifeboat belonging to the Belgian steamer *Paul*.

In the meantime, the desperate men clinging to the lifebelt box dropped off one after the other until only Able Seaman Hillier and the donkey-man remained. They were in the last stages of exhaustion, and at last Hillier alone remained. Fortunately the *Paul's* boat reached him just in time. It was not known until afterwards that the *Paul* had been lying at anchor about a mile away from the *Franz Fischer* when the bomb exploded on the latter ship. As soon as the cries for help from the distressed seamen struggling in the water were heard, the *Paul* tried to heave her anchor, but without success. A boat was then lowered and put out into the pitchy darkness. Cries could be heard, but it was impossible to see anything. But at length the Belgians came across the only three

survivors—the able seaman desperately clinging to the box, the chief engineer, looking as though he were already dead, and the steward, who had also kept himself afloat by means of a lifebelt, in the last stages of collapse. The troubles of these unfortunate men were not yet ended. For the boat, manned by the mate, the boatswain, a seaman and a fireman of the *Paul*, was carried out to sea by the tide. Signals convinced the master that the boat could make no headway against the current, and at last, despite a series of mishaps, he got under way. It was still very dark, and not until three hours had passed did he succeed in picking up the boat. By that time the three men of the *Franz Fischer* appeared more dead than alive, but warm drinks and food soon enabled them to recover.

As a footnote to this record of the end of the *Franz Fischer*, it is interesting to recall the sequence of events. On January 31st the enemy had carried out an airship raid on England, penetrating farther westward than ever before; on the succeeding day one of the airships—the L19, as was afterwards learnt—had destroyed the *Franz Fischer* with a loss of thirteen lives, including the master; and early on the morning of February 2nd the L19 herself, a miserable tangle of wreckage, foundered in the North Sea. In this way retribution was exacted for the heavy loss of life which resulted from the raid on shore and the bombing of the defenceless *Franz Fischer*.

The capture of the *Teutonian* (4,824 tons) by a submarine, March 4th, was the first evidence that the submarine campaign in home waters was being resumed by the German naval authorities, despite the hesitation of the Kaiser and the Imperial Chancellor. This vessel (master, Mr. R. D. Collins) was on voyage from Sabine, Newport News, to Avonmouth. All had gone well until the morning of the 4th. She was then thirty-six miles S.W. by W. of the Fastnet when the officer on the bridge reported a submarine on the starboard quarter. Judging by the widely advertised orders of the German Government no attack was to be expected, but Captain Collins rang for "Full speed ahead." Thus a chase began, for the submarine gradually overhauled the merchantman. The enemy fired three shots, and in response to this warning the engines of the *Teutonian* were stopped. The submarine, after taking up a position on the port beam, forthwith sub-



merged, and without more ado, fired a torpedo which struck the vessel forward. Fortunately the master had already ordered the crew into the boats, and as soon as he realised that his vessel was doomed, he himself slid down the ship's side into the water and swam towards one of the boats, which took him on board. The submarine reappeared on the surface and fired thirty-six shells, which caused the *Teutonian* to burst into flames, which burnt fiercely until she sank a little short of three and a half hours from the opening of the attack. By a happy chance a patrol-boat soon came on the scene and rescued the crew, landing them in due course at Berehaven, so no one was much the worse for the adventure, though everyone lost all his belongings and the ship had disappeared.

In thus wise the submarine campaign in British waters was reopened, despite restraining influences in Germany, from the Kaiser and the Imperial Chancellor downwards. As the experience of the *Teutonian* had revealed, the enemy commanders had determined to treat prize law with contempt and to sink merchant vessels out of hand wherever they were encountered, without regard for the safety of the crews on board. On the following day the *Rothsay* (2,007 tons) was torpedoed thirty miles from the Bishop Rock; on the 8th the *Harmatres* (6,387 tons) was destroyed without warning near Boulogne breakwater, four men being killed; on the 16th the little sailing-vessel *Willie* (185 tons) was sunk by gunfire off the Fastnet; two days later the *Lowlands* (1,789 tons) was torpedoed without warning of any kind eight miles N.E. by E. from the North Foreland, and then occurred the sinking of the *Port Dalhousie* (1,744 tons), with the loss of eleven of her crew, as well as the master. This vessel was on her way from Middlesbrough to Nantes, and on the advice of the pilot, who had come on board at Yarmouth, the master dropped anchor on the evening of March 18th about two miles N. by E. from the Kentish Knock Light-vessel. Shortly after midnight she was torpedoed. In the words of the chief officer (Mr. W. F. Spurr):

“The *Port Dalhousie* was lying to her anchor, the sea watch being continued, when a loud hissing was heard by me and I looked to see what it was caused by. Almost immediately the ship was struck by, I believe, a torpedo

amidships on the port side. She sank within one minute. Only myself, three seamen, and two firemen were saved by jumping into the water or being washed off the deck as the ship submerged and then seizing floating hatches. We were in the water one and three-quarter hours, and were rescued by the steamer *Jessie* and transferred to a patrol-boat and landed at Ramsgate at 11 p.m. yesterday (March 19th)."

That is the unadorned record by a seaman of the end of his ship and the deaths of twelve of his fellows. Whatever might be the confusion of policy in Germany, there was no doubt by this time of the character of the acts by sea of the submarine commanders.

An effective contrast to many stories of sinkings which were being received by the Admiralty was provided by the escape of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company's oil-tanker *Turbo* (4,782 tons), which gained for the master (Mr. J. Hill) a mention in despatches. This vessel had been given a 12-pounder gun, and though she had a speed of only about 10 knots, she managed to outmanœuvre the enemy. Early in the morning of March 1st—at 5.45, to be exact—when she was in the Mediterranean, on passage from Port Said to London, a submarine, four miles distant on the port bow, opened fire on her. Altering course in order to bring the enemy astern of him, Captain Hill ordered the fire to be returned. The situation was a trying one, for the *Turbo's* crew consisted of fifty-three Chinese and only nine British. Soon after the duel opened, the Chinamen almost got out of hand, but owing to the firmness of the master and the influence of British members of the crew, they were induced to keep at their stations. For upwards of half an hour the enemy continued the chase, gradually lessening the distance separating the two vessels and firing intermittently. Fortunately none of the twenty rounds struck the merchantman, while the *Turbo's* gunners got at last so close to the submarine that she suddenly abandoned the action. Captain Hill completed his voyage in safety, his ship being undamaged and his crew uninjured. In this instance speed and good handling proved the means of salvation of a valuable ship.

Another conspicuous example of pluck and good seamanship, which gained for the master the D.S.C., besides

recognition for other officers and the quartermaster, was the *Duendes* (4,602 tons). This vessel was homeward bound from St. Johns, N.B., to Plymouth, and was seventy miles west from the Scillies at 5.40 on the morning of March 13th when a shot fell astern of her. The vessel was unarmed and her best speed was only about  $10\frac{1}{2}$  knots. With hardly a thought of the odds against him, the master (Mr. Albert Chittenden) decided he would resist capture. So he pressed on all speed and brought the enemy astern of him. His efforts were splendidly seconded by the chief officer (Mr. J. Blacklock), the chief engineer (Mr. W. Cameron), Cadet F. Bennion and Quartermasters E. Dobbins and T. Taylor. For an hour the *Duendes* outmanœuvred the submarine, which maintained a continuous fire. The vessel was hit nine times, the wireless house, as well as the bridge, was struck and the wireless apparatus put out of action for a time, but otherwise the vessel was uninjured. The submarine commander at length came to the conclusion that his efforts were doomed to failure. So he abandoned the chase and the *Duendes* reached her destination without further molestation. In the case of the Cunard steamer *Phrygia* (3,353 tons), on the 24th, a 6-pounder gun, admirably fought, in combination with a heavy sea, was responsible for a fortunate escape. The submarine could not get on her target, while the gunners of the *Phrygia*, at a range of 1,500 yards, hit the enemy twice. The first shot caused her to emit a thick cloud of smoke and to list heavily to starboard. She then up-ended, and while in this position was struck again, and nothing more was seen of her. The master (Mr. F. Manley) was mentioned in despatches for saving his ship.

During the latter part of the month the mine peril became very serious. Two of the most conspicuous disasters must be mentioned. The *Sea Serpent* (902 tons) went down on the 23rd off Folkestone Pier, with the result that the master (Mr. W. Philips) and thirteen of his crew were killed; and on the last day of the month the *Alacrity* (1,080 tons) disappeared in mysterious circumstances. She sailed in ballast from Le Havre for Seaham Harbour on the 29th, passed through the Downs on the night of the 30th-31st, and then all trace of her was lost. She was an old ship, having been built in 1883, but on the

eve of the war she had been thoroughly overhauled by her owners, so that there was every reason to assume that she was seaworthy. Evidence eventually pointed unmistakably to the conclusion that she had struck a mine and had sunk, carrying with her the master (Mr. J. Dickinson) as well as the crew of thirteen hands.

The enemy's submarine operations during March also led to considerable loss of life, the most serious case being that of the *Minneapolis* (13,543 tons). The depositions of the master (Mr. F. O. Hasker) suggest vividly the conditions which then prevailed at sea. For several weeks past the enemy submarines had met with little success in the Mediterranean, but the usual precautions had been enforced on all masters. The *Minneapolis* left Marseilles for Alexandria on March 20th. She followed the course given her by the Divisional Naval Transport Officer. All the usual water-tight doors were closed; boats were swung out, lowered half-way, and then frapped in to secure them; and Captain Hasker issued a general caution that a good lookout should be maintained. The *Minneapolis* was proceeding at full speed on the morning of the 23rd, and zigzagging in accordance with Admiralty instructions, when an explosion occurred in the forward end of the engine-room on the port side. No submarine had been observed. The second officer was in charge on the bridge, an A.B. was stationed on the fo'e'sle head, another A.B. was in the crow's-nest, and there was of course a quartermaster at the wheel. The ship was travelling at between 15 to 15½ knots. The second officer saw a torpedo approaching the vessel at right angles, but it was too late to do anything beyond sounding the whistle for stations before the *Minneapolis* reeled under the explosion. Captain Hasker, who had been on the lower bridge, then took charge.

On going below, the chief engineer (Mr. R. P. Palmer) found the engine-room flooded, the water having already risen to within two feet of the top of the engines. Measures were immediately taken to close the remaining water-tight doors, which had been left open to enable the ship to be worked. In spite of every precaution, however, the ship gradually sank by the stern, while the engines stopped of their own accord. Nine of the staff who were down below at the time of the explosion were apparently

killed instantly when the vessel was struck. In a comparatively short time, most of the crew had taken to the boats or rafts; the master, with the other officers, engineers, and the carpenter's mate, remained for the time on board the vessel. Fortunately, early in the afternoon two men-of-war came to the assistance of the distressed seamen, and an attempt was made to tow the *Minneapolis*. For a time the operation was continued with some success, but at 11 o'clock that night the rope parted, and it broke again early the following morning. At last H.M.S. *NASTURTIUM* took over the task of towing the ship from H.M.S. *LYDIARD*. Assisted by a trawler made fast on each quarter of the *Minneapolis*, the *NASTURTIUM* stuck to the job until midnight and it was then apparent that the vessel could not remain much longer afloat. Shortly after midnight this anticipation was fulfilled and she sank stern first, three men, in addition to the nine engine-room hands, having lost their lives as the result of the enemy's criminal act. From first to last nothing was seen of the submarine.

This tragedy occurred 195 miles E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  N. from Malta, and on the following day the *Englishman* (5,257 tons) was sunk by a submarine thirty miles north-east from Malin Head, supplying evidence, supported by the sinking on the same day off Dungeness and Bishop Rock respectively of the *Salybia* (3,352 tons) and the *Fenay Bridge* (3,838 tons), that the enemy was working simultaneously in British waters as well as in the Mediterranean. The *Englishman* (master, Mr. W. A. Moorehouse) sailed from Avonmouth for Portland, Mayne, on the 22nd, and on the morning of the second day out passed Oversay, Isle of Islay, steering, in accordance with Admiralty instructions, in a north-westerly direction. Shortly after noon Captain Moorehouse sighted a submarine on the surface, one point on the starboard quarter about a mile away. The weather was fine and clear. The enemy was flying flags, evidently attempting to signal, but the master was determined not to sacrifice his ship without making, at any rate, an attempt to escape. So he put his helm to starboard and rang for extra speed, thus bringing the submarine right astern of him. The submarine also altered course and, giving chase, opened a steady fire upon the merchantman.

Captain Moorehouse, realising the desperate position in which he stood, ordered the boats to be lowered to the rail and all the members of the crew who were off duty to stand by them. Within a quarter of an hour of the opening of the chase, the davits of boats Nos. 3 and 5 on the starboard side were shot away, causing the boats to fall into the water, together with about thirty men. The ship was then stopped, and an attempt made to pick up the seamen who were fighting for life in the water. Ten of them were rescued and then the ship was abandoned. The submarine, coming in close, fired two torpedoes into her, one on the starboard and the other on the port side, and continued to fire into her until she sank at 2.30 p.m. Though the *Englishman* and ten of her crew were destroyed, the enemy expended two torpedoes and about forty shots in the operation, and then, still on the surface, she disappeared. Three days later the *Manchester Engineer* (4,302 tons) was torpedoed near Coningbeg Light-vessel; on the following day the *Eagle Point* (5,222 tons) and the *Rio Tiete* (7,464 tons) were captured in the vicinity of Bishop Rock and Ushant respectively, and then occurred the spirited attempt of the *Goldmouth* (7,446 tons) to elude capture.

This vessel was bringing home a cargo of oil from Tarakar, Borneo, when she fell in with a submarine while crossing the Bay of Biscay. The *Goldmouth* had been provided with a small gun, so when the submarine's conning-tower was observed emerging out of the water about three miles away on the starboard beam, the master (Mr. R. L. Allinson) determined to make a fight for his ship, his cargo, and the lives of his crew. As soon as the submarine had reached the surface, she opened fire from her two guns. Everything was in her favour, for she out-ranged the little gun of the British merchantman, with the result that the two gunners of the *Goldmouth* fought under a continuous fire to which they could make no effective reply. They continued, however, undaunted. At last one of the enemy's shells struck the bridge, on which the captain was standing; another wrecked the officers' cabin; and yet another, penetrating the deck, exploded in an oil-tank. The main steam-pipe was damaged, and the speed of the *Goldmouth*, as she struggled through the oil-covered water, fell off to 3 or 4 knots. It seemed hope-

less that she could escape, but the master remained on the bridge with unconquerable pluck, while the wireless operator continued to send out calls for help.

At last an answer in code was received from a distant patrol-vessel, but by that time the master, having given up hope of escape, had, in accordance with Admiralty instructions, thrown the weighted code-book overboard with his other confidential papers. At last the wireless operator had his foot shot away; Captain Allinson also learnt that the gunners had used their last shot, having fired sixty altogether. They had been out-gunned and out-ranged and, though they had succeeded in keeping the enemy at a distance, they had not secured a single hit. Against overwhelming odds—for the enemy fired about 200 shots and hit the vessel twenty times—the master had made a fine attempt to save his ship. His crew consisted of forty-seven Chinese and twelve British seamen, and "all behaved well, especially the British," during an ordeal which lasted for over an hour. Only two boats remained, and into these the crew took their places as soon as the order to abandon ship had been given. The submarine then drew in and the master was called to go on board, where, having been roundly cursed by the German commander, he was made prisoner. In one of the boats was the wounded wireless operator, as well as a Chinaman who had had a finger shot away, but an appeal for first-aid dressings was callously refused. The boats were ordered to clear out, and then two torpedoes were put into the *Goldmouth*, which was simultaneously submitted to a heavy gunfire. As the ship sank, the submarine disappeared. After three hours' pulling the boats were, by a happy chance, picked up by a trawler. Captain Allinson was awarded the D.S.C. and the chief officer (Mr. D. Pearce) and the wireless operator (Mr. R. C. Older) were mentioned in despatches.

During March an incident occurred which was to have considerable influence on the enemy submarine war. In the late afternoon on March 24th, 1916, the French cross-Channel packet *Sussex* was making her way between England and France when she was torpedoed in lat. 50° 42' N., long. 1° 11' E. She was hit forward, her bows being blown completely off as far aft as the foremast. A French trawler came on the scene as well as the British

destroyer *AFRIDI*, and these two vessels took off the survivors. Among the passengers aboard the *Sussex* were many Americans, of whom several were killed. The torpedoing of this vessel, in face of German pledges, again roused the United States. The American Government sent to Germany a sharp Note protesting against the wrongfulness of the submarine campaign against commerce and threatening to break off diplomatic relations. The result of this Note, presented on April 20th, was that the German Government capitulated, and ordered the Naval Staff to see that henceforward submarine warfare was carried out in accordance with Prize Law ; that is to say, the U-boats would, before sinking a merchant ship, come to the surface, stop the prize, examine her papers, and cause all passengers and crew to leave her. This decision was diametrically opposed to the views of naval officers connected with the submarine service, who realised that, what with the proximity of destroyers, trawlers, motor-launches, decoys, and other craft, they would be exposed to the greatest danger, and the submarine campaign, which was intended to bring Great Britain to her knees, must fail. The U-boats operating against British commerce in British waters were, therefore, recalled on April 25th, though of course the East Coast mine-laying submarines and the submarines in the Mediterranean carried on as before.

Before the new orders reached the commanders at sea, they had been very busy, paying no regard to Prize Law or other considerations. In the month of April fifty-six British merchant vessels were intercepted, and forty-three, of 141,193 tons, were sunk, with a loss of 131 lives, all but six, which struck mines, being the victims of submarines. The spirit of the seamen, in spite of the latest threat of the Germans to treat defensively armed vessels as men-of-war, was unbroken. Indeed, whether a gun was or was not available, several of the masters put up fine fights. One event occurred on the first of the month which attracted the notice of the Admiralty. The Australian Steamship Company's *Ashburton* (4,445 tons), when on voyage from Wellington, N.Z., to London, was about 180 miles south-east from Land's End when the master (Mr. C. Matthews) was called to the upper bridge. Suspicions had been aroused by a "stick," which appeared



to be attached to a pear-shaped buoy standing vertically about 40 feet distant; it was stationary. Captain Matthews brought the "stick" astern and then stood watching it through his glasses. All doubts as to what it indicated were soon set at rest, for it rose to the surface and it was realised that the *Ashburton* was confronted with a submarine. A distress call was immediately dispatched, and although the enemy signalled Captain Matthews to stop, he continued on his course at full speed, sending everyone available into the engine-room to help with the fires. The submarine, after a short delay, opened fire; fifteen shots hit the *Ashburton*. She gradually drew in close and Captain Matthews had to admit that escape was hopeless: the mast and wireless gear had been shot away; the funnel, boats, and deck-house had been badly damaged; and five of the crew had been wounded during the fusillade, which had lasted twenty minutes. The ship was stopped and the usual formalities were observed. A torpedo dispatched the *Ashburton*, and the crew, in their two boats, were left to fare as best they might. Happily help was at hand and no lives were lost. Captain Matthews was mentioned in despatches for his attempt to save his ship.

On the same day the *Perth* (653 tons) was torpedoed without warning, with a loss of six lives, when one mile S.E. by E. from Cross Sand Light-vessel, as well as the sailing-vessel *Bengairn* (2,127 tons), 165 miles west-south-west from the Fastnet. The former vessel was at anchor, when at midnight she was split in two by a torpedo, the fore part sinking at once with the chief engineer and four of the crew. A somewhat similar fate overtook the P. & O. liner *Simla* (5,884 tons) on the following day. She was acting as an Admiralty transport and had been provided with a gun. This weapon proved valueless, for when she was off Gozo she was struck without warning on the port side, the stokehold being pierced and ten of the engine-room staff killed outright. The survivors were rescued by a French patrol-boat and landed at Malta. On the following day, April 3rd, the *Clan Campbell* (5,897 tons), also defensively armed, was destroyed with a similar lack of ceremony and humanity twenty-nine miles south-east of Cape Bon, happily without loss of life; and on the 5th the *Chantala* (4,951 tons)

disappeared fifteen miles north of Cape Bengut, nine of the crew being killed.

A far more grievous sacrifice of human life attended the sinking of the *Zent* (3,890 tons). This vessel was also torpedoed without warning. She was outward bound in ballast from Liverpool to Santa Marta, and on the night of the 5th, at 10.15, she had reached a position twenty-eight miles W. by S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. from the Fastnet, when a torpedo penetrated the engine-room, and was followed by a second, which struck the vessel near No. 3 hatch. No ship could withstand such injuries as the *Zent* had sustained, and in two minutes nothing was to be seen of her; her end came so swiftly that three boats, in which men had already taken their places, capsized as the steamer took her dive. From one cause and another the death-roll mounted to forty-nine; among the lives lost being that of a stowaway, a black, who had thought to cross the sea safely, and at no charge, in this fine ship of the British India Steam Navigation Company.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FRYATT

WHEN the German Government first declared that all vessels found in the war zone round the British Islands would be torpedoed without warning, the route which runs across the southern end of the North Sea, between Parkeston and Rotterdam, was, perhaps, more immediately threatened than any of the approaches to British harbours. Zeebrugge, the base of the Flanders Flotilla, is thirty-five miles to the southward of the central part of the track, which was thus a first point of attack for all submarines on their outward trips; and every vessel plying along the route was in greatest danger when she was in the middle of her voyage, farthest away from land or naval assistance. The duty of maintaining this dangerous service fell, mainly, upon the captains of the Great Eastern Railway Company's steamers, who soon got an accurate picture of the risks involved. Between March and July 1915 the steamship *Brussels* was attacked five times: once when she was commanded by Captain Fryatt, twice when Captain Hartnell was in charge, and twice when she was under Captain Beeching. The captains were quite unflinching; they carried the extra weight of their responsibilities without complaint; and all the steamers of the company sailed at their appointed times, week after week and month after month.

The service rendered by these men was of the first importance. War against commerce is made effective almost as much by holding up sailings as by sinking or capturing ships, and when the German Government started their war upon sea-borne trade it was feared that one of its most serious consequences would be that of suspended sailings. The spring of 1915 was thus a highly critical time; and during the first months of the campaign communications with Holland were threatened by

the fact that a considerable number of neutral vessels refused to sail. The captains of the Great Eastern Railway Company's steamers were not, however, intimidated. Early in April our Consul-General at Rotterdam wrote to the Foreign Office calling attention to the "highly meritorious and courageous conduct" of the captains of the *Brussels*, the *Colchester*, the *Cromer*, and the *Wrexham*, and added that the regular sailings and arrivals of the steamers had produced a great moral effect locally, at a time when Dutch and other steamships had ceased running owing to the nervousness of their commanders and owners. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Admiralty wrote to the company and asked that their appreciation should be conveyed to all concerned.

This was the second time on which the Admiralty had expressed their admiration; for they had already congratulated Captain Fryatt for his conduct in circumstances which must be closely examined. Early in the afternoon of March 28th, 1915, when the *Brussels* was approaching the Maas Lightship, on passage from Parkeston to Rotterdam, Captain Fryatt sighted a large submarine on his starboard bow. She was U33, just starting out for the English Channel, under the command of Kapitän-Leutnant Gansser, who signalled to the *Brussels*, which was unarmed, to stop. It was Captain Fryatt's plain duty to escape capture if he could, and his obligation was the more binding in that the Admiralty had instructed all merchant captains to thwart submarine attacks by every means in their power. Apart from this, Captain Fryatt was quite justified in thinking that Captain Gansser's signals were a treacherous ruse to make torpedoing easier.

In any case he was not the man to hesitate; he had been attacked once before, and his seamanship and knowledge of his vessel told him that, though the danger was great, he might still avoid it. He judged, at once, that he had no time to turn and escape by flight, and so altered course to pass under the submarine's stern. U33 moved across the bows of the approaching ship so as to torpedo her when she opened her port side, after the turn was completed. The two vessels were thus approaching very fast, and the danger to the *Brussels* increased with every second. Captain Fryatt was quick to see that his first

manœuvre had been countered, but he had another ready. As the submarine crossed his bows he put his helm hard a-starboard and made straight towards her. Captain Gansser was, apparently, not in the conning-tower at the moment, and the officer in charge gave the order to submerge. It was at once obeyed; the *Brussels* passed about 50 yards under U33's stern when she was about 25 feet below the water; and Captain Gansser did not break surface again until Captain Fryatt's ship was five miles away. The entry in the *Brussels's* log is of great importance, as it was made at a moment when Captain Fryatt's recollection of what had happened was still fresh and vivid. It ran thus:

“ 1.10 p.m. sighted submarine two points on starboard bow. I altered my course to go under his stern. He then turned round and crossed my bow from starboard to port. When he saw me starboard my helm he started to submerge, and I steered straight for him. At 1.30 his periscope came up under my bows, port side, about 6 feet from the side and passed astern. Although a good lookout was kept, I saw nothing else of him. I was steering an E. by S. course at the time of sighting him, and brought my ship to a north-easterly course when I was over the top of him. The lat. was  $51^{\circ} 08' N.$ , long.  $3^{\circ} 41' E.$ ”

It was a modest way of recording the achievement. At the lowest estimate of the risks involved, Captain Fryatt had saved several hundreds of his countrymen from imprisonment or worse and his ship from capture; assuming that Captain Gansser intended to act on the proclamation of his Government, every person in the *Brussels* had been rescued from imminent danger.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Captain Gansser's impressions differed from those of Captain Fryatt, as was, perhaps, not unnatural in the circumstances. The entry in U33's log was as follows: “ 28. 3. 15. North Sea, light northerly breezes, visibility eight miles. 2.20 p.m. steering for the Noord Hinder Lightship. Sighted a steamer . . . heading for the Maas Lightship at full speed, and showing no flags. At a distance of four miles I signalled—Stop immediately or I fire!—at the same time altering my course towards the steamer. At a distance of one mile, I cleared one tube for action. The steamer neither altered its course nor speed. U33 making direct for the steamer. At a distance of 500 M (metres), and only a few seconds before the shot was to have been fired, the steamer put her helm over, and came at U33 with the manifest intention of ramming us. In view of her high speed and the large arc described by the steamer, it was not possible for me to

Four years later Captain Gansser stated on oath that he had seriously thought of taking the *Brussels* into port as a prize. It was not, however, Captain Fryatt's duty to speculate on the nature of the danger, but to avoid it; and how could he, with several hundreds of utterly defenceless persons under his charge, have trusted to the humanity of a German submarine commander at such a moment? The exact nature of the threat to the *Brussels* is, moreover, immaterial, for whether it were capture or destruction, Captain Fryatt had an equal right, and an equal duty, to act as he did.

The courage and skill with which the *Brussels* had been handled did not pass unnoticed. The Admiralty congratulated the master warmly and presented him with a gold watch; and on April 28th his name was mentioned in the House of Commons in answer to a question by Lord Charles Beresford.

During the next year Captain Fryatt continued in command of the *Brussels*. His record of service would make monotonous reading, but it was by no means uneventful to him. His ship, like the other vessels of the company, was often attacked; and a high testimony to Captain Fryatt and his brother-captains is to be found in the fact that, by June 1916, the Germans had, apparently, given up all hope of interrupting the Rotterdam service by submarines.

Then occurred the incident which led to events that moved the world to indignation. Late in the afternoon of June 22nd, 1916, the *Brussels* left Rotterdam for Tilbury. Captain Fryatt had orders to stop at the Hook of Holland to pick up mails, which he accordingly did. By 11 o'clock he was under way again, steering for the Thames. There was a large number of escaped Russian prisoners and Belgians on board, and before leaving Rotterdam the British Consul-General, Mr. Maxse, placed an important diplomatic mail in Captain Fryatt's charge. As they left the Hook, both the captain and his first officer, Mr. Hartnell, noticed strange rocket lights in the

make sure of striking her with a torpedo. As observed through the periscope, the steamer passed us at a distance of from twenty to thirty metres, after which she resumed her former course at high speed. . . . 2.40 came to the surface." The difference in the times recorded by U33 and the *Brussels* is not a discrepancy between the two accounts. U33 was keeping Mid-European time and the *Brussels* Greenwich time.

direction of the shore ; and when twelve miles west of the Maas Lightship they distinctly saw " a very small craft, probably a submarine not submerged," morsing the letter " S." It was clear that the ship was being watched, and Captain Fryatt issued strict orders that all lights were to be put out and the passengers kept below. The enemy was not his only anxiety, for he knew that another steamer was very near him, steering the same course without lights. He could not get a sight of her, in spite of a very sharp lookout, and at half-past twelve he switched on port and starboard lights for a few minutes.

At a quarter to one Captain Fryatt became aware that his ship was surrounded by German destroyers, and stopped her when warned that they were about to fire. He probably hoped to escape to the very last, for Mr. Hartnell, the first officer, seemed surprised that no firing occurred. Captain Fryatt was calm and mindful of his duty. His first care was to have the diplomatic mail destroyed in the engine-room furnaces, after which he warned the passengers to be ready to take to the boats if necessary. As the last mail-bag was reduced to ashes, the Germans came over the side with revolvers and bombs. The crew were pushed into destroyers pretty roughly. Mr. Hartnell refused to follow them and was ordered to the bridge, where he joined Captain Fryatt.

The German officers who took charge of the ship were very nervous and excited. The senior one of them at once put the engine-room telegraph to " Full speed ahead," but as the stokers and engineers were prisoners in the destroyers, the stokeholds were deserted and nothing happened. The German officer then drew his revolver, pointed it at Captain Fryatt, and threatened to shoot him dead if he obstructed the navigation of the ship. The captors were persuaded, very reluctantly, that the fault did not lie with Captain Fryatt, after which they ordered their own men to go down and work the engines. They rushed below and, being unable to read the engine-room telegraph, put the engines to full speed astern.

The *Brussels* reached the Schouwenbank Lightship some time after daybreak, when the German flag was hoisted. Soon afterwards the Flushing mail-boat passed close by, and Captain Fryatt remarked, as he saw her, that the capture of the *Brussels* would be reported early.

He was evidently thinking of how anxiety and worry would spread at home when once his ship was reported overdue. During the forenoon the *Brussels* arrived at Zeebrugge, and after a stay of five hours was sent on up the canal to Bruges. Both banks were crowded with Landsturm and soldiers of the Marine Corps as she passed up.

At Bruges the prisoners were landed and distributed at various prison camps, after they had been transported over Germany in cattle-trucks and publicly exhibited in the towns through which they passed.

On June 28th Captain Fryatt and Mr. Hartnell were put into the camp at Ruhleben. Barrack No. 1, to which Captain Fryatt was consigned, was in charge of an Englishman called Turnbull, a man who owned a business in Hamburg, where he had lived for a number of years. He had been dubbed a pro-German by his fellow-prisoners, and rumour credited him with having played a very sinister part in what followed: that of getting Captain Fryatt to talk freely, by being kind and friendly to him, and laying the information so obtained with the German authorities. Of this there is no evidence at all. Turnbull was certainly kind to Fryatt—very likely because he was lonely and dejected at the ostracism to which he was subjected—and it is equally certain that Fryatt never concealed the fact that he had several times saved the *Brussels* from submarine attacks; but there is no trace at all of any information ever having been lodged by Turnbull with the German authorities.

The Germans had enough information for their purpose without tapping new sources. They had carefully noted the statements made in the House of Commons, when Captain Fryatt's name was mentioned; Captain Gansser's report of what had happened on March 28th, 1915, had been in their hands for over a year; and the High Naval Command was painfully aware of the part which the Merchant Service had played in thwarting their plans. These three things—not one of which gave him the slightest reason to be ashamed—were the cause of Captain Fryatt's subsequent death.

On June 30th Captain Fryatt and Mr. Hartnell were given orders to leave the camp under escort. They were told that they would only be away for a few days; but



the instant they passed the camp gates they were forbidden to speak to one another and treated as ordinary prisoners. Their arrest may, therefore, be said to have taken place at Ruhleben on June 30th, and it will be shown later that this is an important point. On July 2nd the two prisoners arrived at Bruges and were thrown into jail, though no charge was brought against them. What happened to Captain Fryatt during the next three weeks is known only in its barest outlines. He was kept in a cell by himself, although allowed, for a time, to speak to Mr. Hartnell, and was frequently visited and cross-questioned by German officials. During those visits he never concealed the fact that he had been in danger of attack from a German submarine a year before and had escaped by steering straight for her and compelling her to dive. Never once, as far as is known, was he warned that what he said might be used against him, nor was any legal adviser instructed to act on his behalf and warn him of the consequences of anything that he might say. Did Captain Fryatt, none the less, guess that he was standing into danger? He may have drawn his own conclusions from being treated as an ordinary prisoner and from the repeated cross-questionings. If he did, the fearlessness with which he faced what was coming does him the highest honour, for we can only see, in the frankness with which he supplied the material for his own condemnation, a determination to take all upon himself and a resolute purpose that he, and he only, should be enmeshed in the cowardly and vindictive plot which was maturing.

These long cross-questionings raise another question: Who was the directing genius of this sinister, methodical plan to encompass Captain Fryatt's death? All the evidence available points to Admiral von Schröder, the officer in command of the Marine Corps on the Belgian coast. The laws of the German Empire allowed local commanders, in time of war, to bring foreign enemy subjects before courts martial, without reference to the Central Government or General Headquarters; and Bruges, where the trial took place and where Fryatt was subjected to those interminable cross-questionings, was within the limits of Schröder's command. Years later, moreover, the president of the court—Dr. Zäpfel—stated positively

that the trial had been ordered by Admiral von Schröder, and added that, in his capacity as Court Martial Officer (Kriegsgerichtsassessor), he recognised no other authority. Nor is this all. The case of Captain Fryatt became engraved on the minds of the local population, and when the German armies finally retired, Schröder's name was the centre of a cycle of ugly stories. According to one, Dr. Zäpfel had expressed regret at what had happened, saying that he was powerless in the matter—a curious remark from a trained lawyer who, as president of the court martial, was responsible that justice should be properly administered. Bad as the stories were, there was a peculiar consistency in them; even the terrible accusation that Admiral von Schröder said openly that, by a certain date, he desired that Captain Fryatt should have ceased to live, assumes a sinister probability in the light of what happened later. Was the proceeding of Schröder's sole planning, or were the high authorities at Berlin consenting parties? This question is not so easy to answer, but such material as we do possess is significant enough. Towards the middle of July the British Consul-General at Rotterdam informed the Foreign Office that Captain Fryatt would shortly be brought before a court martial, and Lord Grey at once asked the American Ambassador at Berlin to engage a competent counsel. His Excellency, Mr. Gerard, brought the matter to the attention of the Imperial Foreign Office on July 20th. He received no answer, and sent in a further *Note verbale*, marked "Very Urgent," on July 22nd. Only on the afternoon of the 26th was he told that the trial would take place on the following day. Why was there this delay of six whole days in answering?

On July 24th, whilst Mr. Gerard was still pressing for a reply, the two prisoners at Bruges were cross-questioned for the last time, and when the examination was over, Captain Fryatt was warned that he would be tried by court martial. His candour and fearlessness had produced one result: that he alone was charged in the indictment.

But the vindictive diligence of Schröder and his subordinates did not limit itself to amassing material for the trial. They knew, well enough, how their case would be torn in pieces by an experienced counsel who

had been given time to prepare his brief; and, for the next three days, Captain Fryatt was kept in his cell without advice or assistance.

At nine o'clock in the morning of July 27th, Captain Fryatt and Mr. Hartnell were taken to a waiting-room of the prison, where, to their surprise, they met four members of the *Brussels's* crew. Three hours later they were all taken to a private house near the town hall, where the court had assembled. It was called a *Corps Gericht des Marine Corps*, and differed from what is known as a field court martial in that its sentence could be appealed against. It consisted of a president, Dr. Zäpfel, a trained lawyer, of five officers whose names have not been divulged, and a secretary.

Before the trial opened, each member was sworn in by an oath adapted to the duties of a military court: "I swear by God Almighty that, having given due consideration to the judicial duties imposed upon me, I will *administer justice in accordance with my conscientious convictions*, so help me God." The formula, therefore, imposed no obligation to administer the law, and showed that Fryatt was not arraigned for any offence against a written criminal code. The enactment of the German Empire which gave the court its jurisdiction was, in fact, one which made certain rules of international law binding upon its officers; and it was by the set of customs and usages known as the law of nations, in that it derived its binding force from the established practice of civilised peoples, that Captain Fryatt was to be tried. Had it been administered he could never have been condemned.

As the prisoner and witnesses entered the court, an officer in uniform told Captain Fryatt that he had been ordered to defend him. This man's name was Major Naumann; he had held a subordinate position in the Imperial Courts before the war, and it should be said of him that he strove conscientiously to do his duty.

The charge against Captain Fryatt was that he was "strongly suspected of having attempted to cause injury to the forces of Germany"; and that his action on March 28th of the previous year came within the meaning of a proclamation issued to the population on land: "All persons, not being members of the enemy forces, including civil servants of the enemy government, render

themselves liable to the death penalty if they undertake to advantage the enemy state or to do injury to Germany or her allies."

After the indictment had been read out, the president laid before the court a telegram from the Foreign Office at Berlin, asking that the trial should be postponed. Major Naumann at once seconded the request, by pressing for a stay in the proceedings, and asked that the American Embassy should be allowed to appoint a counsel, in view of the political significance which attached to the trial. Unfortunately, the matter had already been decided. Admiral von Schröder had replied, before the court opened, that the trial could not be delayed, and Dr. Zäpfel was not the kind of man to resist him. The court did, it is true, adjourn to consider Major Naumann's plea; but they reassembled after a few minutes and rejected it.

The prosecution relied, in the first place, upon the direct testimony of Lieutenant Wieder and a seaman called Richter, both of whom had been in U33 on March 28th, 1915, and, in the second, upon a written statement by Captain Gansser, who was then serving in the Mediterranean, and upon extracts from certain Dutch and English newspapers. The war diary of U33 was the only document contemporary with the event which was produced in court: the log of the *Brussels* was not exhibited, although it had been in German hands for more than a month. Captain Fryatt's defence might have been based upon two pleas: it might have been shown, first, that as he had been instructed by the Admiralty to resist submarine attack by steering direct for the submarine if needs be, he was outside the rules relating to those who carry on unauthorised warfare; and it might have been shown, in the second place, that, in every age, merchant captains have had the right to resist capture, and that the defensive arming of merchantmen had been recognised as only an assertion of that general right.

Had these arguments been presented, no court could have resisted them; but it had been the particular care of Admiral von Schröder and Dr. Zäpfel to make a defence on such lines impossible. There is no reason to doubt that, given time for preparing such arguments, and facilities for seeing and consulting with the man whom he was called upon to defend, Major Naumann would have made out an

overwhelming case : it was, therefore, carefully arranged that he should have neither the one nor the other.

Still, he did his best. When the court subjected Captain Fryatt to a long cross-questioning, he objected to whatever he thought unfair, and he protested strongly against admitting Captain Gansser's statement—which does not appear to have been an affidavit—when Captain Gansser himself could not be cross-examined. His objections were, in every case, overruled, and Captain Fryatt had to face the trained legal skill of Dr. Zäpfel almost unaided. His answers were a perfect reflection of the man's nature : even in the mutilated, shortened form in which they have survived, they echo the undaunted courage which animated him to the last. He never denied that he had steered straight for the submarine ; but he was never tricked into admitting that he had tried to sink her. He saw that there was a difference between thwarting a submarine by compelling her to dive, and attacking her outright, and he clung to it firmly. He spoke with pride of the watch which the Admiralty had given him ; but pointed out that it had been given him for saving his ship from a submarine and nothing else. One of the most pathetic things in the trial was the way in which the man's loyalty hampered his defence. Had he shown, as he could easily have done, that he had acted strictly on Admiralty instructions in steering for the submarine, he would probably have been acquitted ; for when once he had proved that he had received orders, or something resembling orders, the accusation of being a *franc-tireur* would have fallen to pieces. But those instructions in which his salvation lay had been issued to him confidentially, and he never so much as hinted at their bare existence.

Several times the Court strove to get answers from him which would have implicated the captains of the *Cromer* and the *Colchester*, and presented the prisoner with an extract from the *Yarmouth Mercury* which must have been disconcerting. Captain Fryatt refused to admit a syllable ; and his answer breathed contempt for a Court which could admit matter so irrelevant and untrustworthy : " I heard the *Cromer* had been close to a U-boat. It is not right that such things should be published. Reporters make mountains out of the most trivial matters." Time and time again Dr. Zäpfel tried to make Captain

Fryatt admit responsibility for the stories which were current in Rotterdam: every time he got back the same proud answer: "I never boasted that I had rammed a submarine."

After the last witness had been examined, Major Naumann made his final effort on behalf of the prisoner. There was no proof, he said, that Captain Fryatt had tried to ram the submarine, and in its absence, he was entitled to be acquitted. Should the Court take an opposite view, judgment ought, none the less, to be postponed. The evidence of the two eye-witnesses to the event, Lieutenant Wieder and Seaman Richter, conflicted, for they each described how the submarine had been manœuvred, in a different way. Until Captain Gansser could attend and clear up the points in dispute, the Court had neither the right nor the material to decide finally. When he had done speaking Captain Fryatt rose and stated firmly, but without defiance, that "he had done no wrong." "I was, and am still, proud of Captain Fryatt's manly behaviour," wrote Mr. Hartnell; "and when he rose to his feet to speak for himself there was not a German present who could face him."

After deliberating for only a few minutes, the Court returned and found Fryatt guilty. It was then about 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Court had persistently refused to listen to any plea of postponement; but there was still a loophole of escape open to Captain Fryatt: an appeal for mercy.<sup>1</sup> He rejected it, without explaining why; but his reason is clear. There was something so base in asking for pardon from men who, to him, seemed so mean and cowardly that death was preferable: better, a thousand times, to stand by his last proud claim that he had done no wrong, and lay it, intact, before a Higher Tribunal.

Captain Fryatt was taken back to the prison and warned that he would be shot on the following day; but by this

<sup>1</sup> There is a certain amount of doubt as to whether Captain Fryatt was ever given a chance of appealing at all. There is no suggestion of an appeal in the minutes of the court martial, and neither Mr. Hartnell nor the Belgian officials at the execution knew anything about it. It is certainly most curious that Captain Fryatt should never have mentioned his reason for not appealing to Mr. Hartnell; but, on the other hand, the German Committee of jurists who inquired into the matter in 1919 stated, positively, that Captain Fryatt was given the chance of appealing and rejected it.

time Admiral von Schröder was getting anxious. The telegram from the Foreign Office showed him, clearly enough, that the American Government was taking steps to secure a fair trial, and having completely thwarted them in this, he was anxious that no further move from high places should come between him and the final accomplishment of the work which he had set himself to do. Orders were therefore issued that Captain Fryatt was to be shot that evening; and not even the committee of German lawyers who, years later, exerted their ingenuity and learning in excusing the whole business, and relieving everybody of blame, could find one shadow of excuse for Schröder's decision.

The findings of this body will be dealt with later; but one of its statements should be noted at once: "In reviewing the case, the commission has gained the impression that the military authorities, though they proceeded rigorously, never failed to respect the manly courage of Captain Fryatt." If that is so, it is the greater shame to them that they denied him the rights of a man about to die, and surrounded his death with brutality and outrage.

After the trial was over, Captain Fryatt was put under the charge of Mr. Vergaelen, the governor of the prison, and was allowed for a few minutes to walk about the prison yard. Mr. Schaloigne, a political prisoner, strove to comfort him, and Mademoiselle Arens de Berteghem, a Belgian lady of noble family, who had earned imprisonment by acts of compassion to prisoners and soldiers, seized his hands and promised that she would remain with him to the end. As they were talking, two German officers entered the yard and walked up to Captain Fryatt: unnerved by the long trial, he clutched Mr. Schaloigne's arm, and asked whether they were going to shoot him outright. But the two officers had come only to watch the nervous tension of a man under sentence of death, and when they started to mock and jibe at him, Captain Fryatt turned away with a gesture of scorn. At 5 o'clock the prisoner was taken back to his cell and Mr. Hartnell was allowed to talk to him.

He had faced death so often, in the course of his life, that he viewed what was coming calmly; but "he was deeply upset," Mr. Hartnell has recorded, "at the unfair and cowardly way in which everything had been

done." Captain Fryatt was still under the impression that he would not be shot until the following morning, and it was only towards 6 o'clock that a Lutheran minister entered the cell and told him to prepare for death at once. Naval Chaplain Koehne had half an hour in which to bring comfort to the doomed man ; and he seems to have spent a good part of it in trying to persuade him that he had been justly condemned for an offence against the laws of civilised warfare. Fryatt, it is recorded, nodded, and said that he was ready to answer for what he had done. The chaplain did, then, try to perform the solemn duty which had been laid upon him. He read over the twenty-third Psalm with him ; and so it was that, during his last hour of life, Captain Fryatt heard words which must have recalled the green woods and pastures of England to his mind, though they were uttered in the accents of his enemies. Had he wished to be assured of the mercy of God, he would not have gone to Naval Chaplain Koehne for guidance ; and his last thoughts were for his family, not for himself. To the harsh, unfeeling stranger who stood beside him he confided the names of his children, and he asked of him where his body would lie ; when told that it would be in Bruges cemetery, he begged that a photograph of it should be sent to his wife. He could not know that whilst it lay there it would be tended, and covered with flowers, by Belgian ladies, until the day should come when it would be carried back with honour to the land which he had served so faithfully. Finally he asked the chaplain to write to his wife : a duty which was scrupulously performed in a letter of 400 words, of which nearly half were devoted to explaining that Captain Fryatt had been justly sentenced.

Just before half-past six Captain Fryatt was led away. Mademoiselle Arens de Berteghem was on the watch, and spoke to him as he went out, at the greatest risk to herself, for he was then under an armed escort of German soldiers.

To the very end the Germans strove to insult a courage which they could not break. Captain Fryatt was taken to the Caserne d'Infanterie, up the long avenue of shady trees that passes in front of it, with a brass band playing at the head of the firing party. They led him through the gateway under the two-storied house which stands



on one side of the barraek yard, where the senior officer present—Colonel von Bottelar—stood smoking a cigar, with a sporting dog on a leash beside him, and then tied him to an execution post which had been set up in the filthiest corner of the yard, near a manure heap. Nothing shook the prisoner's composure, and he received twelve bullets in his chest without flinching.

If, in the vast staff which the German Government employed to spread propaganda abroad, there existed some honest and dispassionate-minded man, who traced the impression left on neutrals by German methods of war, the effect of Captain Fryatt's execution must have filled him with grief and shame. In America, the single voice which spoke in defence of the German court martial only served to make the opposite opinion more emphatic. The entire press of the capital condemned what had happened in the severest terms, and the *New York Times* described it as "a deliberate murder." American opinion was not moved by one of those gusts of feeling which exhaust themselves in the clamour of the daily press. The country was deeply stirred: the case was examined by the most learned and eminent jurists in the land, and their sentence was unanimous. Dr. Monroe Smith, after weighing every argument that either side could advance, concluded that Germany was "endeavouring to remodel the existing code of naval warfare, in its own immediate interest, and by its sole authority," and that "the state which assumes to be a law to itself puts itself outside the law." Dr. Ellery Stowell was just as impartial in examining the circumstances, and equally firm in his conclusions: "The execution of Captain Fryatt, under the circumstances reported in the press, is an intentional taking of human life without justification in law."

The private leagues and associations of America constitute one of the strongest motive forces of its public opinion: it must, therefore, have been with mixed feelings that German residents in America read a stirring manifesto issued by the American Rights League:

"Although the Fryatt case is not more shocking than many other acts of the German Government, it is a clear reminder that Germany still defies our ideas of law and

righteousness . . . and we believe that American citizens ought to consider the Fryatt case, and take whatever action is within their power to keep it unforgotten in the public conscience. Will you write, or, better, telegraph, to your Congress man at Washington, to your Senator, and to the State Department, protesting against the execution of Captain Fryatt? And will you also, by personal interview or by letter, bring the matter before your local newspaper again? You will be told that its news value has passed; will you answer that its moral challenge has not passed?"

In Holland the Press was unanimous; not even those sections of it which had shown German sympathies could find a word of excuse. The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* could only say that it would "disgust neutrals and arouse fresh hatred and bitterness in Britain." In Norway and Denmark opinion expressed itself in the same way. What can have been the feelings of those Germans who had seen the brains and treasure expended without stint upon propaganda, as this thunder of disapproval rolled in on their ears from every country in the two hemispheres?

It was possibly Admiral von Schröder's wish to impress the world with the relentless character of German power, when he brought Captain Fryatt to trial by methods which disregarded the form and substance of justice. If so, his advice was singularly unfortunate, for all it did was to spread over the whole German administration a dishonour which should have attached to him and Dr. Zäpfel alone. If the trial and execution were intended as a deterrent to British seamen, the plan was as contemptible as it was cruel, for the case of Captain Fryatt, his trial and death, set up a standard of conduct which every British captain strove to copy.

In England the news of Captain Fryatt's death was received with indignation and horror; and we can do him no higher honour than to show that our first feelings have been justified by time and knowledge, and that he earned his death by asserting a principle embedded in our rights as a Sea Power.

The task has been simplified by the German Government. In April 1919 a special Committee of Inquiry

assembled in Berlin to see whether international law had been violated by the trial and sentence of Captain Fryatt. In their opinion it had not: nothing in the whole affair called for the mildest censure, except the haste with which the execution had been carried out. Obviously, then, Captain Fryatt's best defence consists in answering those who have continued to assert that he was justly condemned.

First, the Committee examined the technical procedure of the court martial at Bruges, to see whether it had been competent to try the case. They found that the Court was competent, in that it was empowered, by an Imperial Edict, to try prisoners of war and foreigners not belonging to the armed forces of the enemy, and that the procedure laid down for the arrest and detention of persons about to be brought to trial had been complied with. On the first head the Committee was probably right; but their ruling on the second calls for comment. Paragraph 4 of the Imperial Edict runs thus: "The first consideration with regard to the competence of an authority is that the accused shall have been arrested by its subordinates." The Committee of Inquiry stated, with regard to this, that Captain Fryatt had been arrested early in July 1916, "within the jurisdiction of the Admiral Commanding the Marine Corps," and that "the competence of this command was not prejudiced in that Captain Fryatt was first taken to the civilian camp at Ruhleben, and thence transferred to Bruges." All available evidence tends to show that this was not so. As far as we can tell, Captain Fryatt was arrested at the gates of Ruhleben Camp—which was not in the jurisdiction of Admiral von Schröder—and there is no proof at all that those who arrested him belonged to the Marine Corps. The Committee's findings are therefore suspect from the start.

The Committee next dealt with the question of Captain Fryatt's defence; but it is not possible to criticise this part of their findings without a brief examination of German procedure. A long preliminary inquiry takes place before anybody can be brought before a German court martial. Those who conduct it are appointed by the local commander-in-chief; and it is their duty to discover whether sufficient material exists to support an indictment and

a prosecution. Their powers are very wide; for they can examine witnesses in secret, and have full right of access to the accused man if he is under arrest. When they have finished, an indictment is made out upon their report and a day fixed for trial. Both the indictment and the date of the trial must at once be communicated to the accused person. As the results of this inquiry generally constitute the matter for the prosecution, a prisoner ought, obviously, to be allowed the advice of a counsel whilst it is being conducted; but this the German law denies him. He is only allowed to consult an adviser if witnesses, who will not be present at the court martial, are examined at the preliminary proceedings. In all other cases, he must face the inquisition by himself.

It is not quite clear whether Captain Fryatt should have been given the benefit of this permission. If Captain Gansser was examined by the officers of the preliminary inquiry, he was certainly entitled to it; for Captain Gansser's evidence at the court martial was given in writing. But the minutes of the court martial do not explain how the evidence was originally obtained. All we know for certain is that Major Naumann thought it most suspicious, and maintained stoutly that it ought never to have been admitted. It is therefore not possible to settle the point outright on the available material; but we can say that Captain Fryatt was denied the opportunities of defence which the German law allows.

When the preliminary inquiry is over, the prisoner is allowed to choose his own defender; if he does not do so, the local commander-in-chief must appoint one; but, even in this case, he must consult the prisoner's wishes.<sup>1</sup>

These regulations were absolutely set at nought by Admiral von Schröder, first, because he never gave Captain Fryatt any opportunity of appointing his own defender, and, secondly, because he never gave him the choice between being defended by Major Naumann or by the counsel whom the American Embassy would have employed.

The German Court of Investigation decided that there was "no rule of International Law" obliging the court martial to accede to the American Embassy's request.

<sup>1</sup> German Military Court Regulations (*Militärstraf Gerichtsordnung*), §§ 337, 338, 342.

Possibly not, but that does not excuse them for disguising that their own procedure had been violated.

Harsh and rigorous as the German military law seems to us, it assures an accused person a proper means of defending himself.<sup>1</sup> First, a whole week must elapse between the date on which the indictment is communicated to him and the day of the trial, and the period can only be shortened with his consent. Secondly, he must be allowed, during that period, to communicate with his defender by word of mouth and in writing. Thirdly, his defender must have all the documents of the preliminary inquiry sent to him as soon as it is over. Fourthly, if the trial takes place before a week has elapsed since the accused man was first shown the indictment, the president of the court martial must let him know that he has a right to ask for a delay in the proceedings. Fifthly, it is particularly laid down that if the defence of the accused person has been hampered he may appeal.<sup>2</sup>

The accused man is, however, deprived of nearly all these safeguards if the court martial is held "in the field," and, as these words are of great importance, it is made to be quite clear about their meaning. They were defined by a German law of 1898 in the following manner. The regulations governing the procedure of the military criminal courts held in the field hold good: (i) for the duration of the "mobile condition" of the army or navy, or isolated parts of the army or navy, and (ii) for the garrison of a fortified place, threatened by the enemy so long as the beginning and the end of this condition (of being threatened) has been notified by the governor or commandant, and (iii) for prisoners in enemy country, or theatres of operation, depots or sea and coastal war zones. This, then, is the clause upon which so much depends. So long as Captain Fryatt was at Ruhleben, or the military district in which Ruhleben lies, he could certainly be court martialled, but he would then be protected by all the rules of ordinary procedure. Once he had been removed from thence and carried within the limits of Admiral von Schröder's command, he was deprived of them all. No restrictions

<sup>1</sup> German Military Court Regulations (*Militarstraf Gerichtsordnung*), §§ 226, 267.

<sup>2</sup> German Military Court Regulations (*Militarstraf Gerichtsordnung*), §§ 345, 275, 400.

would then be imposed upon the Admiral and his subordinates; they could prepare their case as slowly and methodically as they wished, they could hurry on the trial and the sentence as much as they chose, and they could take full advantage of all those rules, which for the sake of ensuring a rapid procedure, make it so easy for the prosecution to obtain a conviction and so hard for an innocent man to prove his innocence.

Captain Fryatt was, as we know, taken from Ruhleben to Bruges, and the Court of Investigation never once asked whether his removal was justified or necessary; that is, they refused to admit any discussion as to whether justice had been administered in the abstract or according to the letter of their own code; for Admiral von Schröder was not content with trying the prisoner by extraordinary martial law, he actually broke its provisions in his eagerness to obtain a conviction.

It cannot be denied that the field procedure cancels all right of appeal and makes it unnecessary that a week should elapse between the indictment and the trial; but it still allows a prisoner the right to choose his counsel, and to consult with him "if circumstances permit."<sup>1</sup> Circumstances did permit and Captain Fryatt was denied both.

Nor is this all, the court left it on record elsewhere that the court martial procedure laid down in the edict was based on the assumption that it would be put into force under conditions of moving warfare, and was careful to add that due allowance should have been made for the fact that these conditions did not obtain at Bruges. Now, a regulation which lays down that those who defend court-martial prisoners must be on the spot is obviously one which assumes a state of moving warfare; for proceedings cannot be postponed, whilst armies are on the march, in order to allow a prisoner to consult a counsel who has to be sent for from a place several hundreds of miles away. As the court brought forward this argument when they considered the execution, and ignored it when they considered the defence, their findings are both suspect and slovenly.

Next the Committee considered whether the sentence

<sup>1</sup> German Military Court Regulations (*Militarstraf Gerichtsordnung*), § 348.

of the Court Martial at Bruges had been in accordance with the evidence available at the time. The question before them was whether Captain Fryatt's action had been in the nature of an attack or a defence. They decided that, as he had sighted the submarine at a greater distance than he admitted, and that, as he could have escaped by flight, he attacked from the moment when he steered straight for her. In their opinion the judgment agreed with the evidence. That was not a proper way of deciding whether Captain Fryatt attacked the submarine or defended himself. The heart of the question lies in the German proclamation with regard to submarine war. According to it submarine commanders had orders to attack all merchant vessels at sight, so that the mere appearance of a German submarine was in the nature of an attack, regardless of its distance away; and Captain Fryatt, in command of a defenceless ship, was under no obligation to limit his own means of thwarting it. The Committee never once discussed either the proclamation or its consequences, and stated, merely, that Captain Fryatt's "last manœuvre, carried out against a totally defenceless opponent, was in the nature of an attack." When a submarine, with torpedoes in the firing position, meets an unarmed merchantman at sea, she may be outmanœuvred, but she is never wholly defenceless, and a body which uses language of the kind is not impartial.

The Committee then raised a further question: Whether anything which affected the Court Martial's finding had been brought to light since the trial took place. Two documents which had not been produced before were examined: the log of the *Brussels* and the Admiralty instructions to merchant captains. They decided that the entry in the *Brussels's* log supported, rather than weakened, the main contention. The essential part of that entry was that the *Brussels* had been "steered straight for the submarine"; and it is quite reasonable to say that words of the kind imply an intention to attack.

The Admiralty instructions raised a much bigger question: they cut at the very root of the indictment against Captain Fryatt, and cleared him of the charge which had been laid against him. The instructions were in two sections. In the first merchant captains were given a

general warning about the areas in which German submarines were likely to be met, and a set of sketches were added, to enable them to be distinguished at sight. Section II dealt with the best means of escaping from an attack, and opened with the sentence, "No British merchant vessel should ever tamely surrender to a submarine, but should do her utmost to escape." There were two ways of doing this: (i) by bringing the submarine astern, and making for the nearest land, and (ii) by steering straight for her if she was sighted ahead.

Now these instructions destroyed the whole case against Captain Fryatt. The German military code states explicitly that civilians who make war under the direction of a "war lord" cannot be regarded as *franc-tireurs*; so that, even admitting that Captain Fryatt had attacked the submarine when he steered for her, he was justified by the mere fact that he was acting under Admiralty instructions. How did the Committee get over the difficulty? By the simple device of discussing that part of the Admiralty instructions which advised escape by flight; by omitting all mention of the other, and by adding to the findings of the Court a mutilated copy of the instructions, from which every syllable which went against their contention had previously been expunged.<sup>1</sup> The Committee was, therefore, as dishonest as it was prejudiced, and its proceedings are the more disgraceful in that they were largely directed by men of high legal position in a country justly famous for the learning of its jurists and the gravity of its Courts.

But Captain Fryatt's defence is not exhausted by the mere exposure of the subterfuges of this Committee. He was justified in acting as he did by the laws of England and the law of nations, and we must now go back to those first principles of reason and justice which establish his innocence.

In one of its last conclusions, the Committee of Inquiry held that the Court Martial at Bruges was right in condemning Captain Fryatt as a "*franc-tireur* of the seas." There is no such thing. The guilt of a *franc-tireur* springs from the manner in which land war is carried on, and any attempt to draw analogies from war by land to war at sea breaks down utterly. When the armies of two nations are at war, all belligerent acts are directed against the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendices A and B.



regular forces of each side ; and a general agreement exists that the civilian population shall be exempted as far as possible. It is quite true that this rule is very often violated ; but breaches do not destroy a principle, any more than successful thieves invalidate the law against theft, and this general principle involves certain consequences. The first and most important of these is that, as the lives and property of civilians are to be respected by hostile armies, then civilians must respect the exemption which they enjoy. In other words, they must not take up arms. Those who disregard this obligation are *franc-tireurs* ; and their action is, in a certain sense, similar to that of a man who assaults another without provocation. But if no such convention existed, if a civilian's life and property were threatened from the moment he saw an enemy soldier, there would be no such thing as a *franc-tireur*. Would anybody suggest that a man who had no choice but to fight, or receive a bayonet in his body, would commit a crime if he chose to fight ? Or does any sane person contend that a man would have no right to defend his property if the first enemy soldier he met had the right to destroy or confiscate it ? Obviously not ; a man so placed might lose his life in defending his house and chattels : he would never be a *franc-tireur*.

Now it is precisely because sea warfare is governed by no convention similar to the one which obtains in war by land, that the conduct of civilians and non-combatants at sea is subject to a wholly different set of rules. The convention with regard to property at sea is, that an enemy may confiscate it if he finds it, and the natural corollary to this is, that the owners of such property, or the persons into whose hands it has been confided, may defend it by arms if they chose to take the risk. That risk is, either that they may be killed outright, or made prisoners of war if captured. The general law of nations acknowledges this right to resist, but imposes no obligation. The English statute and common law go farther : not only is a master obliged to resist ; but he is allowed to compel all passengers on board to assist him, and to punish them if they refuse.<sup>1</sup>

There is, none the less, such a thing as illegal sea warfare. If the captain of a merchantman sailed about seizing and

<sup>1</sup> "The Master Mariner's Authority," William Senior, *Law Quarterly Review*.

overpowering enemy merchant vessels, without any commission from his government, he would be guilty of piracy. But piracy involves the question of robbery, and is possible in war as well as peace: a pirate is not a *franc-tireur*, and there is no use in suggesting that the offence of the one is the same as the offence of the other (as the Committee of Inquiry did) because the death sentence attaches to both. A *franc-tireur* of the seas would be a man who, without authority, cruised about the seas in war-time, sinking all enemy ships which he could find, simply for the sake of destroying them and taking life. To suggest that Captain Fryatt's action in March 1915 in any way resembled such a line of conduct was contrary to the known facts.

There is, thus, no rule of reason which forbids a merchant captain to resist capture at sea, and his right to do so has been fully admitted in practice. In the year 1799, a case of salvage claims arising out of the recapture of a prize was argued in the Admiralty Court. The claims themselves do not concern us; but the words of Sir William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell, upon the right of resistance to capture are very relevant:

“It is a meritorious act to join in such attempts; and if there are any persons who entertain doubts as to whether it ought to be so regarded, I desire not to be considered as one of the persons who entertain any such doubts.”

This judgment was no expression of a merely personal opinion nor a statement of the English common law; for, in the very same case, Sir William Scott described the Court over which he presided as a “Court of the law of nations.”

In the year 1804, another case, involving the same general principle, was brought up for decision, the question being whether an enemy merchant captain who had seized his captor's ship thereby rendered his entire cargo, whether enemy or neutral, subject to condemnation. After hearing the arguments of both parties, Lord Stowell stated the general principle in the widest and most emphatic terms, and gave judgment accordingly:

“That there is any ground for condemnation of the

cargo in the conduct of the master cannot be maintained. It could only be the hostile act of a hostile person who was a prisoner of war, and who, unless under parole, had a perfect right to emancipate himself by seizing his own vessel. . . . If a neutral attempts a rescue he violates a duty imposed upon him by the law of nations. . . . With an enemy master, the case is very different. No duty is violated by such an act on his part."

In other countries, the same question has been decided in the same way. During the Napoleonic wars the case of the *Pégou* was brought before the Court of Cassation in Paris. The vessel flew the American flag, and had been condemned as a prize in the Court of First Instance at Lorient on the ground that she had been armed for war, without any commission from her Government, with "ten guns of different calibres, musketry, and munitions of war." The case was learnedly and elaborately argued, and, in giving judgment, Portalis was as careful in stating the basic principle involved, as Lord Stowell had been in the British Court. "Defence is a natural right, and means of defence are legitimate in voyages at sea, as in all other dangerous occupations."<sup>1</sup>

The Courts of America have been equally firm. In the year 1815 the case of the *Néréide* was brought before the Supreme Court on appeal. The question for decision was whether neutral goods which had been put on board an armed merchant vessel, flying the flag of a country at war, had thereby been tainted with belligerency. On this point the judges could not agree; but they were quite decided on the question whether resistance to capture was lawful. The majority of the Court, in giving judgment, stated that: "A belligerent [merchant] vessel had a perfect right to arm in his own self-defence," and the judge who disagreed with the general conclusion of the Court was careful to say, in his dissenting judgment, that a belligerent merchant ship "may lawfully resist search."<sup>2</sup> This general right has not only been asserted in Prize Courts: it has been regarded as so inherent in every merchant captain engaged in trading and trafficking upon the high seas that it has influenced policy.

<sup>1</sup> Pistoye et Duverdy: *Traité de Prises Maritimes*, vol. ii, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Moore, *Digest of International Law*, vol. vii, p. 488.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the revolt of the Spanish colonies in South America started a desperate guerilla warfare at sea. Being unable to equip ships themselves, the revolutionary Governments encouraged American adventurers to man and arm vessels in their own country, and then to sail for some harbour in the revolted colonies. After receiving letters of marque from the revolutionary Governments, they preyed upon Spanish commerce from one end of the Atlantic to the other. There was, in all this, much that was unlawful; but, although the Supreme Court often refused to admit as prizes vessels which the Courts of the revolted colonies had declared to be so, and though many restitutions were ordered, the American Government never prevented the arming and equipping of these privateers. So long as there was a reasonable chance that the arms and munitions supplied were to be used in defending lawful commerce, the right of self-defence could not be tampered with for reasons of policy.<sup>1</sup>

It would be enough to limit quotations to the cases cited; for the law of nations is a set of customs, and not a written code: it is composed of what has been done and not of what has been written. Still, the opinions of high authorities are valuable, for they may draw from cases and judgments consequences that may not be apparent at a first inspection. In this matter, however, expert opinion neither widens nor restricts the general principle. It merely reasserts it; and Oppenheim sums up the considered opinion of the jurists—British, American, French, and Italian—when he states that—

“Enemy merchant ships may be attacked only if they refuse to submit to visit, after having been duly signalled to do so. No duty exists for an enemy merchantman to submit to visit; on the contrary she may refuse, and defend herself ‘against an attack.’”

German opinion was quite as firm. Perels stated the general rule without the least equivocation; Dr. Wehberg repeated it in terms equally emphatic:

“The enemy merchant ship has then the right of defence

<sup>1</sup> See *Decisions of the Supreme Court of the U.S.A.*, vol. v, p. 307.

against an enemy attack, and this right it can exercise against visitation, for this is, indeed, the first act of capture."

But the German contention is not yet answered: This right of resistance might be admitted, the Committee stated, but only in the case of armed merchantmen; unarmed vessels like the *Brussels* must submit. There is only one test to this argument: Do modern states divide merchant vessels into two classes, each with its own status, duties, and privileges? If they did, the German plea would be sound; but the question has been most elaborately discussed, and the decision come to is in exactly the opposite sense. Previous to 1914, the British Government had mounted guns for defensive purposes in a number of large liners. As soon as the country was at war, British representatives abroad were instructed to explain to neutral Governments that such armament as might be found on board liners visiting their harbours was for defence alone. Those liners were still merchantmen, and would not be converted into auxiliary cruisers.

The neutral Governments of Europe and America at once examined this declaration. The smaller states of South America made practically no comment on it, and admitted armed merchant vessels to their harbours as ordinary trading-vessels. The Government of the Argentine was more particular, and strictly enforced their port regulations with regard to munitions and explosives when armed merchantmen visited Buenos Aires; but on the general principle they were most explicit:

"Foreign merchantmen, which, without having been officially declared auxiliary cruisers, none the less carry guns for their defence, may not use them within the territorial waters of the State . . . but, as these vessels have not been given the legal position of men-of-war, any act of hostility which they may commit within the territorial waters of the State will be regarded as a criminal action, falling to be judged by the laws of the nation."

Nothing could be clearer: armed merchantmen are simply merchant vessels. This admirable declaration seems to have guided the other large states of South America; for the Governments of Chile and Brazil informed the

British Foreign Office soon after that they were satisfied with the assurance given.

In the United States the British declaration was examined with the greatest care. The question made feeling run high, and, in the House of Representatives, one member after another urged that British armed merchantmen should only be admitted to American ports as auxiliary cruisers. For a time it seemed as though the Secretary of State might bow before the storm; but Senators Sterling and Lodge caused the question to be examined afresh, and when at last the Administration made up its mind, the decision given was singularly emphatic: "Merchantmen of belligerent nationality, armed only for purposes of protection against the enemy, are entitled to enter and leave neutral ports without hindrance in the course of their legitimate trade." That is, a merchantman does not change its character by the mere fact that it is defensively armed, and the rights, privileges, and status of merchantmen are uniform.

The neutral states of Europe decided in the same way; the Spanish Government simply made the captains of armed merchant vessels give assurances that they would not use their weapons for offensive purposes, and treated their ships like ordinary traders; the Scandinavian Government accepted the British declaration without comment. There was, it is true, one exception. The Netherlands Government refused to admit armed merchantmen to their European ports in war-time; but the reasons for that refusal, on examination, leave the basic question quite untouched. The Netherlands Government never suggested that armed and unarmed merchantmen had a different legal status, but stated simply that the position of Holland in the North Sea made it imperative that the Government should protect its territorial waters from being the theatre of temporary hostilities. The British Government did not like it at the time, but the argument was reasonable. An armed merchantman in the Flanders bight, steaming from a submarine at the top of her speed, might easily be carried over to the Dutch shore. Shots would certainly be exchanged during the pursuit, and all the tiresome consequences of acts of war committed in neutral waters would follow. The rule of the Netherlands Government was therefore based upon policy and con-

venience, and, to make its position quite clear, armed merchant vessels were admitted to harbours in the Dutch colonies on the same terms as ordinary trading-vessels.

Europe reached the same conclusions as the American states, and the distinction which the German Committee of Inquiry strove to make between armed and unarmed merchantmen was no distinction at all. They only attempted to make it because the German prize code allows the right of an armed merchantman to resist capture, and they did not dare face the consequences of their own rule of war. The right to arm is meaningless unless the wider right of self-defence is admitted, and an impartial body would have confessed outright that Captain Fryatt's action was justified by reason, by practice, and by the laws of the German Empire.

How did the German Committee of Inquiry escape from this cataract of testimony? It argued that a merchant captain's right to resist capture was still undecided, not because Prize Courts had disputed it, or because it had been questioned in practice, but because some writers had asserted the contrary. Upon what writers did they rely? Upon two delegates at the meeting of the Institut du Droit International at Oxford in 1913, whose reservation on the matter disputed could not have been extended to submarine warfare; upon a few isolated writers in the British daily press; upon a contributor to a publication called *Concord*; and upon Dr. Schramm, who, "as confidential adviser to the German Admiralty, voiced the opinion of the German Naval Staff." Having confronted the accumulated judgment of centuries with these contrary opinions, the Committee of Inquiry decided that the Court Martial at Bruges committed no breach of international law in following Dr. Schramm upon a point so keenly disputed. If the import and meaning of the law of nations are to be thus expounded; if it is to be open to all who wish to settle a point, to pick out opinions favourable to their own view from the enormous literature of international law, and call them proof of a contention, then, what has hitherto been called the science of international jurisprudence becomes, at once, a vast system of casuistry, which awaits the coming of a second Pascal to fall into universal contempt.

But international law is not built up of "probable

opinions," nor is it the product of learned minds. It is the recorded custom of civilised peoples, and the true meaning of those customs may be rightly or wrongly interpreted. Captain Fryatt's innocence is alike attested by British history, by British laws, and by British privileges at sea. He upheld a right which is vital to those who go down to the sea, and defended it with constancy, loyalty, and unflinching courage. His body now rests in the cemetery at Harwich, and a memorial at Bruges commemorates his life and death. He committed no crime in national or international law, and the British people instinctively have paid, and will continue to pay, high honour to his memory as a martyr to a great cause.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ENEMY'S FINAL PLUNGE

WHEN the German Government abandoned what was in fact, if not in name, unrestricted submarine warfare in the spring of 1916, its Ministers and advisers were divided into three groups of opinion. First, the Imperial Chancellor and some of his assistants, like Helfferich, looked upon the concession as a first step towards a general peace to be effected by President Wilson's mediation ; secondly, there was a powerful group of military men who, though they did not like submitting to American pressure, none the less admitted that it was the best course to take ; thirdly, there was the solid block of naval officers holding high rank who bitterly regretted the Chancellor's concession, and were determined to reverse it if they could.

It was only natural, perhaps, that the officers of the German Navy should have been deeply stirred by the prospect which had opened before their eyes. Early in the year the Chief of the Staff, General von Falkenhayn, had stated that the German Army could not finish the war without naval co-operation ; and the assistance for which he craved was an attack on the Allied, and particularly the British, lines of communication so powerful that it would sensibly diminish the volume of military supplies to the chief theatres of war.

Falkenhayn's appeal had produced a remarkable effect on naval opinion, and particularly on the junior officers and no small proportion of the men. He had suggested that the hour had struck for the young German Navy to win lasting glory. It had lived since its birth in humiliating subordination to the other service, and now saw a unique opportunity in the Chief of the Staff's admission. Could they but carry through the task assigned to them, the share of German naval officers would be equal to that of the leaders of the Army ; they would rank in fame with the

Roman Consul who "had not despaired of the republic" in her darkest hours; they would be raised to an equal place in German history with the Scharnhorsts, the Derfflingers, and the Blüchers; and they would live in future years as the men whom Imperial Germany delighted to honour.

During the ten months between May 1916 and February 1917, two of these currents of opinion struggled for mastery, for the military party, which "pursued the middle course," soon disappeared and was replaced by another which became the chief advocate of the strictly naval standpoint. The Chancellor, striving for a negotiated peace, was thus confronted with a navy, supported in influential quarters, demanding submarine warfare on a scale which would make negotiations impossible. In the end the Navy won; but it was only by a narrow margin.

It is not within the scope of this history to trace the diplomatic negotiations carried on by the Chancellor and Count Bernstorff during this ten months; both men pressed them forward steadily and ably, and, as they worked with the Emperor's full approval, they were able to keep naval pressure in check, so long as they had the smallest hope of success. The naval leaders thus saw the splendid perspective, which had been opened to them by General von Falkenhayn's appreciation, grow fainter and more distant, but they never despaired of reaching their goal, and the history of the submarine campaign between April 1916 and February 1917 is the history of the German Navy's effort to make its will prevail in the Empire's councils.

At the outset they had to secure union amongst themselves, for they were sharply divided. Admiral Scheer, in command of the High Seas Fleet, hoped to force the hand of those with whom the decision lay, by refusing to allow the submarines to operate against commerce like surface cruisers, claiming that the conditions exposed officers and men to risks which they should not be called upon to face, and that, in any event, the limited warfare could not attain its objective. By sullenly adopting an "all or nothing" attitude, and by keeping the submarine flotillas idle at their moorings in the Jade and the Ems, he seems to have hoped that he would raise such in-

dignation in the hard-pressed Fatherland that the Chancellor would be compelled to give way. Admiral von Holtzendorff was convinced that such an attitude was unwise. He was in favour of keeping the submarines at work in order to make their achievements the basis of a demand for greater latitude. His view prevailed, and the first phase of this new period is the one in which the German submarines adapted themselves to their new orders, and endeavoured to show what results they could achieve in spite of their adherence, more or less strictly, to the restrictions of cruiser warfare. This phase stretched right on into the autumn of the year 1916, by which time the U-boats had crawled down the trade routes and were operating off the Azores, on the track to Archangel, in the White Sea, and on the western side of the Atlantic. The British Naval Staff in Whitehall had watched their progress with the anxiety of a physician who studies the steady, unrelenting spread of a harmful symptom.

In the next phase the U-boats closed up their areas of activity slightly; and in the third and last they steadily and persistently intensified their efforts in the theatres which their experience had shown to be most promising. This final period simply marks an effort on the part of the Navy to break through the restrictions by which they were bound. Its incidents supply proof of what Karl Helfferich had foreseen when he said: "I could never get it out of my mind that when the Lords of the Navy said extended submarine warfare, they meant unrestricted submarine warfare." The remark was true. During the autumn months of 1916 the number of vessels sunk without warning rose steadily, until, at the beginning of the New Year, the pretence of attacking commerce according to the rules of cruiser warfare had worn very thin; and when, in February 1917, the Chancellor announced that Germany was compelled to resume intensive submarine warfare owing to the rejection of her peace proposals, he was announcing what had, to all intents and purposes, become an accomplished fact.

The execution of Captain Fryatt at the end of July, and the indignation which that event aroused throughout the civilised world, was not without its influence, as has been suggested, on the enemy's submarine policy. The result of the Battle of Jutland had prompted Admiral

Scheer to renew his representations to the Emperor. "A victorious end to the war at not too distant a date," he wrote, "can only be looked for by the crushing of English economic life through U-boat action against English commerce." The advice of the Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet in favour of intensive warfare was, however, unacceptable at the moment, and the record of ship sinkings during the month of August reflected the confusion of policy which prevailed in the official world of Germany at this period. During August only twenty-two ships, of 42,553 tons, were sunk by submarine, with the loss of five lives. The one vessel which was torpedoed without warning was the *Aaro* (2,603 tons). A wireless message from Berlin announced, in pursuance with the official German policy of the moment, that the *Aaro* had been blown up by a "warship," it being added that "there seems to be little hope of anyone being saved." The deliberate misrepresentation was only revealed later on. While on a voyage to Christiania the ship was sunk in the North Sea by a submarine. Only three lives were, in fact, lost, and the remainder, including the master (Mr. Harry Newton), were taken prisoners and interned at Tielmen. On the same day the *Heighington* (2,800 tons) was captured and torpedoed off Cape Serrat. On succeeding days a number of small ships were secured by the enemy, but in no case were any members of the crew either killed or taken prisoner.

During this period the enemy still continued his activities in the Mediterranean. The remainder of the month supplied only two outstanding incidents—the destruction of the *Swedish Prince* (3,712 tons) in the Eastern Mediterranean, when on passage to Bizerta, and the loss of the *Duart* (3,108 tons) off the Algerian coast on the 31st. On the morning of the 17th the former vessel was steaming in company with the *Astereas* when a submarine was seen. The *Swedish Prince*, which had a gun on board, immediately warned her unarmed companion of the submarine's presence, and both vessels altered course to southward at full speed. Within a quarter of an hour a duel had developed between the enemy and the defensively armed merchantman, but the 3-pounder gun of the British vessel proved useless at the range selected by the sub-

marine. Nine or ten shots struck the *Swedish Prince*, the second officer receiving wounds from which he afterwards died. The contest was a hopeless one, so the master (Mr. J. A. Halloway) at last ordered the engines to be stopped. While preparations were being made to abandon the ship, the submarine continued firing, and then, coming alongside the ship's boats to which the crew had taken refuge, made Captain Halloway, the chief engineer (Mr. William Poole), and the gunner, a Frenchman, prisoners. The chief officer and the remainder of the crew eventually reached Port Pantellaria without further misadventure. The *Duart* on the last day of the month fell a victim to an Austrian submarine.

Of the thirteen ships, of 34,862 tons, which escaped capture in August, possibly the most notable case was that of the little Hull steamer, the *Destro* (859 tons). On the afternoon of August 3rd, when nine miles N.E. by E. of Coquet Island, a submarine opened fire from her two guns. The master of the *Destro* (Mr. Edward B. Johnson) had no defence except his speed, but he at once brought the submarine astern of him. Time and again the *Destro* was hit. The enemy repeatedly manœuvred to get on the quarter of the British vessel. At last Captain Johnson thought an opportunity offered to ram the enemy, so he put his helm hard over, but the submarine did the same. As a result of this manœuvre, the *Destro* gained an increased lead, but it was not until the unequal action had lasted fifty minutes that the enemy abandoned the chase. By that time the ship's boats had been badly damaged by gunfire and the funnel had been holed, making stoking very difficult, while the bridge and deck-house, as well as the ladders and compass, had all suffered in greater or less degree. Captain Johnson was awarded the D.S.C. for his determined resistance, and the chief engineer (Mr. T. Martin) was mentioned in despatches.

Another illustration of the fine courage which British seamen were exhibiting was furnished by the *Strathness* (4,345 tons). She was in the Mediterranean when she was attacked at a range of 5,000 yards. The enemy discharged thirty shots without hitting the ship, and the *Strathness*, with her 15-pounder, replied with twenty-five rounds; one of them struck the submarine and caused a large volume of smoke to rise from her. Her captain

evidently concluded that he had met a tartar and made off. For the second time in the course of a short period, the master (Mr. David Thompson) had fought a successful action against submarines, and he was mentioned in despatches.

The losses in September rose ; thirty-four ships, of 84,596 tons, were destroyed by submarines and sixteen lives were sacrificed. Nine ships were sunk without warning, supplying an indication of the little respect which some of the German officers operating at sea had for the superior orders which they had received. All these infractions of the rules of cruiser warfare happened in the Mediterranean. The heaviest loss of life occurred in the latter half of the month, when the enemy exhibited a new phase of ruthlessness. Six members of the crew of the *Inverbervie* (4,309 tons) were killed on the 14th, and three days later the *Lord Tredegar* (3,856 tons) and the *Dewa* (3,802 tons) went down off Malta, four lives and three lives respectively being lost. Throughout the month the enemy pursued the new policy of making prisoners, taking off defensively armed ships the gunners as well as the masters.

The story of the circumstances in which the *Roddam* (3,218 tons) was captured seventy-six miles east-south-east from Barcelona may serve as an example of the conditions in which merchant shipping at this period was carried on. On the morning of September 26th the *Roddam* was making her way home to England, when a French torpedo-boat destroyer signalled that a submarine had been seen some hours before, making a course which would bring her near the *Roddam*. The master changed his course and went on his way. A short time afterwards another French destroyer issued another warning, and gave the master a change of course which would, it was thought, ensure the safety of his ship. As soon as she was well away on her new course, a submarine opened fire at long range. The weather was fine and the atmosphere clear, but the captain, though he must have realised the penalty he was incurring at the hands of the enemy—the submarine was flying the Austrian flag—ran up his ensign and replied with the one little gun available. The resistance was, of course, hopeless, but it was characteristic of the spirit in which merchant seamen of this period were confronting the enemy. We

have in the sworn statement of the second officer, Mr. A. A. French, an unadorned record of the way in which the ship met her fate :

“ At 4 o'clock p.m. I was relieved from the bridge and went below at about half-past four. I heard a shell come across the bridge, and I then ran up to the bridge and saw the submarine at about 4.35 p.m. The captain gave me the order to keep the ship's stern to the submarine and ordered the gunners to return fire, which was done. We ran for about fifteen minutes until a shell exploded in the chart-house. The captain then ordered the boats to be got ready. The gunners came aft and reported that we were hopelessly outranged. The ship was stopped and the boats pulled away.

“ The submarine when first seen was three and a half to four miles away, and remained at that distance ; the range of our gun, which was a 6-pounder, was only two miles, and all our shots dropped short. The submarine fired some twenty shots at us and we fired about ten in return. The submarine came up to my boat (the master's boat) and told the captain he was a prisoner for having fired upon him. The commander of the submarine then took the captain on board and sent him below. Noticing that our boat was holed, the submarine towed us back to our ship, allowing us to go on board to get another boat as long as we kept away from the gun platform. We went on board and lowered the motor-boat out, into which I placed eight men. About this time we lost sight of the mate's boat and did not see her again. When we were off the ship the submarine approached and fired four shots into the *Roddam* ; when we last saw her at 7 p.m., when it fell dark, she had a very heavy list and was sinking. We were picked up by the French motor patrol FRIPPONE next day at 1 p.m., and taken to Marseilles. . . . When I went on board I found the cabin saloon and chart-house all smashed up by the shell which struck us.”

Whether any of the officers and men of the *Roddam* would live to tell the tale of their adventures must have seemed at one time doubtful. Darkness had fallen and a gale had sprung up. The two well-laden boats were thirty-five miles away from the nearest land, and they

soon became separated. Mr. French has described how he and his companions were rescued, but it was not until some time later that news reached the Admiralty that the chief officer's boat had been picked up by a neutral vessel and taken into Valentia. That any of the crew survived was due to the fine seamanship exhibited by the chief officer and the second officer as they struggled in conditions of sea and weather which might well have paralysed the initiative and courage of less dauntless men.

If the sinkings during the month were heavy, the number of vessels which escaped—twenty-nine, of 122,933 tons—was also large. The captain of the *Bellview* (Mr. James S. Churchill) in particular well earned the D.S.C. which was conferred upon him in recognition of the manner in which he saved his ship. When on passage from Malta to Port Said on the 17th, a submarine was sighted on the starboard beam only three miles away. Captain Churchill followed what had now become the well-established routine in the service, putting on full steam and bringing the enemy astern of him. The submarine dived, but ten minutes later came up again on the starboard quarter. Though the range was 6,000 yards, the British vessel opened fire with the one 15-pounder gun which she mounted. By a happy chance the *Bellview* (3,567 tons) was carrying four motor-launches, and the 13-pounder guns in two of these little ships were brought into action. It was well that the *Bellview* possessed this additional defence, for after ten rounds had been fired, her 15-pounder became disabled, and the safety of the ship then depended upon the efficient use of the 13-pounders, which continued to fire unremittingly. Three hours after the submarine had been sighted a shell struck one of the motor-launches and, passing through her, penetrated the ship's hold. But events were to show that the *Bellview* had fired better in the contest than the enemy, who at half-past one, having apparently been hit, turned broadside to the ship and "when last seen appeared to be sinking by the stern."

About a week later another merchant officer, the master (Mr. G. R. Thompson) of the *Dunrobin* (3,617 tons), also gained the D.S.C. for the manner in which he fought his ship, a vessel capable of steaming only  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots and carrying only one 15-pounder gun. It was on the morning of the 26th when a submarine appeared two miles distant



from the British vessel, and Captain Thompson had barely succeeded in bringing the enemy astern, when a determined duel opened. After an interval of forty-five minutes the submarine appeared to be in difficulties and ceased firing. A high-explosive shell was then discharged by the *Dunrobin* and it struck the submarine near the conning-tower, causing an explosion; smoke rose in the air to a height of 30 feet. As the smoke cleared away it was seen that the conning-tower had been injured, and three common shells in quick succession were fired, and fired so accurately that each of them found its target. The submarine's stern by this time was high out of the water, and the last that was seen of her was when she was diving in haste at an angle of 45 degrees. Though the *Dunrobin* was hit once, she emerged from the action triumphant, having suffered no casualties.

Before the month was out the *Strathness* again came under attack, Captain Thompson having since the last occasion been succeeded by Captain L. Barnett. Once more the value of her 15-pounder gun under efficient control was illustrated. For an hour and a half she was under fire off Dragonera Island, and though she fired only 57 rounds to the enemy's 150 rounds, she won the action.

The German naval authorities, having successfully invaded the Mediterranean, were intent at this stage of the war on demonstrating in the eyes of the world the extended range of their newer and larger type of submarine. In the autumn of 1916, to the unbounded satisfaction of the people of the Fatherland, they were able to produce evidence that these vessels could be employed not merely in the Arctic Ocean, but even as far away as the coast of America. Indications of submarine activity on the route to Archangel—a route of great importance to this country owing to the necessity of importing pit-props—were furnished in the early days of October by the disappearance of the *Brantingham* (2,617 tons). Of the fate of this ship no positive evidence was ever received. She left Archangel on October 2nd and presumably she was torpedoed without warning, the master and his twenty-three companions being drowned. At this period German submarines were known to be off the coast of Lapland, and several Allied and neutral ships had been attacked and, in

some cases, sunk. The state of the weather was not such as to support the belief that the *Brantingham* had foundered. Other ships, including the *Petunia* and the *Mordant*, which subsequently passed over much the same route, saw no vestige of wreckage of any description. All reasonable doubt as to the fate of the *Brantingham* was subsequently dispelled by the admission of the German wireless that she had been torpedoed on October 4th.

Whether the complete disappearance of this ship and all on board her was part of a deliberate policy which was being pursued by some of the enemy submarines is open to doubt, but at any rate about this time the German chargé d'affaires in the Argentine suggested that merchant ships of the friendly country to which he was accredited should be *spurlos versenkt*—sunk without leaving a trace. This policy had already been recommended by a German professor. Discussing the methods to be adopted by submarines at sea, Professor Flamm, of Charlottenberg, had declared that “the best would be if destroyed neutral ships disappeared without leaving a trace, and with everything on board, because terror would very soon keep seamen and travellers away from the danger zones and thus save a number of lives.” To what extent this advice, which found official expression in the message from Count Luxburg, the chargé d'affaires in the Argentine, was acted upon can be judged only by events. That this barbarous policy was pursued in the case of the *Rappahannock* (3,871 tons) was placed, in any event, beyond question. This vessel sailed from Halifax on October 17th and she was never heard of again. Evidence eventually reached the Admiralty which led to the conviction that the *Rappahannock* (master, Mr. Richard Garrett) was destroyed on October 26th seventy miles from the Scillies. Of the officers and men on board, including the master, who numbered thirty-seven, not one survived. The Germans in this, as in many other cases, assumed that “dead men tell no tales”; but in fact these men, though dead, continued to bear damning evidence to the methods which the enemy was pursuing at sea, for the Germans admitted, through their wireless, that she had been sunk by a submarine, and the conclusion as to how she had been destroyed was obvious to all Allied and neutral countries. Towards the end of the month the *North Wales* (4,072 tons, master,

Mr. G. Owen) also disappeared without trace, and the only evidence of her fate was supplied a month later by the washing ashore of one of her boats at Penzance, and several bodies were also cast up by the sea and identified as those of members of the crew. In this case, as well as in others, these murdered seamen bore damning evidence against the Germans.

The loss of life which accompanied the sinking of the *Astoria* (4,262 tons) was also heavy. The ship fell in with two submarines on October 9th. Hardly had she stopped in answer to the peremptory signal, when a torpedo was put into her and she disappeared 120 miles from Vardo. The enemy had no consideration for these hapless seamen, and the wonder is that half survived the ordeal to which they were submitted in these Arctic waters.

The month of October was also notable by reason of the destruction of three British, as well as several neutral, ships off the American coast. The German naval authorities had determined to demonstrate to the American people the long range of action possessed by such a submarine as the *U53*, with a displacement of 700 tons. If the Americans were thereby frightened into silence regarding the German barbarities at sea, so much the less chance of their intervening in the war. On September 17th Hans Rose, in command of this submarine, was directed to cross the Atlantic and to lie off the American coast in anticipation of the passage to the United States of the merchant submarine *Bremen*. When the war broke out Germany was building a number of large submarines for the Argentine. They had been designed for operating in the Atlantic, and consequently were considerably larger than the type which was being passed into the German Navy—having a displacement of 1,500 to 2,000 tons. The success with which these vessels had been used by the Germans, in military operations, suggested the fitting out of two of them, the *Bremen* and the *Deutschland*, as cargo-carrying craft, in the hope that they might not only bring back to Germany much-needed supplies of various easily transportable materials, but might produce a psychological effect on the minds of neutrals, and particularly of the Americans. The *Deutschland* made the passage with success, bringing back a limited quantity of dyes, of which the Germans were in great need. She returned

home on August 24th, and her running of the blockade <sup>1</sup> prompted the fitting out of the *Bremen*.

The *Bremen* was dispatched from Germany in the fall of 1916, and U53 was sent in advance in order that she might search for and attack Allied vessels which, it was anticipated, would be waiting off New London with the intention of intercepting the submarine merchantman. The U-boat, when this task was completed, was to proceed to Newport, Rhode Island, and then, after as short a delay as possible, was to return to Germany. The *Bremen* failed to reach her destination and the Germans had to mourn another serious loss. U53 saw and heard nothing of her, and in due course entered the harbour of Newport. Having paid a number of official visits, she reached Nantucket Lightship early on the morning of October 8th on her way home. Commander Rose calculated that in the clear, calm weather which prevailed, he might give an exhibition of the powers of long-range action which resided in the submarine which he commanded. He was not disappointed. In the course of the day he stopped no fewer than seven steamers, and among them were three British ships, the *Strathdene* (4,321 tons), the *West Point* (3,847 tons), and the *Stephano* (3,449 tons). Happily, owing to the precautions which had been adopted by the American naval authorities, the destruction of these three fine ships was accompanied by no loss of life.

Commander Rose, acting in marked contrast to many of his companions in the German submarine service, behaved with a certain measure of humanity. In the case of the *Stephano*, the enemy was confronted with the problem of dealing with a well-laden passenger ship. A Paul Jones would have let her pass, even though he were not prompted to that course by political considerations. Commander Rose, however, could not resist the temptation of teaching the Americans a lesson in ruthlessness, for most of the passengers, who numbered ninety-three, were returning to New York from a holiday cruise to Newfoundland. Time was allowed for the passengers and crew to lower the boats and leave the ship, and they were immediately accommodated on board the United States destroyers which were in the vicinity. The American naval authorities

<sup>1</sup> On setting out on a second voyage across the Atlantic, the *Deutschland* was sunk by a British patrol.

had, indeed, sent out several small craft on the assumption that American men-of-war could at least assist in saving life, though they could not interfere with operations carried on outside the three-mile limit. In the case of the *Strathdene* (master, Mr. George Wilson), U53, observing another ship to the westward, left the crew to make their way as best they could in their own boat towards Nantucket Lightship, and they were eventually rescued by an American destroyer. Later in the morning, however, when the *West Point* (master, Mr. F. J. Harnden) was intercepted, U53 showed a greater measure of consideration, though Captain Harnden had given no little trouble before surrendering. After the merchantman had been sunk by gunfire, the submarine took in tow the two lifeboats, and did not leave Captain Harnden and his companions until they were within about six miles of the lightship. That evening they were all taken on board an American destroyer and reached New York in safety.

While these events were occurring in the Arctic Ocean and off the American coast, the enemy was still at work in the waters surrounding the British Isles, as well as in the Mediterranean. In several instances the circumstances in which ships were destroyed exhibited the insubordination of German submarine officers, in relation to the Imperial orders they had received, if, indeed, those orders were intended to be taken literally. In the case of the British India steamship *Mombassa* (master, Commander R. F. Thomson, R.N.R.) a fine example of life-saving work was supplied. The *Mombassa* left London on October 11th, and, after calling at Gibraltar for instructions on the 16th, proceeded on her voyage. Early on the morning of the 20th a French destroyer signalled "What ship?" On the signal being answered, the destroyer reduced her speed to that of the liner and proceeded to bear her company. This protection proved of no avail in saving the *Mombassa*, for a few minutes later an explosion shook the vessel from stem to stern. She had been torpedoed without warning, although she carried nineteen passengers, as well as a crew of 109. A wireless call was sent out, passengers were roused, and the boats were speedily manned. Within five minutes of the *Mombassa* being struck, all the boats were clear of the ship, which four minutes later disappeared. Captain Thomson, having

directed these operations successfully, was himself the last to leave the vessel; he dived overboard and was picked up by one of the boats. One *secunni*, who must have hidden himself away, lost his life, but the rest of the crew, as well as the passengers, were taken into Bougie by the French destroyer and received the kindest treatment from the inhabitants, as well as from the Italian Consul. From first to last nothing was seen of the submarine. A Naval Court was afterwards held, and it found that, as the vessel was torpedoed without any warning, no blame attached to Captain Thomson or anyone else, and that everything was done to save life. The expedition with which the ship was cleared was held to have been "a masterly performance." It was added that "particular credit must be given to Mr. Russell, second engineer, who, knowing from the inrush of water into the funnel that the vessel was doomed, used his own discretion to stop the ship before the receipt of orders from the bridge, and was thus undoubtedly instrumental in saving many lives." The Court recorded that "the chief sarang and some members of the native crew appeared to have done their duty. The passengers, men and women alike, behaved in an exemplary manner."

Another vessel which suffered from the complete disregard of the superior German orders, which had been so industriously advertised to the world, was the *Marina* (5,204 tons). She was on her way from Glasgow to the United States, and was off the Fastnet on the afternoon of October 28th when she was torpedoed without warning. Of the crew of 104, eighteen were drowned. This ship had on board a number of American citizens, and they and the other survivors were in the ship's boats for over thirty hours before they were picked up by a patrol-vessel and landed in Ireland. Nothing was seen of the submarine before the attack. The first intimation that the ship was in danger came when a torpedo struck the *Marina* amidships on the starboard side. Though the British vessel was defensively armed, she had no chance of putting up a defence. There seemed some hope that she might still survive in spite of the heavy seas that were running, but ten minutes later a second torpedo struck her on the port side and the blow proved mortal, the ship breaking in two and going down almost at once.

The submarine came to the surface, and her officers and men watched impassively the consummation of their deadly work, and then disappeared without offering succour to the seamen and passengers in the dire emergency which confronted them. As one American passenger afterwards remarked: "They did not give warning, nor did they warn us either when the submarine came round to fire on the port side, while we were in the lifeboats and almost beside the sinking ship. I guess that is not playing the game." The destruction of the *Marina* attracted the attention, as might be expected, of the American Government, and the unsatisfactory explanation furnished by the enemy of this breaking of the pledge which had been so solemnly given was not without its influence on public opinion in the United States.

With the record of the unhappy fate of the crews of the *Cabotia* (4,309 tons) and the *Marchioness* (553 tons) the story of the experiences of British merchant seamen in the month of October must close. Towards the former ship no mercy was shown either by the sea or by the enemy. She fought a gale across the Atlantic on her way to Liverpool, but she fought it with success, though she was continually swept by the angry seas. On October 20th, as she was labouring heavily, a fierce wind blowing from the south-west, a submarine was sighted on the starboard bow, and at once opened fire with her forward gun. The *Cabotia* was 120 miles from Tory Island, and she possessed no armament with which her crew could attempt to purchase, at however great a risk, immunity from the hardships which the taking to their small boats suggested. They were twelve hours' steaming from the nearest land, and whether they could reach it in such frail craft as they had at their command was the thought which must have passed through the minds of a good many of the little company on board, numbering seventy-four, as the first shot struck the steamer about midship on the starboard side.

There was no possibility of effective defence, but the master nevertheless turned the *Cabotia's* stern to the submarine and put on full speed. Every five minutes the submarine fired a shot, and she secured four hits. The captain then ordered all the boats to be swung out, though everyone realised that they could not live long in

such a sea. In the meantime the *Cabotia* managed to keep the enemy astern, but gradually the distance between the two vessels was lessening. The position was seen to be hopeless. The engines were stopped and four boats were lowered, manned, and got clear of the steamer without mishap. The submarine, having given the *Cabotia* another shot, went alongside another steamer which was approaching. The boats proceeded in the same direction, hoping to be picked up; but the stranger, after communicating with the U-boat, blew two blasts on her whistle and continued on her course, without a thought for the mariners fighting for life in the heavy seas which were running.

Two of the boats of the *Cabotia* were never seen again, and small wonder in view of the storm which was raging. It was little short of a miracle that the other two boats survived. Throughout the night the second officer and his companions pulled steadily with faint hope, for they realised that the nearest land was 120 miles away; but as the dawn was breaking it became possible to set a sail, and a few hours later a patrol-boat appeared and the little group of seamen, drenched to the skin, cold to the marrow, and exhausted by their labours, found safety. A search for the other three boats was then begun, and twenty minutes later the chief officer's boat was sighted and its occupants were also rescued. Throughout that day and all the succeeding night, and on the following day, a patrol-vessel thrashed the waters, hoping against hope to find the master's and third officer's boats, but no trace of them could be discovered. In these circumstances thirty-two more men were murdered as a result of the ruthless policy pursued by the enemy's officers in face of the protestations which had been made in the ears of Americans and other neutrals.

But not a few British ships evaded the enemy during the month of October. Thirty-two, of 125,770 tons, though molested, escaped. It would be to do an injustice to the officers and crews of these ships to omit mention of the fine defence put up by the Ellerman liner *Fabian* (2,246 tons). This ship (master, Mr. W. J. Price) left Almeria on October 19th bound for Manchester. After passing about fifteen miles to westward of Ushant six days later, a heavy west-north-westerly gale sprang up with very



thick weather. Captain Price thought it too dangerous to pass between the Scillies and Land's End, so the vessel was headed to pass outside the Scillies. The wind continued to back, and the *Fabian* passed ten miles west of the Bishop Rock at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 26th, making about 6 knots. What happened afterwards Captain Price himself subsequently recorded:

“ After passing Bishop Rock the course was shaped for the Smalls, and at 7.10 a.m. on the 26th a shot was fired, which struck the water about fifty yards on the port beam. A submarine was then observed about one and three-quarter miles on the port beam, proceeding on the same course as the *Fabian*. The helm was at once put hard to port to bring the submarine astern, and whilst the vessel was swinging on her helm a second shot was fired, which passed over the bridge. A third shot was then fired, which struck the ship on the port side in the bunkers. By this time our gun, which was a 3-pounder Vickers-Maxim quick-firer, was able to bear and fire was opened on the submarine at a range of about two miles. The submarine then gave chase to the ship, and an exchange of shots took place, but, owing to the rough state of the sea, aiming was difficult. The ship was manœuvred to keep the submarine astern as nearly as possible and to avoid the submarine coming up on the beam, which she tried to do. Her fourth shot struck the *Fabian* on the starboard side in the wake of the main rigging, carrying away the three shrouds and bulwarks, portions of the shell pitting the deck-house. Unfortunately this shell killed the third officer. The firing was still continued on both sides, but no further shots struck the *Fabian*. After about fifty minutes' running fight, our thirteenth shot appeared to strike the submarine, which was then distant about two miles. The submarine then submerged; but five minutes later she reappeared on the surface broadside on to the *Fabian* and stationary, and she fired no further shots. Another shot (the fourteenth) was fired by the *Fabian*, which appeared to us to strike the submarine, and she disappeared, nothing further being seen of her, though a very careful watch was kept to see if she would come to the surface again. I feel strongly of opinion that either the submarine had been injured by our shots, or

she was in too disabled a condition to continue the fight."

The *Fabian* was then headed for Milford Haven. "Throughout the whole of the fight," Captain Price added, "the crew behaved very well indeed, each man being at his proper station and carrying out all orders promptly. I wish to express my appreciation of the services of the engineer staff, who all worked well to keep the ship running at her utmost speed."

The month of November provided a curious illustration of the varying methods which enemy craft were employing at sea, and incidentally the commander of one submarine revealed how submarines might be employed without inhumanity. On the morning of November 1st the *Seatonia* (3,533 tons) discovered, as she was steaming in the North Atlantic swell, that she had become the target of an invisible enemy. For nearly three hours she was kept under fire, her master (Mr. Arthur Pattison) in the meantime zigzagging in the hope of lessening the chance of the *Seatonia* being hit. Immediately the crew were afloat in the ship's boats, the one in charge of Captain Pattison was hailed alongside the submarine and all the seventeen occupants were taken on board and sent below. In the meantime the chief officer (Mr. Henry Davies) in the other boat shaped a course E. by N., and was picked up by a neutral steamer.

In these circumstances the captain and his sixteen companions found themselves shipmates with the enemy as the submarine, having sunk the *Seatonia*, left the scene of her triumph. Within the limited space which the U-boat provided, sixty-three men were huddled together, yet room remained for the Germans to go about their business. The prisoners made the best of their misfortune during the night, and on the following morning Captain Pattison was ordered on deck. Three steam trawlers under the British colours were labouring in a heavy sea not far away, and he was directed to visit and search these vessels, and himself sink the two which had least coal in their bunkers. What was he to do but obey? While he was afloat in one of the trawler's boats, the submarine made short work of the *Kyoto* with a single shell. At this moment another trawler, flying

the Danish ensign, came on the scene. This vessel, the *Brigi*, had, it appeared, already been captured by the enemy and was under the command of a German officer, who had under him an armed guard. The *Brigi* had been selected to act as the submarine's consort, so all belonging to the *Seatonia*, as well as to the three trawlers, were set to work to remove the coal from the *Casswell* and *Harfat Castle*. For six hours the British seamen, in a heavy sea, passed to and fro with their burdens, the Germans in the meantime complacently looking on. At last the task was completed and the weary men were ordered to go on board the *Brigi*, but the master was still kept a prisoner on board the submarine—an undesired distinction.

Within a short time the surviving trawlers, having been gutted of coal and stores, were sunk and the *Brigi*, with their boats on board, disappeared. One can imagine the feelings of the master of the *Seatonia* as he realised that he was about to become the enforced observer of German methods of commerce-destruction by sea. If the submarine were destroyed, he would lose his life, but if she carried on her work without mishap he might hope to escape, with his life at least. For nine days he remained in captivity, during which the American s.s. *Columbian* was sunk, as well as the Norwegian steamer *Balto*. And then at last, with all the other seamen of the *Seatonia*, he was sent on board the Swedish steamer *Varing*, which had been placed in charge of a prize crew. On November 10th the *Varing* put into a neutral port and her passengers were landed. The master of the *Seatonia* and his companions were treated with no harshness, as were so many others, at the hands of the enemy, but received a large measure of consideration. In the meantime the *Brigi*, having fulfilled her mission, was dismissed, and the exciting experiences at the hands of this particular craft, in which so many British and neutral seamen had had to take a part, came to an end.

On the day following the sinking of the *Seatonia*, the *Statesman* (6,153 tons) was sunk without warning by a torpedo 200 miles east from Malta, with a loss of six lives, and on the 4th, in practically the same position, the *Clan Leslie* (3,937 tons) and the *Huntsvale* (5,398 tons) were also destroyed without warning; in the former case

three lives were lost and in the latter seven, including the master. Both these ships were defensively armed, but in the conditions in which they were attacked their guns were valueless. An incident not without psychological interest occurred after the *Huntsvale* had received the mortal blow which carried away her stern and caused her to sink in a space of two minutes. The sea was strewn with wreckage, to which a number of British seamen were clinging in desperation, and two boats which had been hastily launched were passing to and fro picking up survivors.

The scene would have been a pitiable one to other than German eyes, but two of the officers of the enemy submarine decided that it offered an opportunity of enheartening their fellow-countrymen. So, standing on the deck of their vessel, they took a series of photographs, evidently with a view of placing on record the success with which submarines were not merely sinking ships, but practising the policy of ruthlessness in spite of all the declarations of the German authorities that the campaign was being conducted in accordance with the generally recognised rules of cruiser warfare. These damaging pictures having been secured, the enemy vessel disappeared, leaving the survivors of the *Huntsvale* afloat in two boats, far distant from the nearest land. Even in these conditions these British seamen were not unmindful of their obligations to others. The master (Mr. J. Edmondson) had, as has been stated, been killed, but the chief officer, who remained in command of the two boats, casting his eye over the sea, noticed two steamers coming up. So, ignoring the risk that the submarine might return and wreak vengeance on him and his companions, he burnt warning flares and was thus probably responsible for robbing the enemy of two victims. Throughout the night the chief officer and his comrades, soaked to the skin and suffering from the cold, confronted the prospect of death; but early on the following morning, after nine hours' exposure, the hospital ship *Valdavia* came to their rescue. That they did not all perish, leaving no trace of the enemy's crime, was due to no consideration on the part of the officers of the submarine, who, having secured their photographs, cared not one jot what fate overtook these forty seamen of the great brotherhood of the sea.

Though a certain measure of respect to superior orders was being paid by submarine officers around the British Isles, where there was danger of encountering American citizens, in the Mediterranean the sink-at-sight policy was at this period being applied, not merely to ordinary cargo boats, but even to heavily laden passenger ships. On November 6th the P. & O. liner *Arabia* (7,933 tons) was homeward bound from Australia and Colombo to London when she was torpedoed without warning, though she had on board 743 persons, for she carried, in addition to the crew, a complement of no fewer than 439 passengers, of whom 169 were women and children. The master (Mr. Walter B. Palmer) was not unconscious of the difficult task which was allotted him of bringing his ship in safety through the Mediterranean, and he took every possible precaution.

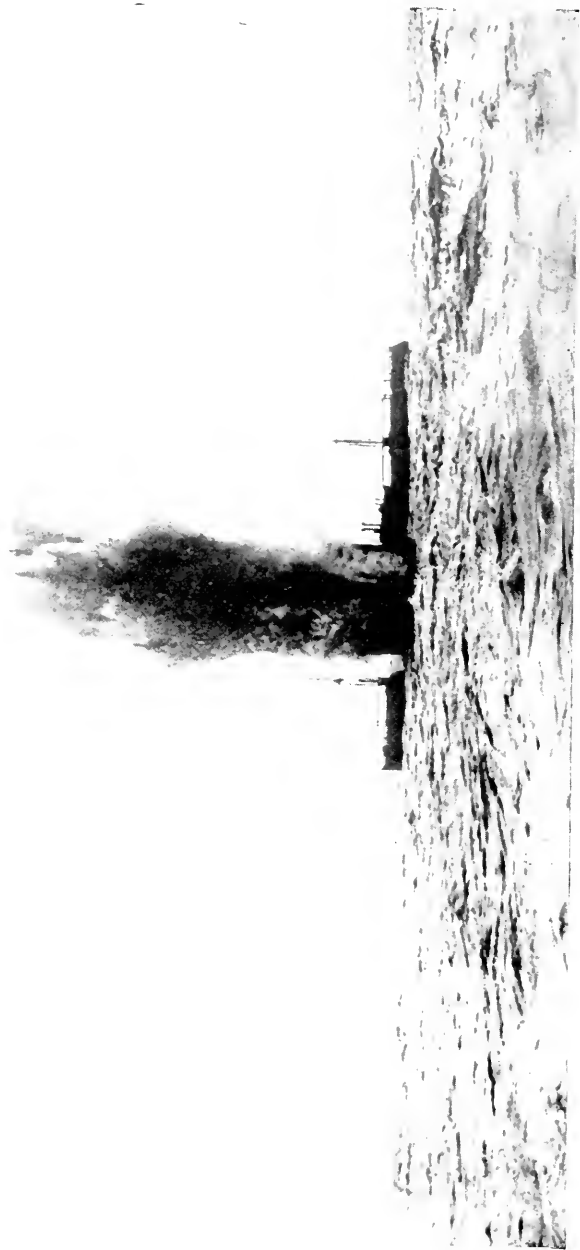
On the morning of November 6th this liner was steaming on a zigzag course at a speed of about 17 knots; the chief and third mates were on the bridge, a quartermaster being at the wheel; another quartermaster was on the lookout on the forecastle head, and a lascar was stationed in the crow's-nest; the defensive armament with which the ship had been provided was ready for any emergency. It was all in vain. Though the atmosphere was clear and the sea smooth, not a trace of a submarine was seen until a torpedo had been fired, striking the *Arabia* on the starboard side. At the moment Captain Palmer was in his cabin; he went instantly to the bridge with the intention of stopping the engines, but he was too late; the explosion had already smashed them, and smoke was issuing from the engine-room skylight. The wireless aerials had also been put out of action, so no signal for help could be sent out.

An adequate explanation of the disaster was provided as the periscope of a submarine appeared about six hundred yards distant. A moment later a second torpedo was fired, without success. Then the enemy made off. Captain Palmer instantly realised the heavy responsibility thrust upon him. He sounded five short blasts on the ship's whistle to announce to passengers and crew that the ship must be instantly abandoned. The boats had already been swung out and, as soon as sufficient way was off the ship, they were lowered safely, and within a

few minutes everyone on board had left the *Arabia*, with the exception of eleven of the engine-room staff—natives—who were presumably killed by the explosion; and then the master himself surrendered his command. By a fortunate circumstance, within a few minutes three British armed trawlers arrived on the scene, and the Ellerman liner *City of Marseilles*, outward bound, joined in the work of rescue, in which later on a French man-of-war assisted. Within less than an hour and a half the *Arabia* had disappeared, and Captain Palmer, though he had lost his ship, could congratulate himself that, owing to the organisation on board which he had instituted and the manner in which passengers, officers, and men had behaved in face of the disaster, every living soul, except the unfortunate natives of the engine-room staff, had been brought out of danger. Many hours' exposure had to be faced, however, before these unhappy people, cold and hungry and exhausted, at last were got ashore.

That enemy submarines were now disregarding more and more the assurances which the German authorities had given to the United States and other neutral Governments became increasingly apparent as the month passed. On November 12th the *Kapunda* (3,383 tons) was torpedoed without warning 205 miles east-south-east from Malta, and the *Brierton* (3,255 tons), the *City of Birmingham* (7,498 tons), the *Reapwell* (3,417 tons), the *King Malcolm* (3,351 tons), and the *Moresby* (1,763 tons) were all surprised and sunk in the Mediterranean before the month was closed. Each of these vessels was defensively armed, as was also the *F. Matarazzo* (2,823 tons), which was also torpedoed without warning twenty miles south from Littlehampton. That these ships were destroyed without mercy for anyone on board was, of course, a matter not of chance but of deliberate policy.

The story of the sinking of the *City of Birmingham* is one of the enheartening incidents of this sad record of the submarine war, showing how, in face of danger, delicate women can triumph over their fears in an emergency. Of the 170 passengers on board the ship, no fewer than 100 were women and children; including the crew, the *City of Birmingham* had on board 317 persons, of whom 115 were native seamen. She was outward bound for Bombay and Karachi. On November 22nd she left



VESSEL HIT BY A GERMAN SUBMARINE.





Gibraltar, having received orders as to the course to be followed to Port Said. Five days later a terrific explosion occurred near the bulkhead between Nos. 5 and 6 holds, destroying one of the lifeboats. The master (Mr. Wilfred J. Haughton) had taken every precaution against disaster. He had prevailed upon every passenger to wear a life-belt at all times; boat lists had been posted about the ship; large numbered indicators had been attached to each boat; and he had introduced a special system of boat-station identification tags. At the moment when the ship was struck, and water and wreckage were flung upwards, Captain Haughton was going round the ship with the chief officer, assured that a good lookout for the enemy was being maintained; the third officer, with a naval cadet on the lookout, was in charge of the bridge, and a lascar was on the fore-castle head; a white quartermaster was in the crow's-nest, and a naval cadet and a gunner stood ready by the 4.7-inch gun. The ship was proceeding on zigzag courses at a speed of about  $13\frac{1}{2}$  knots; the weather was fine and clear, with a heavy north-westerly swell. Those on board were justified in believing that everything possible had been done to ensure the safety of the ship. No submarine, however, was seen; only the explosion gave notice that the vessel had been marked down for destruction.

It was soon apparent that there was little time to lose, for the ship immediately took a heavy list. Captain Haughton was equal to the emergency. The engines were stopped and then reversed, wireless signals for help were sent out, and all on board were ordered to the boats. There was no panic. The captain on the bridge remained in command of the situation, and his coolness and courage were communicated to passengers and crew. Within ten minutes of the explosion all the boats had been got away, though a mishap occurred to one of them owing to the falls jamming. Captain Haughton alone remained on board the doomed vessel as she sank steadily stern first. Another ten minutes elapsed, and then the *City of Birmingham* took a final plunge, carrying with her this typical British seaman who, having assured the safety of everyone in his charge, determined to retain his command until the seas robbed him of it. As he rose to the surface and struck out towards some floating planks,

the sound of women singing an enheartening hymn reached his ears. In spite of all they had gone through, and regardless of the danger which still threatened them adrift in the Mediterranean in mid-winter, ninety miles from Malta, these women still had heart to raise their voices in song. Although seven boats heavily laden were afloat in the vicinity, half an hour passed before the master was seen and could be rescued. Drenched to the skin and exhausted though he was, Captain Haughton immediately resumed command as soon as he was on board one of the boats. Happily the ordeal of all these passengers and seamen was to prove of comparatively short duration. The *City of Birmingham* had sunk shortly before noon, and soon after 4 o'clock Captain Haughton, on board the hospital ship *Letitia*, mustered his crew and called the roll of passengers. Only four failed to answer—the doctor, a man well advanced in years; the barman, who had fallen into the water and been drowned; and two lascars. In the report which he afterwards wrote the master recorded that “the women especially showed a good example by the way in which they took their places in the boats, as calmly as if they were going down to their meals, and when in the boats they began singing.”

It would be to convey a wrong impression of the course of the submarine war at this period were nothing said of the thirty-six ships, of 157,633 tons, which, though attacked, managed to escape during this month of November. Month by month, as the intensity of the enemy's attack and the volume of the sinkings of merchant shipping mounted up, the number of vessels which, though interfered with by submarines, managed to escape steadily increased. In September the tonnage which, owing to good seamanship or defensive armament, reached port after molestation had been 122,933 tons. In October the figure was 124,770, and in November reached another high-water mark—157,633 tons. The defensive armament of merchant shipping had by this time made considerable progress, and of the thirty-six vessels which escaped during November two-thirds had been provided with guns. The success of British seamen in eluding the enemy was all the more remarkable in view of the various stratagems which the submarine commanders were adopting. An example of this resourcefulness was revealed shortly after midnight

on October 1st, when the *Lindenhall* (4,003 tons) was steaming to the westward of Sicily. The master (Mr. Evan Thomas) saw a vessel three points on the starboard bow—apparently a sailing-craft. There was nothing to arouse suspicion, as sailing-vessels are often encountered in these waters; but the master watched the stranger carefully. Though there was no wind, she was moving through the water at a rapid rate. He came to the conclusion that the sailing-craft was in fact a submarine disguised. Shortly afterwards a live shell plunged into the water about forty yards off the starboard bow of the *Lindenhall*. In the official record which Captain Thomas afterwards made of the incident he stated that—

“The helm was put hard a-starboard to bring the submarine astern, and when the steamer was broadside on two shells passed over, one of them only just clearing the upper bridge. We then returned her fire, which had the effect of causing the submarine to raise her speed and increase her distance from us. She kept shelling us with two guns for one hour fifty-five minutes. No one counted the number of shells fired by the submarine, but it could not be less than 200, as she was firing two shells for every one we fired, and firing more rapidly. The steamer fired eighty-six shells and had only fourteen left. When we were about seven miles off the island and proceeding direct for it, the submarine submerged and we saw no more of her. Some deck damage was caused, the port lifeboat was holed and the bridge damaged by pieces of shells. The officers, engineers, stewards, carpenter, cook, and gunners deserve credit, as they fought and steamed her without any assistance from the sailors and firemen, they having refused to do anything.”

Another not infrequent device of the enemy was to hunt in couples in the expectation that, while the defensively armed ship was engaged with one submarine, the other might succeed in getting in sufficiently close to fire a torpedo with the assurance that the target would be hit. Even this manœuvre did not always succeed, as the master (Mr. P. Urquhart) proved when the *Clan Chisholm* was attacked off Finisterre on November 13th. Shortly after 1 o'clock a topsail schooner was sighted one point

on the starboard bow; a submarine was alongside her, and another submarine was steering eastward across the bows of the *Clan Chisholm*. It must have seemed as though this ship was doomed. What happened? We have the modest story of this plucky master, and it well deserves to be placed on permanent record.

“ We were zigzagging at the time. The nearer submarine was evidently getting into position for the next southerly course of the *Clan Chisholm*. I swung the steamer under port helm, whistled to the gunner, and pointed to the submarine, ringing the engine telegraph to an agreed signal, every man rushing to stations. The ship seemed to jump as the engineers opened her out, black smoke pouring from the funnel. The submarines evidently did not realise we were on the turn, so we gained a little on them; however, soon they were round and after us; then they opened fire, and we answered them with our 4-7 gun (at the same time hoisting ensign on triatic stay and kept flying throughout action)—a steady and well-directed fire. They were opening out to get one on each quarter, so I kept one astern, and the gunner attended to the one on the port quarter, the fourth shot at 6,100 yards sending her under; and she must have blown up, as there was a great volume of water. The one astern turned and went in the direction of the sunk submarine, I suppose to pick up any men. We gave her two parting shots, but missed.

“ The chase and action only lasted about twenty minutes. We fired six shots to their three, and their nearest shot was about 200 yards short, a column of black smoke rising from where the shots entered the water. I wish to draw your attention to the splendid response Mr. Russel and his engineers gave to my appeal for speed and more speed—a case of burst the engines or be sunk. Also to the two gunners, who were cool and collected, and their gun crew, steward and carpenter, who served them well. These gunners were of the greatest assistance to the chief officer during the night of heavy gale, November 8th and 9th, extricating the horses from underneath broken boxes and leading them over wire lashings and flooded decks to alleyways. The chief and third officers got boats ready and crew under shelter, and then assisted the

second officer and myself on the bridge. The above is a true statement of all that happened."

But even unarmed ships were effecting their escape. The officers and crew of the *Palm Branch* (3,891 tons) gave an exhibition of courage and dauntlessness on November 21st, the only spectators being the out-manceuvred crew of the submarine. The *Palm Branch* was in the English Channel at the time, not far from the French coast, when a submarine arose from the water and opened fire at close range. The master of this unarmed ship determined to see whether his ship, dexterously handled, could be saved. It was a tremendous risk, but he took it. He put his helm over to get the submarine astern of him, and the chief engineer rushed down to the stokehold to encourage the firemen to do their best. Everyone, from the captain downwards, realised that it was a fight for life against heavy odds, but they were not afraid, though shells began to fall round them and some of them hit the ship. The port lifeboat was soon shot away, and the starboard lifeboat holed; the bridge was struck and a seaman wounded. The quarters of the crew aft were wrecked; and a splinter hit the apprentice on the head, but, though blood was streaming down his face, he remained at the wheel. At last fire broke out in the forecastle. Throughout the ordeal the captain, enheartened by the spirit exhibited by everyone on board, continued to swing his ship first to port and then to starboard so as to prevent the enemy getting broadside on. For half an hour this unarmed ship out-manceuvred the submarine with her high speed, her guns, and her torpedoes. At last the enemy abandoned the contest, and the *Palm Branch*, after effecting repairs at a French port, reached the United States to supply the Americans with conclusive evidence that British seamen, though defenceless, were continuing to go about their business.

In the last month of the year enemy submarines, mines, and raiders took heavy toll of British shipping; fifty-six vessels were sunk with a loss of 186 lives, and of these thirty-six ships fell to submarines, the death-roll being ninety-one. The policy of sinking ships without warning was still being pursued, and proved effective in fourteen

instances. We have in the story of the *Istrar* (4,582 tons) an example of the manner in which the naval authorities were continuing to co-operate to ensure the safety of the Merchant Fleet, for the *Istrar* was defensively armed and the master (Mr. Maxwell M. Jacob) was supplied with all the information which the Admiralty had at its disposal as to the safest course. Captain Jacobs' narrative constitutes a picture of sea conditions at this time which could not well be improved upon.

“ I had been eleven and a half years in command of the *Istrar* when she was sunk. We sailed from Liverpool on November 2nd, 1916, with a crew of seventy-two, of whom fifty-nine were lascars. We ran into very heavy weather shortly after clearing the English coast, and had to put back to Plymouth to repair. We arrived there on November 6th and left again on the 18th for Calcutta. I had obtained instructions as to my route as far as Gibraltar at Liverpool, and at Falmouth I obtained fresh instructions which were sent to me from the Admiralty Office at Plymouth. These instructions were carried out and the vessel arrived safely at Gibraltar on November 24th. I then obtained from the Routing Officer on the Examination Vessel at Gibraltar the route instructions for Port Said.

“ All went well until December 2nd. On that day, at 1.15 p.m., when we were in a position lat. 33° 5' N., long. 28° 40' E., the third officer being on watch and the usual men at stations, I heard the explosion, the vessel sustaining a very heavy shock. I went on the bridge at once and stopped the engines. The third officer told me that he had seen the wake of a torpedo about 300 yards away, coming towards the vessel on the starboard side and heading towards midships. He at once ordered the helm hard a-port and, as the vessel answered quickly, the torpedo struck her on the starboard quarter. The vessel at once took a list to port and the crew came up. The crews' quarters were aft, and it was found that one native had been killed and five injured by the flying debris after the explosion. The vessel carried a 4·7-inch gun which was displaced by the explosion. It was fine and clear at the time. We were proceeding at 10½ knots on No. 2 zigzag and were on the appointed course of S. 40 E. There was

not much trouble with the crew, and the boats were lowered safely with the exception of my boat, which remained alongside.

“The first step which I took was to collect all the secret instructions and code-book, and these I threw over-side. The loose papers I collected together and put on the galley fire, and then, after searching the vessel to see that all were clear, I got into my boat. The vessel was settling very slowly, no doubt owing to the fact that the hatches and ventilators were sealed and the escape of air was slow. Before the vessel was abandoned, an S.O.S. signal was sent off giving our position, but we did not receive any reply before we left. I ascertained afterwards that the message had been received. Not long after we were clear, the submarine came to the surface on the port quarter and, coming close, put ten shots into the port side. The vessel then commenced to sink very rapidly.

“My boat was on the starboard side and the chief officer’s boat on the port side. The submarine first spoke to the chief officer’s boat and asked for me. I ordered sail to be made in my boat and tried to get clear, but the submarine caught us up and ordered us alongside. We were first asked for our papers, and the submarine’s commander was told that anything that had not been destroyed was on the vessel. The submarine did not attempt to take me prisoner, but asked for the chief engineer, who was in my boat, and on his answering he ordered him on board the submarine, saying that they were taking the chief as they heard that England was getting short of engineers, and added that it did not much matter, because England would not have any ships left soon, as they were sinking three every day. The commander then said: ‘You won’t be long in the boats; there are plenty of patrol-vessels about.’ He then wished us a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I thanked him, and then shoved off. There were two other captains on board the submarine, the captain of the *Reapwell* and the captain of the *King Malcolm*. They were allowed, when the chief officer’s boat was alongside the submarine, to speak to the chief officer and to give him telegrams to be sent home. We were told that there were two other captains down below. When my chief engineer was sent below, the commander made me promise to send word to his people that he was safe. The

submarine had no flag flying and no mark or number showing. We counted thirteen people on her decks, of whom two were officers. The submarine went away to the northward. The *Istrar* had been settling all the time with an increasing list to port, but very little by the stern, and at 2.25 we saw her capsize, the tops of the masts being the last thing visible. I gave the boats their course and we made sail, being picked up at 5 o'clock by the sloop ASPHODEL, which was on patrol duty. The sloop communicated by wireless with Alexandria and was told to bring us in, and we were then put on board H.M.S. HANNIBAL."

How were the crews of the submarines faring at this period of the war? It would be an error to assume that, because they were meeting with a certain measure of success, they were not suffering great hardships. We have fortunately the narratives of two British captains who were taken prisoners after their ships had been sunk in December which supply evidence of the harassing life which enemy seamen were supporting. As the defensive measures consorted for the protection of British merchant shipping improved, the strain on the enemy crews increased in intensity until at length it became no easy matter to obtain crews, and at last the spirit of the men engaged in this hazardous service broke, as we shall see later on. It is indeed a reasonable hypothesis that, even if the Armistice had not come in November 1918, the intensive submarine campaign would have had to be abandoned owing to the difficulty of securing trained and willing crews to face the risk of death in conditions of horror to which warfare in earlier centuries had provided no parallel. But this is to anticipate the course of events, and we are concerned at this moment with the experiences of the submarine crews in December 1916, when the struggle still had twenty-three months to go. On December 4th U65 torpedoed without warning the *Caledonia* (9,223 tons) when she was 125 miles E. by S. from Malta. The defensive armament with which this Anchor liner had been provided proved useless. Out of the nowhere a torpedo struck her a glancing blow on the starboard side of No. 3 hold, and she sank in three-quarters of an hour. The master (Mr. James Blaikie) tried to ram the submarine, and struck her,



but the impact was insufficient to sink her. After the crew were in the boat, the submarine appeared and took off the master as well as two Army officers who were on board.

Some time later Captain Blaikie was able to give some account of his experiences on board this submarine—a large vessel, fitted with four torpedo tubes and carrying eight torpedoes, besides mounting a gun on the fore-deck. Though the submarine was not destroyed when the *Caledonia* ran over her, she was flattened out on the port side forward for about 130 feet to a depth of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet; the stem had been bent to starboard, the periscope doubled up, and the wireless gear on the port side carried away. These injuries resulted in leakage around some of the plates, and after the submarine had gained the surface she was unable to submerge. Temporary repairs were at once undertaken, and on the following day an experimental dive was tried, but the boat threatened to get out of hand, and the commander decided that his only course was to make his way back to Cattaro on the surface. About three hours before reaching port two Austrian torpedo-boat destroyers came out to act as escort. Though the *Caledonia* had only succeeded in crippling U65, the damage to the submarine was sufficiently serious to entail repairs which were not completed until the following April.

Another master who had his ship sunk under him, and who was also taken prisoner, subsequently put on record his experiences. The *Apsleyhall* (3,382 tons) was twenty-eight miles W. by N. from Gozo when she was struck. The ship was going at full speed when a torpedo hit her on the port side. Her case was hopeless. After Captain Higginbottom had stopped the engines and ordered the boats out, another torpedo struck the ship on the port side, and in ten minutes the *Apsleyhall* had disappeared, but fortunately no lives were lost. As the vessel was going down, submarine UC22 appeared on the surface and ordered Captain Higginbottom on board. He was directed to go below, where he found Captain T. R. Borthwick, of the Glasgow steamer *Oronsay* (3,761 tons), which had been sunk two days before off Malta. Captain Higginbottom learnt that he was on board a submarine engaged in laying mines round Malta, and that she carried twenty-one mine-tubes. Each cruise occupied from fifteen to twenty

days. She was also armed with a gun on the fore-deck, capable of firing effectively at a six-mile range. She carried five torpedoes, but these were not used until after the mines had been sown, since it was feared that the concussion might fire the mines and thus destroy the submarine. Captain Higginbottom has supplied a picture of the routine followed by this mine-laying submarine.

“Learnt that commanders and crews of all submarines dread the system of nets and trawlers across the Gulf of Otranto, and preferred to have dirty dark nights in that part and to navigate on the surface to submerging so as to pass under the net. When no object was in sight I was allowed on deck twice a day for a few minutes for air, and I noticed that the submarine was zigzagging. She carried two collapsible boats in a casing on the fore-deck, and was fitted with wireless to enable her to remain in touch with Berlin and Cattaro during each cruise.”

A few days later the *Baycraft* (7,316 tons) was also torpedoed without warning off Malta, and her master (Mr. Bertram Edmonds) joined the other two captains confined in the submarine. The temper of the submarine officers at this stage of the war was illustrated by the conduct of the commander of the UC22 when Captain Edmonds got on board. The commander met him at the conning-tower and, waving a small revolver, which had been thrown overboard in the British master's overcoat, in his face, remarked menacingly, “You remember Captain Fryatt?” Under all the trials which the submarine crews were supporting, they were, however, encouraged by the belief that their eventual success was certain. Whether this attitude was assumed by the officers in order to encourage the men under them or was genuine must remain a matter of speculation, but at any rate, when the old year died the Kaiser's health was toasted and it was declared that within a few months victory was assured. The men of the submarine service, hard pressed already by the various defensive measures adopted by the Admiralty, and opposed by the invincible spirit of British seamen, did not realise that the worst of their trials still lay ahead.

How invincible was the spirit which British merchant

seamen, on the other hand, were exhibiting, though confronted with terrors of which they had been able to form no conception when in pre-war days conversation had turned to the dangers of war, was shown by the experiences of the officers and men of the *Conch* (5,620 tons). This vessel was an oil-tanker belonging to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company. She was off Anvil Point when she was struck by a torpedo on the night of December 7th. The *Conch* was carrying 7,000 tons of benzine and the explosion caused this oil to ignite, and within a few minutes the water was lighted up by leaping flames which spouted from her port side. The master (Mr. Edwin Slott) did not survive to tell the tale; of the twelve British officers only three, indeed, in addition to twenty-five Chinamen out of the forty-four which were on board, escaped with their lives. Contrary to the normal experience under such conditions, it was the three engineer officers who were spared the worst contagion of fire.

As the *Conch* was making her way down-Channel in the brilliant moonlight, the routine precautions were adopted. At 8 o'clock the watch had been changed, the master and the third officer going on the bridge; two quartermasters were at the wheel; a lookout man was stationed on the fore-castle head, and a gunner with the wireless operator stood by the gun, mounted aft, ready for an emergency. A zigzag course was, of course, steered, but these measures were in vain. At half-past ten the chief engineer (Mr. H. L. Raffray), when in his cabin, felt the ship shake from stem to stern; she listed a little to port and then righted herself. He at once went to the engine-room, where the fourth engineer was on watch. There were no signs there that anything untoward had happened; the telegraph dial still spoke full speed, and the ship was in fact travelling at the rate of 10 knots. What had happened? The fourth engineer, as he ran to call his two companions, speedily discovered that the ship was on fire. As he passed along the alleyway he was met by flames and smoke. He persevered in spite of burns on his arms and hands, and was soon back in the engine-room with the two other engineers. It soon became apparent that the afterpart of the ship had become a furnace. "The explosion," Mr. Raffray afterwards suggested, "must have either blown up the deck or blown the tank tops off and

sent a column of burning oil over the bridge and poop, killing everyone on duty on the bridge." But the officers and their staff in the engine-room were in ignorance of what had happened. They tried to get instructions from the bridge, but could get no reply. So they kept the engines working, as it was assumed if, as seemed evident, the oil was alight, it was better to keep the ship moving so as to prevent the flaming oil collecting round her, rather than to stop her.

Attempts were made to reach the deck, but they were unavailing. An hour passed in vain efforts to ascertain what was happening, and during that period the ship, licked by the flames, continued to steam at 10 knots. At length, half an hour after the clocks had struck midnight ashore, the second engineer managed to reach the deck. His companions shortly afterwards joined him, to discover to their horror that they were imprisoned in a burning charnel-house; the four lifeboats had disappeared, nothing remaining but the davits; the bridge was in ruins, and fore and aft flames were leaping upward, devouring everything they touched.

The *Conch* had become a great funeral pile, as she still steamed up-Channel in the moonlight, with her pennants of smoke and flame. It was impossible to regain the engine-room in order to stop the engines, for the fire barred the way, and the only hope of safety lay in the dinghy, which still remained on the well deck. What were the thoughts which flashed through the minds of those on board, British officers and Chinamen, as they confronted their fate? Time was pressing if anyone was to survive. Four terrified Chinamen slid down the falls and reached the dinghy, which had been hoisted out, only to fill immediately with water. They had been followed by the fourth engineer, but he, badly wounded in the hand as he was, dropped into the sea like a stone and was not again seen. A few minutes later the chief engineer succeeded in joining the four Chinamen, and then the dinghy broke adrift before the two other engineer officers could follow; and the ship still steamed ahead, a mass of flames, at a steady 10 knots. Though the unfortunate seamen, as their boat lost distance, did not realise it, a patrol-vessel on duty inshore had noticed the flames and had been chasing the *Conch* at full speed. The chief engineer and

his companions had all they could do to keep the dinghy afloat by baling. They were still fighting for their lives when the steamer *Rattray Head* bore down upon them and rescued them from what seemed certain death.

The chief engineer had soon told his tragic story on board the *Rattray Head*, and the steamer set off in pursuit of the burning ship in the hope that further lives might be saved. But by good fortune a trawler had already rushed to the rescue, and the two engineers, jumping overboard from the *Conch*, found safety.

Through the early hours of the morning the *Conch*, still pursuing her course up-Channel, attracted the attention of Lieutenant Grough Scott of the destroyer *NYMPHE*. At great risk to his vessel, he approached the doomed ship, by this time a mass of contagious flame. It would have meant disaster to himself and his crew to try to go alongside the *Conch*, which had been converted into a furnace. So he threw overboard life-saving rafts, lifebelts, and lifebuoys as he steamed past the stern, and then called to the crowd of terrified Chinamen who stood amid the flames on the forepeak to jump into the water. He repeated this manœuvre three times, and at last had the satisfaction of picking up all except nine of the Chinamen, who still remained paralysed upon the ship. They would not or could not save themselves, but the naval officer would not abandon them. They were only Chinamen, men of a foreign nation, but he determined to face the risk of going alongside the burning ship, though she was out of control and a danger to any vessel which approached her. It was a task that demanded seamanship of the highest order, but it was carried out with little injury to the destroyer, and the nine Chinamen were roused to action by the courage and daring exhibited on their behalf, and summoned sufficient energy to drop down one by one on to the deck of the destroyer. By the time these last rescues had been made, the steamer which had picked up the chief engineer and his companions, and two patrol-boats, had rescued other men from the water. And thus it happened that out of a complement of fifty-six seamen, white and yellow, no fewer than half were almost miraculously saved from death in circumstances of terror calculated to rob any men, however brave, of their power of intelligent action. The career of the *Conch*, without officers and men on board

to control her erratic course, came to an end next morning when she foundered.

With the close of 1916, the Germans, rendered desperate by the failure of their methods of terror by land and by sea, were preparing to throw off the pretence that the submarine campaign was being conducted in accordance with the rules governing cruiser warfare. They realised that British merchant seamen were still fighting against heavy odds owing to the inadequacy of the armament which the authorities could spare for their defence, and urged on the German Government that a swift blow should be struck. The crisis of the naval war was at hand.

During January, in spite of all the exhibitions of ruthlessness, a far larger volume of tonnage, though molested, had managed to elude destruction than the enemy succeeded in sinking—140,722 tons molested as compared with 109,954 tons sunk. But the death-roll of the month was heavy: 245 British seamen were forced to surrender their lives in defence of their King and Country.

At this period the German naval personnel was evidently satisfied that the submarine campaign could, and would, be pressed home and that victory would be achieved. The defensive armament, though quite inadequate, was evidently proving a great embarrassment; of the twenty-nine ships which escaped, all but eight were defensively armed. The practice of taking prisoner the masters of the defensively armed ships which were destroyed was being generally adopted. Under these trying conditions these merchant captains bore themselves with dignity and courage. For instance, when the master (Mr. James A. Taylor) of the *Mohacsfield* (3,678 tons) reached the submarine U35, which had destroyed his ship, he was told that he was a prisoner of war. He noticed a small Austrian flag had been placed near him. He regarded that as a misrepresentation, and turning round, he pulled it out of its position, exclaiming, "This is an Austrian flag! You are not Austrians, you are Germans." The commanding officer protested that, though he was a German, the crew were Austrian. This modified statement, however, was also untrue, as Captain Taylor discovered soon afterwards. This ended the conversation for the moment.

"Getting below at the after end of the submarine, close

to the after torpedo-tube," Captain Taylor afterwards recorded, "I found Captain Fry, of the *Lesbian*, a prisoner of war.<sup>1</sup> He was wounded, and lying on a small locker and some biscuit tins. I had to sit down alongside of him as there was no accommodation in these quarters. All the cooking of the ship was done here. I was given a blanket and had to make the best of the small space allowed to us. That evening the commanding officer called me a pirate and asked me why I fired. In reply I said I was no pirate, but that he was the pirate, and he had fired at me first. 'If a man strikes you, would you not strike him back?' adding that unfortunately he, the German, had had the upper hand owing to the possession of a larger gun. He declared that he would shoot me. I replied, 'Remember, I have got the British nation behind me.' "

Captain Taylor's bearing evidently impressed the German, and he even permitted him to write a few lines to his home and promised that he would see that the letter was duly dispatched. On the following day the *Andoni* (3,188 tons) (master, Mr. W. S. Dennis) was dispatched, being torpedoed without warning, and the *Lynfield* (3,023 tons) shared the same fate. The submarine then turned towards Cattaro. She arrived off the Gulf on the morning of January 13th with her four prisoners, and was received in triumph as she made her way into the port. The ships were manned and a band played. "The four prisoners were placed on her after-deck, with their eight days' dirt upon them, for we had not been allowed to wash." They had had little food, and none of the ordinary conveniences of life; they were forthwith dispatched to a prisoners' camp to endure even worse torments than they had experienced at sea.

The manner in which some of the enemy's submarines were being operated at this stage in the campaign was illustrated by the experiences which fell to the master (Mr. T. H. Stretting) of the *Jevington* (2,747 tons) and his crew. This ship was crossing the Bay of Biscay on the afternoon of January 23rd, when the chief officer, who was resting in his cabin, was thrown out of his bed by a violent explosion. About two hours earlier in the

<sup>1</sup> The *Lesbian* (2,555 tons) had been captured and destroyed two days previously, 125 miles E. by S. from Malta.

afternoon Captain Stretting had noticed a little steamer about five miles distant. The Bay was in an angry mood, the weather was misty, and a few minutes later the strange craft disappeared in the driving rain which was falling. Not long afterwards Captain Stretting saw what appeared to be a fishing-vessel, with two lug sails, steering northwards. It occurred to him that she might have been communicating with the strange steamer. She altered course as though to cross the bows of the *Jevington*. Then she disappeared in a rainstorm. Whether the appearance of this strange steamer in some sort of association with a vessel looking like a fishing-craft had any special significance in the Bay of Biscay, it was difficult to determine.

Nothing occurred for an hour and a half to clear up the mystery, and then a submarine rose to the surface 200 yards on the port bow and fired on the *Jevington*. The shot hit the ship on the port side. There was nothing for it but to reverse the engines, so as to get way off the ship, and to order all hands into the boats. It was one thing to decide on the abandonment of the ship, and quite another, in the heavy seas which were running, to get the boats away in safety. But at last everyone had left and the ship rode on the heaving waters, a deserted derelict, already sinking by the head. The forward deck was nearly awash, and the propeller was well out of the water. The two boats were pulled away from the *Jevington*, but on catching sight of the submarine a mile away, the chief officer (Mr. J. C. Ross) pulled towards her. Struck by the miserable clothes in which some of the crew were dressed, the enemy passed over to the other boat a quantity of clothes. Captain Stretting was afterwards taken on board and cross-examined and then sent back again, being informed that later on he would be made a prisoner. The submarine, with two sails up, which caused her to resemble a fishing-boat, then disappeared.

At this moment the shipwrecked British seamen saw with delight a steamer not far away, so they pulled towards her. She proved to be the *Donstad*, a Norwegian vessel. Everyone clambered on board, only to discover that the vessel was in charge of an armed party of Germans. She had been captured earlier in the day and was being employed as a decoy. The British seamen recognised her as the vessel which had been lost in the mist soon after the



dinner-hour, while the submarine was evidently the fishing-vessel which had tried to cross the bows of the *Jevington*. Shortly afterwards the chief officer and his companions were joined on board the *Donstad* by the master and the men who were with him in his boat. By this time the submarine reappeared, accompanied by a Spanish vessel, the *Leonora*, which she had intercepted by way of an interlude in the ritual which was to attend the destruction of the *Jevington*.

Night had fallen by this time. On the heaving waters of the Bay of Biscay the doomed vessel rolled and pitched as though every moment would be her last—a black blot on the seascape. Within sight of her lay the submarine with sidelights burning, keeping guard over the two neutral steamers which, with lights ablaze, she had pressed into her service. The German commander then ordered the master to proceed on board the submarine. He informed him that he had captured the Spanish steamship in order that she might convey the other officers of the *Jevington*, as well as the crew, to Liverpool, but that in accordance with his latest instructions Captain Stretting himself would be kept on board the submarine and would eventually be sent to a prison camp in Germany. In due course the chief officer and his companions were transferred from the *Donstad* to the *Leonora*, which then disappeared into the blackness of night. For some unexplained reason the master had been told to return to the *Donstad*. While climbing up that ship's side an escape of steam from a leaking pipe scalded his leg. This looked like a misfortune, but it proved a stroke of good luck.

From the deck of the *Donstad*, Captain Stretting was able during the next few days to study the tactics of the enemy. The steamer cruised about the Bay on the lookout for ships, while the submarine made herself as inconspicuous as possible until her prey was assured. The *Donstad* each evening had all her lights burning with the evident intention of attracting as much notice as possible. Early on the 27th Captain Stretting was told that he and everyone else in the Norwegian ship were to cross over to the submarine, and as soon as the last boat had left, bombs which had been placed on board by the prize crew were exploded and the *Donstad* sank.

On reaching the submarine Captain Stretting informed the commanding officer of the injury to his leg, and added that he was in a good deal of pain. Might he lie down? Let it be stated to the credit of this German that his sympathy led him to give instructions that the wound should be dressed and that this British merchant officer should be given the berth of one of his own officers. Lying in this bunk, the British shipmaster watched with fascination the submarine tracking down a strange vessel by the aid of the periscope. The stranger proved to be the *Fulton*, of Bergen. It was forthwith placed in charge of a prize crew. She had been commandeered by this considerate German in order that she might convey his unwilling guests to a neighbouring Spanish port. The sufferings of the master had appealed to the heart of this naval officer. In any case, so many visitors on board the submarine were proving an inconvenience. It may be that this officer's motives were of a mixed character, but at any rate that evening Captain Stretting and the crew of the *Donstad* were, to their great joy, landed at Cape Finisterre.

In the last week before the enemy flung political caution to the wind and determined on a ruthless and relentless attack on merchant shipping, without any pretence of respect for the rules governing cruiser warfare, 167 merchant seamen were brought to their deaths. In two cases—those of the *Ava* (5,076 tons) and the *Lux* (2,621 tons)—the exact cause of sinking must always remain a matter of surmise, for no officer or man survived to shed any light on the fate of either ship. They were both well found and they both disappeared. It is to re-create something of the atmosphere of the war to quote the terms of the ominous notice with which members of Lloyd's were to become only too familiar, which was exhibited in "the Room" on May 16th :

"*Ava* of Glasgow, official No. 124135, Forson master, sailed from Liverpool for Dakar and Rangoon on the 26th January 1917, with a cargo of coal and general, and has not since been heard of.

"(Signed) E. F. INGLEFIELD,  
"Secretary."

That is the whole story, to which no addition was



SUNK WITHOUT WARNING.



subsequently made. With ninety-two officers and men, the *Ava* sailed from Birkenhead in charge of an experienced pilot, who left her inside the Bar Lightship, well satisfied in his own mind she was a trustworthy ship, well equipped and efficiently loaded. No word of her was afterwards received, and at last the presumption was accepted that she had been torpedoed without warning. The story of the *Lux* (master, Mr. F. H. Robinson) is much the same. She left New York on January 20th, and then the great silence fell upon her, broken only by the discovery early in the following month of two bodies off the Irish coast in the neighbourhood of Cork. One was that of the chief engineer, Vivian Oldry Lawson, and the other that of the chief officer, James Parry Thomas.

In the case of the *Artist* (3,570 tons) little short of a miracle accounted for the survival of nine of her complement of thirty-five men. January 27th was a dirty day in the North Atlantic, and as the *Artist* (master, Mr. G. Mills) drew in towards the Fastnet, she encountered the full force of an easterly gale which swept her from stem to stern. She had battled her way across the Atlantic, having been hove to for three nights and two days, and it may well have seemed to Captain Mills and his little company that in weather which had so severely tested the seaworthiness of their big ship no smaller enemy craft could live. But about 8 o'clock in the morning the confused noise of wind and sea was drowned by the sound of an explosion. A torpedo had torn a great hole in the vessel on the star-board side. It was soon apparent that, in such a sea, the damaged ship could live only a few minutes. It was a desperate situation for all on board, for as they turned to the task of launching the boats water poured over the decks as the *Artist* began to settle down by the head. But these men were not to be easily daunted, and all three boats were in a few minutes safely in the water and the stricken vessel was deserted.

The master, with the second and third officers and a portion of the crew, was in one boat, the chief engineer was in charge of another, and a cadet was put in control of a third: and it was the last of these boats which survived the ordeal. The chief officer with his companions disappeared almost at once in the raging tumult of the waters. But Captain Mills and the cadet managed to

get clear of the doomed ship, and throughout that day, with sea anchors laid out, they drifted. Throughout the night the gale increased in violence, the thermometer dropping to 37°. Those who have never spent a night in mid-winter in an open boat cannot by any stretch of imagination picture the horrors which these men endured as they devoted themselves to the task of baling out the water which broke over the gunwales. Wet to the skin and cold to the marrow, they must have realised how wellnigh hopeless was the prospect that they would survive. By the following morning nothing was to be seen of the captain's boat; it had disappeared, and nothing was ever heard of it or its occupants. The cadet and his little group of companions alone survived.

They were the sole remnant of the forty-five men who had put out on the voyage. They knew that the wireless operator had sent out a call for help when the *Artist* had been struck, but what prospect was there that help could reach them in such weather? Moreover, though the *Artist* had been sunk fifty-eight miles W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. from the Smalls, the position of their little boat as she had drifted hour by hour was unknown to anyone. Throughout the Sunday, all the following day, and until long after dawn on the Tuesday, the boat was at the mercy of wind, tide, and wave. Men died and their bodies were committed to the deep; others sustained various injuries, and all suffered the agonies of cold, wet, and physical and mental exhaustion. Were there not overwhelming official evidence, as well as the narratives of the survivors, it would be almost past belief that any men could have existed throughout those three days and three nights. But, at last, the wind dropped and the sea began to subside. With unspeakable relief their tired, overstrained eyes picked up in the far distance lights which spoke of land being nigh. A short time afterwards a steamer outward bound bore down upon them, but there remained of the original crew of sixteen persons only ten in the boat, and one of these was rigid in death. In calmer seas it proved a simple matter to transfer the survivors to the patrol-boat, and thus in due course they were conveyed ashore to receive at the hands of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society the succour of which they stood in such dire need.

A brief account of the sinking of the *Artist* was issued

shortly afterwards by the Admiralty, and in this statement it was remarked that "the pledge given by Germany to the United States not to sink merchant ships without ensuring the safety of the passengers and crews had been broken before, but never in circumstances of more cold-blooded brutality."

A new chapter in sea warfare without parallel in history had already opened.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CRUISES OF THE GERMAN RAIDERS

#### I. THE MÖWE

WITH the clearing of the trade routes of the earlier German raiders, in circumstances already recorded, British merchant ships went about their business unmolested for many months outside the war zone which the enemy had declared. Since the steamship *Coleby* had been captured by the armed merchant cruiser *Kron Prinz Wilhelm* on March 27th, 1915, no injury had been suffered from enemy surface vessels; indeed, there was good reason for believing that there was none at sea. This state of things contributed to create a false sense of confidence on the part of the masters of vessels in the British Merchant Navy. In spite of the warnings issued from time to time by the Admiralty, many of them were led to the conclusion that there was no cause to fear further trouble, apart, of course, from the menace which submarines and mines represented in the waters around the British Isles. The naval authorities repeatedly stated that, although the enemy was being blockaded as effectively as possible, the conditions under which that operation was being carried out militated against any hard-and-fast guarantee being given that one or more German vessels, whether disguised men-of-war or auxiliaries, would not break out upon the trade routes either from the Baltic or from Germany's North Sea ports. The blockade was being conducted at long range and in latitudes in which fogs were frequently experienced, and during the winter months the dark nights offered opportunities for isolated ships to escape the vigilance of the British naval forces. That these warnings were fully justified events were soon to disclose, for a few days before the close of the year 1915, a raider steamed out of Hamburg cleverly disguised as an ordinary cargo-vessel; within a



few hours she was engaged in the work of mine-laying, and then began a systematic course of commerce-destruction.

This vessel was the *Möwe*, under the command of Korvetten-Kapitän Burggraf Graf Nikolaus zu Dohna-Schlodien, a determined, skilful, and, as events were to show, humane officer, whose record stands out in marked contrast to that of many of his companions in the submarine branch of the German naval service. When Count zu Dohna-Schlodien received his orders to "lay mines in various places along the enemy's coast and then carry on cruiser warfare," the *Möwe* had already been equipped with guns and provided with mine-laying apparatus, and her disguise was complete. She had been painted black-and-white, and a Swedish ensign had been emblazoned on each side just before the foremost hatch. Her armament had been placed behind high bulwarks which were, of course, moveable, and nothing was to be seen of her mines. She had the appearance of an ordinary Swedish merchant ship, distinguished only by a fairly large crow's-nest on the foremast and a rather high ventilating cowl in front of the poop. Thick and stormy weather facilitated the slipping of this disguised vessel through the British patrols. She crept northwards up the Norwegian coast, and thus passed out into the Atlantic after laying two mine-fields—one across the Pentland Firth in a gale of wind and snow,<sup>1</sup> and the other off La Rochelle. She remained at large, capturing one British merchantman after another, for a period of a month before the Admiralty received information as to her doings, and even then the intelligence was of a somewhat indefinite character.

On the afternoon of January 11th, 1916, the *Farringford* (3,146 tons) was on passage from Huelva to Liverpool with a cargo of copper ore when she sighted two steamers on her port bow. The *Farringford* was about 160 miles to the west of Cape Finisterre at the time—well outside the war zone. The nearer of the two steamers was about three miles distant; she was flying the Red Ensign and nothing in her appearance suggested that she was anything but the ordinary merchant ship engaged in peaceful commerce. Suddenly, however, this apparently harmless vessel, which was in fact the *Möwe*, signalled "What ship

<sup>1</sup> H.M.S. KING EDWARD VII was shortly afterwards sunk on this mine-field.

is that ?” The master of the *Farringford* (Mr. John Parry Jones) at once hoisted the Red Ensign and was about to put up the number of his vessel when the stranger intervened with two further signals, “ Stop immediately !” and “ Abandon ship !” On making these demands the mysterious vessel lowered the Red Ensign, and to Captain Jones’s amazement ran up in its place the German flag, at the same time unmasking a powerful battery.

The British master, realising at once that he had no hope of escape, stopped his vessel, and the *Möwe*, turning on her starboard helm, approached close to him. Captain Jones then ordered his men to man and fill the boats and pull towards the German raider. As soon as the crew were aboard, they were placed between decks under an armed guard and informed that they were prisoners of war ; Captain Jones himself was taken to the bridge, where he had the sad ordeal of witnessing his vessel being shelled by the *Möwe*. The hull was penetrated near the water’s edge close to the boilers and engines, but the *Farringford* did not immediately sink, and was still afloat when Captain Jones last saw her.

In the meantime, the captain of the *Möwe* had turned about to pay attention to the other vessel already sighted by Captain Jones, which proved to be the *Corbridge* (3,687 tons) on passage to Rosario with 5,000 tons of coal from Barry. The master (Mr. David Barton) had already, of course, by the action of the strange vessel on his port bow towards the unfortunate *Farringford*, perceived her true nature. He too had received similar signals and had been commanded to stop by the German raider. Seeing, however, that her attention was for the moment directed towards the *Farringford*, he decided for the present to hold upon his course, although several warning shots had been fired at him. Soon after 5 o’clock, however, he realised that ultimate escape was impossible, and, a shell from one of the *Möwe’s* guns passing over his funnel, he deemed it his duty to stop his engines. Darkness had now fallen, and the *Möwe’s* captain lowered a boat and sent a couple of officers and an armed crew aboard the British vessel. Finding that she was carrying what was, for the *Möwe*, a particularly valuable cargo of coal, the German captain decided that he would not immediately sink the *Corbridge* ;

Captain Barton and eighteen of his men were transferred to the raider, and a German prize crew consisting of two officers and six men was placed in charge of the captured vessel. The *Corbridge* was then ordered to follow in the wake of the *Möwe*, which once more returned to the spot where the *Farringford* had last been seen. In spite of the bright moonlight, however, no vestige of her was found, and there was no doubt that she had ultimately sunk as the result of her earlier shelling.

Thus began the first cruise of the German raider *Möwe*, now revealed to the two unfortunate British captains imprisoned on board her as a vessel of some 4,500 tons, not very speedy; she possessed four decks, with two torpedo-tubes on the fore deck, four 5·9-inch guns mounted forward, two guns of similar calibre mounted aft, and one smaller gun. She had been fitted with rails for mine-laying. She also carried a powerful wireless installation. It was apparent to observers that a good deal of ingenuity had been exhibited in concealing her comparatively heavy armament.

The *Farringford* having been sunk, the *Corbridge*, under her German prize crew, was dispatched towards an arranged rendezvous on the coast of Brazil, where the *Möwe* intended to coal from her at a later date. On the following day, therefore (January 12th), at about 4 p.m., Captain Barton saw his vessel disappearing into the south-west. This was the day before the next victim was destined to fall to the *Möwe*, namely the *Dromonby* (3,627 tons), carrying between five and six thousand tons of coal from Cardiff to St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands. This West Hartlepool vessel had been at sea for five days, when her master (Mr. John Brockett), while in his cabin, heard a shot fired. Going on deck immediately, he saw an armed merchantman, flying the German ensign, about a ship's length away on his port side. He immediately put his vessel full speed astern and blew three blasts on the whistle. The German vessel hoisted the customary signal "What ship is that?" to which Captain Brockett replied by hoisting the number of his vessel. The *Möwe* immediately signalled "Stop instantly!" and "Abandon ship!" and realising, as the masters of the *Farringford* and *Corbridge* had previously done, that any resistance would be hopeless, the British captain swung

out his boats and ordered his crew to leave the ship. The captain of the *Möwe* then sent three or four boatfuls of armed men to examine the *Dromonby's* cargo and her papers, which were taken aboard the German vessel. The *Dromonby* was subsequently sunk, in a position about 140 miles W. by N. from Cape Finisterre, by explosive charges laid and fired by a German demolition party. Captain Brockett and his crew had previously been sent below decks on board the *Möwe* to join the other British prisoners, and therefore were spared the sight of their vessel's destruction. It was an unfortunate loss, as the *Dromonby's* cargo of coal was destined for the British Naval Squadron working in South American waters.

Scarcely had the *Dromonby* gone down when a column of smoke to the northward proclaimed to those on board the *Möwe* the approach of yet another possible victim. This was the British steamer *Author*, of Liverpool (3,490 tons). She was carrying a general cargo of about 5,200 tons, consigned to various firms at Durban, Delagoa Bay, and Vigo, and had left London on January 8th. It was about half-past three in the afternoon of January 13th, the weather being fine and clear and the sea smooth, when the second officer of the *Author* reported to her master (Mr. Ralph Yeates) that a German cruiser was alongside. She had approached the *Author* with the British Ensign flying, but had hauled this down when abreast of the British vessel, displaying in its stead the German Naval Ensign. Captain Yeates immediately went on deck to find the raider on his port beam, with her torpedo-tubes showing, and two of her 5.9 guns trained on his vessel. As in the other cases, it was at once obvious that he had no choice but to obey orders. Armed crews from three of the *Möwe's* boats boarded the *Author*, and, having examined her cargo, began to transfer stores to the German vessel, some of these, particularly the sheep, hens, and eggs, proving naturally a tempting prize to the enemy. After these stores had been removed and the *Author's* crew, consisting of eleven Englishmen and between forty and fifty Lascars, had been taken aboard the *Möwe* to join the swelling number of prisoners already incarcerated there, the sea-cocks of the unlucky British vessel were opened and explosive charges, with time fuses, were laid to effect her sinking. Owing to the foresight of Captain Yeates,

the ship's confidential papers had already been burnt in the ship's galley.

Little realising what was happening so comparatively near at hand, another British steamship, the *Trader* (3,608 tons), was now approaching, on her way to Falmouth with a cargo of sugar from Peru. Employed on Admiralty service, she had left St. Vincent on January 3rd. She was travelling at about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  knots when her master (Mr. Evan Jones) sighted a steamer almost ahead, slightly on his star-board bow and about three miles distant. Quite ignorant, of course, of what had so lately happened to the unfortunate *Author*, Captain Jones at first saw nothing in her of a suspicious character. Suddenly, however, she stopped, and immediately afterwards he received the signal "What ship is that?" He replied, and then received further questions, "Where from?" and "Where bound for?" He then himself signalled the stranger, "Who are you?" whereupon he received the reply, "A German cruiser," and orders were given to "Stop at once" and to "Abandon ship." Like the *Farringsford*, *Corbridge*, *Dromonby*, and *Author*, the *Trader* was unarmed even for defence, and Captain Jones therefore ordered his boats out, and the ship was soon almost deserted. He himself remained on board with his chief officer and two seamen, while the German cruiser sent across a boatful of armed men and ordered the *Trader's* boats to go across to the *Möwe*. The German boarding-party then came aboard the *Trader* and began to search for papers, but only succeeded in finding the official log and the bills of lading. They placed explosive charges in the *Trader's* No. 2 hold, engine-room, and No. 3 hold, and re-embarked, taking with them Captain Yeates, his chief officer and the two seamen. The *Trader* sank as a result of three explosions before her captain had reached the side of the German vessel.

There were now some 150 British prisoners on board the *Möwe* under conditions of crowding and ventilation that were far from pleasant, and were in fact also becoming something of a menace to the captain of the *Möwe* himself, who, it should be added, did what he could to mitigate the hardships of his "passengers" by separating the white seamen from the black and giving permission to the men to go on deck from time to time to get some fresh air. For two days no further prey fell to the enemy; and it

was not until about 7 o'clock on the morning of January 15th that the next victim, the British steamship *Ariadne* (3,035 tons), sighted the *Möwe* about 120 miles north of the Canaries. This vessel was carrying a cargo of maize from Rosario to Nantes. She had been at sea since December 6th and was now nearing her destination, so that the feelings of her master (Mr. Robert Reed) and crew can well be imagined when what was apparently an innocent British steamer, flying the Red Ensign, suddenly altered her course to pass under the *Ariadne's* stern, and coming up on her starboard side, lowered the Red Ensign, hoisted the German flag, and revealed her armament of guns. The usual procedure followed: Captain Reed stopped his engines, and the raider sent an armed boat's crew aboard, who ordered him to put out his own boats and abandon his ship. Captain Reed and his chief engineer alone were retained on board while the explosive charges and time fuses were fixed, and were then taken back as prisoners to the *Möwe*. In this instance, however, the explosions did not take place as arranged, and the *Möwe* was in consequence forced to sacrifice one of her torpedoes in order to sink the *Ariadne*, after previously firing some dozen shots at her.

The scene of operations was well chosen from the *Möwe's* point of view. Hardly had the *Ariadne* disappeared than a column of smoke was sighted from the deck of the *Möwe*, this time to the starboard. It proceeded from the funnels of a British steamship that was presently destined, for many weary months, to be the subject of world-wide interest in maritime legal circles and to prove a test case of America's attitude towards one phase of modern sea warfare. The vessel was the Elder Dempster steamship *Appam* (7,781 tons), and she was carrying a considerable number of passengers, including some invalided soldiers and naval ratings, as well as a score of German prisoners of war, from the Cameroons Defence Force. Among her civilian passengers were Sir E. M. Merewether, Governor of Sierra Leone, and Mr. F. S. James, C.M.G., Administrator of Nigeria. The *Appam* (master, Mr. H. C. Harrison) had left Freetown for Plymouth on January 9th, calling two days later at Dakar, where a 3-pounder gun had been shipped and mounted aft. She was some sixty miles to the north of Madeira, when, early in the afternoon of

January 15th, an ordinary cargo-steamer was observed approaching from the north-east. Having already that same day passed a British cargo-boat outward bound in the same direction, the natural assumption of those on board was that this was but another merchant vessel of the same character. At half-past two, as the stranger appeared to be crossing the *Appam's* course, the second officer, who was in charge of the Elder Dempster vessel at the time, altered his course a little so as to clear. She was then seen to be flying the signal to stop.

On this being reported to Captain Harrison, he hurried to the bridge and saw to his dismay that the approaching ship was heavily armed and was flying the German Ensign. Having at his disposal nothing more powerful than his 3-pounder gun, Captain Harrison realised at once that he would be rendering a disastrous disservice to the passengers, both men and women, whom he had on board if he attempted resistance. He accordingly stopped his ship. While Lieutenant Lamble, R.N.R., was attempting to remove the breech-block of the 3-pounder, he was observed by the Germans, who fired two shots at him, happily without result. The *Appam* was then boarded by an armed boat's crew from the raider, the *Möwe* keeping close to the British vessel, with her guns trained on her. The German officer in charge of the boat's crew made full inquiries as to the ship's passengers, cargo, coal, speed, etc., and then placed the master under arrest, telling him to pack up his effects. He was subsequently sent on board the *Möwe*. Although the *Appam* carried a wireless installation, the close neighbourhood of the German raider and her overpowering armament rendered this practically useless for purposes of defence. The *Appam*, therefore, fell into the German's hands as easily as her unfortunate predecessors had done. It was now quite impossible for the *Möwe*, glutted as she was with prisoners from her already captured victims, to accommodate on board the crew and passengers of the *Appam*, and the commanding officer accordingly decided to send her, in charge of a prize crew, to a neutral port.

Before doing so, however, the *Appam* was ordered to remain for a couple of days in company with her captor; and she thus became the witness of a very plucky effort at resistance made by the next victim of the *Möwe*, which

turned out to be the *Clan Mactavish*. This Clan liner had been built as recently as the first year of the war. With a valuable cargo, including wool, frozen mutton, copper, wheat, leather, and canned meats, she had left Fremantle, in Australia, on December 9th. Arriving at Durban on December 23rd, she had there landed mails and cargo, taking on board some more wool. She had afterwards put into Cape Town, sailing thence on the last day of the year, with orders to call at Dakar and ship a gun. Here she arrived on January 12th, a 6-pounder was mounted, and two naval ratings were shipped to take charge of this meagre armament. Leaving Dakar on January 13th, the *Clan Mactavish* (5,816 tons) (master, Mr. W. N. Oliver) had shaped her course to pass westward of the Canary Islands. Her gun, which stood on a platform fixed on the port quarter, was only useful for protecting one side of the vessel and her stern, the starboard side being totally undefended.

Passing the Island of Palma early on January 16th, it was not until 5 o'clock in the evening that she sighted a vessel about three points on her port bow, a second vessel showing up soon afterwards in the same direction. They both appeared to be ordinary merchant vessels, and from the direction in which they were steaming, Captain Oliver came to the conclusion that they were probably bound from some South American port and were making for the Mediterranean. Just as dusk was falling, however, the nearer of the two vessels began to approach so close that Captain Oliver ordered his helm to be ported, as the strange ship showed no signs of giving way, although under the circumstances it was her duty to have done so. A message was then received, morsed by lamp, "What ship is that?" Captain Oliver at once replied by asking the stranger to report her own name. The answer came, "The *Trader*, of Liverpool," and, as this vessel was known to Captain Oliver, he replied by giving the name of the *Clan Mactavish*. The two vessels were steaming side by side, some 300 yards apart, the *Möwe*, as she in fact was, being on the port side of the *Clan Mactavish*. Within a few minutes Captain Oliver received the signal "Stop at once! I am a German cruiser." Captain Oliver, with his instinctive courage, instantly ordered full speed ahead and sent the gun's crew to their stations: he was determined to make



a fight for his ship. The wireless operator of the *Clan Mactavish* instantly dispatched a signal for help: "I am in imminent danger of capture by the enemy in lat. 30° 40' N., long. 17° 10' W.—*Clan Mactavish*." It was taken in on board H.M.S. ESSEX, but was not reported to the decoding officer, and thus by this mischance the *Möwe* gained a further lease of life. The signal was the first news of the movements of the raider, and owing to the failure of two bluejackets it was of no avail. Whether it would have enabled the British naval forces to capture the *Möwe* is, however, a matter of doubt.

When the German raider perceived that the warning to stop was being ignored, she fired a shot across the bows of the *Clan Mactavish*, followed by another. One shell landed on the fore-deck of the *Clan Mactavish*, close to her windlass, killing the man in the lookout. Captain Oliver ordered that the enemy's fire should be returned, not realising at first that the *Möwe's* armament was of such a powerful nature, but presuming it probably to be of somewhat the same calibre as his own. The enemy shells now began to rain heavily upon the British vessel. One, landing on the fiddly deck, killed seven men; a second holed the ship's side in the neighbourhood of the bridge, wrecking the stewards' room and damaging the second officer's cabin, as well as blowing away the ship's gig; a third holed the *Clan Mactavish* below the water-line; and a final one burst the main steam-pipe and thus put her engines out of action. Captain Oliver was accordingly left with no alternative than to cease firing, and he signalled the raider to that effect, having sustained a loss of eighteen Lascars killed and five or six wounded.

The *Möwe* then signalled to know if there were any wounded on board, to which Captain Oliver replied that there were. He received an order for all his boats to be lowered, and just as he had done so, a boat from the *Möwe* came alongside under the command of a lieutenant. The crew of the *Clan Mactavish* were lined up on deck, and directed to take their places in the boats. Bombs were placed on board the captured British vessel in order to effect her sinking speedily, and Captain Oliver, together with his chief engineer and wireless operator, was taken over to the *Möwe* in the German boat. All confidential documents had previously been destroyed, and the breech-

block of the gun and all rifle ammunition had been thrown overboard. One of the first sights that met Captain Oliver's eyes when he reached the *Möwe* was that of the bodies of three Germans being carried aft for burial. Before returning to the adventures of the *Appam*, it may here be stated that Captain Oliver, his native crew and his two naval ratings, were retained on board the *Möwe* till the end of her first cruise, when she returned safely to Germany. Captain Oliver was then interned in a prison camp at Hameln, where he remained in captivity for two years. He was afterwards decorated on his return to England with the D.S.C.

During these weeks of activity on the part of the *Möwe*, anxiety was felt in England as to the fate of a number of ships. The finding of a lifeboat marked *Appam* by the steamer *Tregantle* suggested that the vessel had encountered bad weather and had been at least delayed. For at this time nothing was known of the escape of the *Möwe*, much less of her movements at sea. But the veil was about to be lifted. Count zu Dohna-Schlodien had so many prisoners that he had to get rid of them. By mischance British cruisers were active in every area except those in which the *Möwe*, unknown to anyone, was operating. The *Clan Mactavish* was sunk on Sunday, January 16th, about 120 miles S. by W. (true) from Funchal, and on the day after her destruction the final arrangements for sending the *Appam* to a neutral port, then undisclosed, were made. At about 5 o'clock on the evening of January 17th, certain officers and men from some of the vessels previously captured by the *Möwe* were transferred to the *Appam*, and at about 9 o'clock the two ships parted company, the *Appam* proceeding in a westerly direction.

She arrived under the command of one of the *Möwe's* officers, Lieutenant Berg, and in charge of a prize crew, at Hampton Roads, Virginia, on February 1st. No passengers were allowed to land, and no communication with the shore was permitted, but at 6 o'clock in the evening Sir Edward Merewether, Mr. James, and one or two others were allowed to land at Old Point Comfort in order to confer with the Naval Attaché to the British Embassy and the Vice-Consul of North Virginia. It was then declared that all passengers were free to leave the ship with the exception of the naval and military officers and men on

board, whose release had been objected to by the German Ambassador.

On the following day, February 3rd, the *Appam* was taken up to Newport News, and there ensued a long series of communications between the various Foreign Offices concerned as to the future of the ship and those still on board her. It was finally decided on July 29th, 1916, by Judge Waddell, that the *Appam* had lost her status as prize when she entered American territorial waters to remain indefinitely; that the manner of bringing her, as well as her prisoners, into the waters of the United States constituted a violation of the neutrality of the United States; that she had come in without bidding or permission; that she had remained in violation of the law; that she was unable to leave for lack of crew, which she could not provide or augment without further violation of neutrality; that in her present condition she was without a lawful right to be or remain in the waters of the United States; and that she should therefore be returned to her owners. An appeal was made to the Supreme Court of the United States, but the decision was upheld in a judgment delivered on March 6th, 1917. It was established that the *Appam* was not brought into an American port otherwise than as a prize, captured at sea by a cruiser of the German Navy. It was held that the true rule of International Law was that a prize could only be brought into a neutral port on account of unseaworthiness, stress of weather, or want of fuel or provisions. The Court decided that the use of an American port by the Germans in which they might store prizes indefinitely was in fact a violation of neutrality, and that it could not be justified by existing treaties between America and Germany. The appeal was accordingly dismissed and the decrees for the restitution of the vessel, with the cargo, to the owners were affirmed.

To return to the *Möwe*, it will be recalled that her second capture, the *Corbridge*, with her cargo of coal, had been dispatched south to an appointed rendezvous, where the captain of the *Möwe* proposed later to meet her, for coaling purposes. After the capture of the *Appam* and the sinking of the *Clan Mactavish*, the *Möwe* accordingly proceeded southwards with this object. On January 22nd she was sighted by a three-masted British barque, the

*Edinburgh*, of Glasgow. With a gross tonnage of a little over 1,400, she was an iron-built vessel, some thirty years old, and was proceeding with a cargo of rice meal from Rangoon to Liverpool, having left the former port on September 22nd, 1915. She had reached a point some 700 miles W. by S.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. (true) from St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, and all was well. It was 4.30 in the afternoon that her master (Mr. Samuel W. Burnley) first sighted the German raider on his starboard side, some six miles away.

He proceeded on his course unsuspectingly. The strange steamer came up under his stern, hailed him, and asked him to show his distinguishing flag. Before he had time to do so, however, the mysterious vessel signalled that a boat was being sent across. Captain Burnley backed his mainyard, and two boats, full of armed men, came alongside. They were in charge of a lieutenant, who told Captain Burnley that they were about to sink his ship. After allowing time for him and his crew to collect their belongings, the German officer then took them, together with all available provisions, aboard the German raider. Before doing so, fuse bombs had been placed in each of the three hatches, and about 8 o'clock in the evening the old *Edinburgh* slowly disappeared from sight, a tragic spectacle for her master to witness in the bright moonlight of a tropical night. Six days later, on January 28th, the *Corbridge* was again sighted off Maraca Island, and for three days the German raider proceeded to coal from her, after which she was towed into deep water and sunk. Count zu Dohna-Schlodien realised that the news of his activities had by this time got abroad, so he steamed to the vicinity of the Rocas.

On February 4th the *Möwe* sank a Belgian steamship, the *Luxembourg*, carrying nearly 6,000 tons of coal to Buenos Aires, in a position about eighty miles to the eastward of Fernando Noronha, and then Count zu Dohna steamed slowly to the north-west. On the 6th the *Möwe* was seen by the British steamship *Flamenco*, some two miles distant on the port side. The *Flamenco* (4,629 tons) was bound, with a cargo of coal, from Newport to Santos. Noticing that the approaching vessel appeared to be getting too close to him, the master of the *Flamenco* (Mr. Norman Martorell) ported his helm in order to avoid

her. The *Flamenco*, which was carrying a wireless installation, then received two signals, "Stop immediately!" and "Do not telegraph!" and at the same time saw the German Naval Ensign flying from the strange vessel's mast. Simultaneously a shot passed across the bows of the British vessel. Captain Martorell, disregarding the enemy's warning, immediately sent out wireless messages, upon which the raider fired five more shells, three holing the British vessel amidships, one striking her just under the bridge and another under the wireless cabin. Captain Martorell could do no more. He ordered his crew to the boats, which were swung out and lowered, but unfortunately one of these got into difficulties and was capsized, a fireman being drowned. The boats pulled away from the ship's side, and an armed boat's crew from the raider came alongside. Picking up the survivors of the crew of the capsized dinghy, the Germans proceeded on board, put Captain Martorell under arrest and took him across to the *Möwe*. The *Flamenco* was now in flames and rapidly sinking, and a second boat's crew from the German vessel finished her destruction with a bomb, the vessel sinking at a point about 310 miles N.E. by N. (true) from Pernambuco. How near the *Möwe* had come, at this point, to the end of her predatory career may be gathered from the fact that the *Flamenco* had been in touch with the British cruiser GLASGOW only the day before. There is reason to believe that the GLASGOW and the *Möwe* had passed each other during the previous afternoon, and had the GLASGOW been near enough to see the enemy raider, the exploits of the *Möwe* might have had a different ending.

That was on February 6th, and two days later, on February 8th, the *Möwe* was sighted at about 5.30 p.m. by the British steamer *Westburn*. This was a comparatively old and slow vessel (3,300 tons), and was bound with a cargo of nearly 4,000 tons of coal from Cardiff to Buenos Aires. She had left Cardiff on December 28th, but had been forced, as a result of damage sustained during bad weather, to put into Liverpool on January 4th, where she had remained till the 21st. Since leaving Liverpool all had gone well, and the weather was fine and clear when, in the position lat.  $0^{\circ} 11' N.$ , long.  $31^{\circ} 30' W.$ , the chief officer (Mr. George Wilkinson), who was on the bridge, saw a strange vessel, which was in fact the *Möwe*, about

four points on his starboard bow and some seven miles away, steering straight towards him.

An hour later, when it was nearly dark, the strange vessel, then only about a mile away on his port beam, began to signal asking for the name of his ship. The master of the *Westburn* (Mr. A. T. Campbell) had now joined the chief officer on the bridge. Both of them were very suspicious of the other vessel's movements. Captain Campbell replied to the German signals, describing himself as the master of a Danish vessel. The *Westburn* was accordingly allowed to proceed, but, at about a quarter to eight, she was again signalled by the enemy and told to stop, a gun being fired as a peremptory warning. Captain Campbell at once stopped the *Westburn*, and a motor-boat came across to him from the raider. The lieutenant in charge made the usual inquiries. The *Westburn's* boats were promptly lowered and her crew and officers sent across to the *Möwe*, the captain soon afterwards following in charge of the German lieutenant. The *Westburn* was not, however, immediately sunk, as the commander of the *Möwe* evidently had other views about her; and those who were taken captive from her became the witnesses, at 5.30 o'clock the next morning, of the capture of the steamship *Horace* (3,335 tons), of Liverpool.

This vessel (master, Mr. D. William Hughes) was bound with a general cargo to Buenos Aires. The *Möwe* was within about three-quarters of a mile of her, when the *Horace* received the usual signal to stop. Captain Hughes immediately altered his course westward in order to avoid a collision. The *Möwe* responded by firing a shot across his poop, hoisting at the same time the German Naval Ensign. Captain Hughes then stopped and hoisted the British Ensign, and ten minutes later the *Möwe* signalled that she was sending a boat to him. At 6 o'clock an armed guard boarded his vessel and took charge. At first Captain Hughes was told that the *Horace* would be used to convey some of the prisoners now crowding the *Möwe* to Brazil, but, finding that she was carrying among other things a consignment of copper, the commander of the *Möwe* ordered her to be sunk. Captain Hughes and his men were accordingly taken off the *Horace* and put on board the *Westburn*, which had now come up in charge of her German prize crew. At 11 o'clock explosive charges

were fired on board the *Horace*, and an hour later she had disappeared from sight.

It was now clear that Count zu Dohna intended to use the *Westburn*, much as he had used the *Appam*, to free himself from his very congested cargo of British captives. Those who remained, therefore, of the crews of the previously captured *Edinburgh*, *Flamenco*, *Clan Mactavish*, *Horace*, and *Corbridge*, in company with the officers and men of the Belgian steamship *Luxembourg*, which had also been captured by the *Möwe*, were placed on board the *Westburn*, and told that they would be landed. Accordingly the *Westburn* was placed in charge of Lieutenant Badewitz and a German prize crew, together with some neutrals to assist in navigating the vessel, and on February 9th she left the *Möwe* with about 200 prisoner passengers on board. The captured British naval and military officers, together with some naval ratings and coolies, and the master and second mate of the *Westburn*, as well as the master of the *Clan Mactavish*, were retained on board the *Möwe*.

The *Westburn* was near the Equator when she was cast off, and she was steered in the direction of the Cape Verde Islands. On February 15th the vessel again turned south, suggesting that the commanding officer was intending to break the pledge which Count zu Dohna had given. On the following day, therefore, the masters of the captured vessels addressed the following letter to the German officer in charge.

"The commander of the *Möwe* told us we should be landed in five days and we are still at sea. At your request we provided engineers and firemen, without promise of payment and against their wishes, to run this vessel. During the past two days the men have complained that the food is not sufficient. We shall be pleased, therefore, if you will kindly let us know your intentions as to when and where you propose to land us that we can let the men know and relieve their anxiety."

The merchant seamen were, in fact, existing in the hold in conditions of great hardship: they had little ventilation, their food was badly cooked, and the heat was insufferable.

Lieutenant Badewitz then came aft and informed the masters that he would take them either to Las Palmas or Tenerife if they so desired, or that he would land them earlier on a desert island. To this they replied that they would prefer to be taken to Las Palmas or Tenerife. The course of the *Westburn* was then directed towards the latter island, and it was about half-past two in the afternoon of February 22nd that she entered the port of Santa Cruz, flying the German Naval Flag. To Lieutenant Badewitz's amazement, the British armoured cruiser H.M.S. SUTLEJ happened also to be in the harbour. The Port Authorities and the German Consul immediately went off to the captured merchantman, and returned with the information that the German commander of the *Westburn* had come to the port in order to land his prisoners and obtain provisions.

At the moment of the *Westburn's* entrance, Captain Basil H. Fanshawe, in command of the SUTLEJ, with three of his officers, were in the British Consulate, but on receiving the information that a steamship under the German Ensign was entering the harbour from the south, they immediately returned on board and the SUTLEJ shortly afterwards got up steam and got out of territorial waters so as to watch proceedings. There then followed various negotiations as to the status of the *Westburn* and her treatment by the Spanish authorities, during which the British Consul was allowed to send provisions on board her for the prisoners, who by that time had become seriously short of food. On the next day, February 23rd, all the British prisoners were handed over to the British Consul and the bulk of them were later transferred to the R.M.S. *Athenic*, which had arrived at Santa Cruz en route for England. Later in the day, the *Westburn* was observed to be moving from her original anchorage and she proceeded about a mile along the coast, where she anchored some three-quarters of a mile from the shore; she was followed by the German Coaling Company's steam-launch and a tug-boat. Soon afterwards she was noticed to be settling down, and about half an hour afterwards she sank. The German crew left the ship in the steam-launch, having, as was afterwards affirmed, deliberately scuttled the vessel in Spanish territorial waters.



The *Möwe* was now nearing the end of her cruise. Count zu Dohna must have realised that a hue and cry had been raised and that Allied men-of-war were seeking for him. So on or about February 10th he turned homewards. On the 24th a French vessel, the *Maroni*, was captured and sunk while bound from Bordeaux to New York with a general cargo, and then, some 620 miles west (true) from the Fastnet, the last of the *Möwe's* British victims, during this, her first, cruise, fell in with her. This was the *Saxon Prince* (3,471 tons). This Prince liner (master, Mr. W. S. Jameson) was homeward bound from Norfolk, Virginia, to Manchester with a cargo of some 5,000 tons of steel, cotton, and grain. She was unarmed and carried no munitions, guns, or explosives. Leaving Norfolk on February 13th, the voyage proceeded without incident until about 6 o'clock in the morning of February 25th, when a steamer approaching from the northward on the port side was reported by the lookout. Two flags were hoisted on board the strange vessel, but owing to the fact that they were end on to the *Saxon Prince*, their nature could not be determined.

Gradually approaching until within about half a mile, the mysterious ship fired a blank shot at the *Saxon Prince* as a signal to stop. Captain Jameson had no alternative but to obey. The unknown vessel approached closer, and it was then seen that she was flying the German Ensign. An armed crew boarded the *Saxon Prince*. Having examined the cargo and ship's papers, all on board the *Saxon Prince* were ordered into the boats, and bombs were placed on the deck of the British vessel. These were exploded as soon as the boats had left, the *Saxon Prince* at once listing to port and beginning to sink; she disappeared in less than an hour. With the commander of the *Saxon Prince* (Captain Jameson) on board, together with the British crew, the *Möwe* now succeeded, largely aided by the rough weather, dense snow-squalls, and driving fog-banks, in eluding the patrol-vessels of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, and reached German territorial waters without adventure. Captain Jameson and the British crew of the *Saxon Prince* were landed at Wilhelms-haven on March 4th, and were subsequently interned, the neutrals of the crew, three Danish seamen, being afterwards sent to their homes.

No more was heard of the *Möwe* for several months, and in the meantime the Germans made the most, for propagandist purposes in neutral countries, of Count zu Dohna's success. In a spirit of bravado, the enemy decided to send the *Möwe* roving once more, and on December 2nd, 1916, a British vessel fell in with her, to become the first victim of her second and last cruise. As it afterwards appeared, the *Möwe*, once again disguised as an innocent cargo-steamer, had left Germany in the last week of November and had succeeded, again aided by fog and darkness, in breaking through the patrol upon the trade routes of the North Atlantic. The British vessel which was to afford the first evidence of this success was the steamer *Voltaire* (8,618 tons), outward bound from Liverpool to New York, via Halifax, in ballast. Leaving the former port on November 28th, this Lamport & Holt vessel carried a crew of ninety-four men and was armed with one 4.7-inch gun. Following the track advised by the Naval Intelligence Officer at Liverpool, it was at 7.30 o'clock on the morning of December 2nd, just as light was breaking, that she was overtaken by the *Möwe*, which signalled her to stop immediately, and ordered that the ship should be abandoned. The master of the *Voltaire* (Mr. R. A. Knight), however, at once altered his course to bring the enemy vessel astern, sending out a wireless emergency call. This call the *Möwe* proceeded to block, and opened fire with all the guns that she could train upon the *Voltaire*. Four shells, fired at close range, struck the vessel, many other salvos going over her owing to the rough sea in which the short action was being fought. At last, finding that he was completely outgunned and had not the necessary speed to escape from the *Möwe*, Captain Knight ordered his engines to be stopped, and the crew to leave the vessel in the lifeboats. The *Möwe* then sent an armed crew to the *Voltaire*, who placed bombs in her holds, which were afterwards exploded, the vessel sinking about noon, 650 miles W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N. (true) from the Fastnet. Excellent discipline was preserved on board the *Voltaire*, and although the sea was very rough at the time, and the crew in their frail craft were under fire, the boats were safely got away and no lives were lost. Captain Knight and his men were afterwards picked up and detained as prisoners on the *Möwe*. They were landed later, together

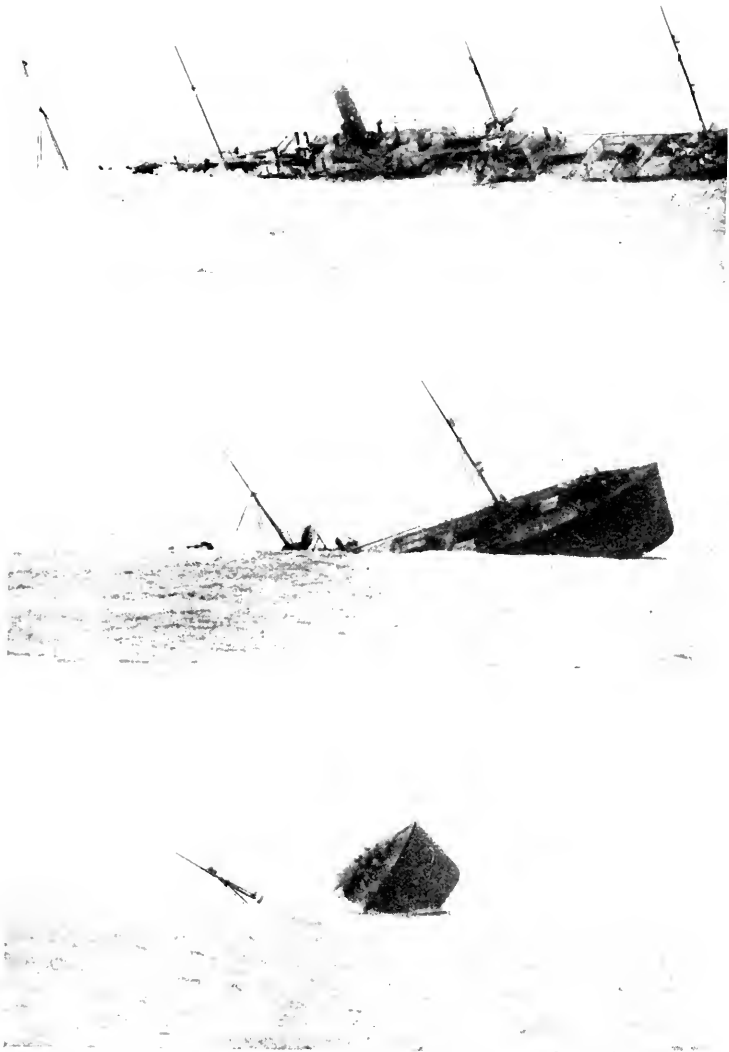
with various other officers and crews, at Swinemünde, and were interned until the end of the war.

The next vessel to be lost was the steamship *Mount Temple* (9,792 tons), which was en route from Quebec to Brest, with a general cargo of wheat, flour, corn, lumber, bacon, cheese, canned goods, and other things, amounting to some 8,000 tons, as well as a consignment of over 700 horses for the French Government. Leaving Quebec on November 28th, this unit of the fleet of the Canadian Pacific Railway fell in with the *Möwe* on December 6th, four days after the capture of the *Voltaire*. Her commander (Mr. A. H. Sergeant), unaware of the character of the armament opposed to him, made a plucky effort to save his ship. On discovering the true nature of the *Möwe*, he ordered his single stern gun to be manned and trained on the German raider. Upon this, the *Möwe* at once opened fire at a range of less than a quarter of a mile, inflicting three casualties on the *Mount Temple's* crew. It was evident that resistance was useless, and the order was given for the *Mount Temple's* engines to be stopped and the boats to be lowered. A few minutes later an armed crew from the *Möwe* placed bombs in position so as to effect the speedy destruction of the merchantman. Captain Sergeant and the survivors of the crew were then taken on board the *Möwe* and detained as prisoners. The *Mount Temple* sank soon afterwards in a position some 620 miles W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. (true) from the Fastnet, carrying with her the bodies of the three men killed during the short action.

That was on December 6th, and two days later, on December 8th, another British vessel fell into the *Möwe's* clutches. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the steamer *King George* (3,852 tons) sighted the raider. Leaving Philadelphia on November 29th with a general cargo for Manchester, the voyage had been as peaceful as could have been desired until the *Möwe* was sighted right ahead. The *King George* altered her course a little in order to keep her on the port side. No suspicions were entertained as to the strange vessel's hostile character; she appeared, until her bulwarks were lowered, to be an ordinary tramp ship of somewhere about 10,000 tons. When she came abeam, she hoisted the German Naval Ensign and signalled to the *King George* to stop, afterwards steaming round her stern and approaching her on the starboard

side. Caught as he was at a hopeless disadvantage, the master (Mr. John Burnett) had no choice but to order his lifeboats out. The crew embarked in them, while the *Möwe* sent off two boats manned with some twenty to twenty-five armed men. On boarding the *King George*, some of the latter's crew were ordered into the starboard lifeboat, the rest being sent into one of the German boats. Bombs were then placed in position and exploded. The *King George* sank before 5 o'clock, in a position some 700 miles E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  N. (true) from Cape Race, her master, officers, and crew becoming prisoners in the *Möwe*. The whole ritual was thus completed in less than an hour. It was also upon this day, and in almost the same position, that the *Duchess of Cornwall*, a small British sailing-vessel of 152 tons, bound for Gibraltar with salt meat, was sunk by the raider, her crew being captured.

Within twenty-four hours the *Möwe* secured another ship, the *Cambrian Range* (4,234 tons). She was carrying two passengers, a crew of thirty-seven, and a miscellaneous cargo of some 6,000 tons, and was homeward bound to Liverpool from Baltimore. She had sailed from the latter port on November 29th, and at 7 o'clock on the morning of December 9th the *Möwe* was observed on her port bow; her smoke and masts alone were visible, and her course was apparently such as would bring her across the bow of the *Cambrian Range*. A couple of hours later she was observed to be closing the *Cambrian Range* upon the same course, but soon afterwards altered her direction so as to pass the British vessel steaming upon an opposite course. When some 300 yards distant on the starboard bow, she hoisted the German Naval Ensign and fired a couple of shots, one passing over the ship and the other falling short. At the same time she signalled to the *Cambrian Range* to stop and abandon ship. Being unarmed, the master (Mr. W. E. J. Moore), having ordered a wireless message for help to be sent out, which was immediately jammed by the Germans, stopped his ship. Two lifeboats were lowered and the crew of the *Cambrian Range* sent across to the raider, Captain Moore alone remaining on board. A German boat's crew then crossed to the *Cambrian Range*, placed bombs in her, according to the *Möwe's* usual procedure, and brought Captain Moore back to the raider. About five minutes later an explosion occurred



THE SINKING OF THE *GEORGIC*.



and the *Cambrian Range* disappeared in a position some 610 miles E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. (true) from Cape Race.

On the following day the steamer *Georgic* (10,077 tons), larger than any of the vessels that had yet been captured by the *Möwe*, was overhauled. She had left Philadelphia for Brest on December 2nd, with a general cargo as well as some 1,300 horses for the French Government, and at 7 o'clock on the morning of the 10th the *Möwe*, which had already been sighted, was observed to turn and head towards the *Georgic*. When within some 1,000 yards' range, the *Möwe* turned sharply on a parallel course, and immediately afterwards a warning shot was fired from her. The master of the *Georgic* (Mr. A. H. Summers) at once tried to bring his ship round so as to place the German raider astern, at the same time ordering his gun to be manned and brought to bear on the *Möwe*. Upon this, the German vessel closed to within a range of some 200 to 300 yards and opened a heavy fire, her first shot destroying the *Georgic's* wireless, her second shot putting the British ship's gun out of action, and her third and fourth shots destroying three lifeboats and damaging the funnels. Fortunately only one life was lost. It was evident that the duel could have only one result, so Captain Summers gave orders for the engines to be stopped. While the undamaged lifeboats were being lowered, some forty to fifty of the *Georgic's* crew fell into the water, owing to the davits having been injured by the *Möwe's* gunfire. All were safely picked up, however, and brought on board the raider. By 9 a.m. explosive charges which had been placed on board the *Georgic* by the raider's armed crew were fired, but owing to the large cargo of cotton on board, the vessel was very slow in sinking and was accordingly torpedoed at noon; she disappeared at half-past two, with the 1,300 horses on board, in a position 590 miles east-south-east (true) from Cape Race.

With the addition of the 142 officers and men from the *Georgic*, there were now some 400 British prisoners confined under conditions of extreme discomfort on board the *Möwe*, and the next British vessel to be captured, the *Yarrowdale* (4,652 tons), was destined to be taken, in consequence, into a German port as a prison ship. She was a comparatively new vessel, having been completed in 1912. Bound, with a general cargo, including 100 motor-

cars and 3,200 tons of steel, from New York to Havre, it was at 8 o'clock on December 11th that the *Möwe* was seen approaching on the starboard bow, some half a mile distant. She was flying no flag, but a few minutes later she fired a shot across the *Yarrowdale's* bows, hoisted the German Naval Ensign, and signalled the British steamer to stop. A party of armed Germans went on board and took possession of her as a prize, the *Yarrowdale* being ordered to keep company with the *Möwe*.

The weather was very bad; highseas were running, with rain, wind, and fog. At 8.30 a.m. of the following day, the *Saint Theodore* (4,992 tons) was sighted by the *Möwe*. She was on her way from Norfolk, Virginia, with coal for Savona, Italy. She was some 520 miles W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. (true) from Flores, when the *Möwe* came into sight about one and a half to two miles astern, proceeding in the same direction. She was to all appearances an ordinary merchant vessel innocent of offence. Overhauling the *Saint Theodore*, she hoisted the German naval colours as she approached, and signalled to the British vessel to stop instantly. The British master (Mr. G. Hallam) noticed men standing by what appeared to be guns on the stranger's forward deck. He called all hands to boat stations, but, this movement being observed on board the raider, he received a signal not to abandon his ship. The *Möwe* then endeavoured to launch a boat, but the weather was so bad that the idea of doing so was abandoned. Captain Hallam was accordingly ordered to proceed, steering westward. At about 4 p.m. he was stopped again. An armed prize crew was put on board, but he was instructed to continue working the steamer, and the *Saint Theodore* proceeded on a southerly course throughout the night.

On the 13th, the weather having improved, the vessel was ordered to lay to, and the *Yarrowdale*, which was also in company with the raider, spent most of the day taking on board the crews of the *Voltaire*, *Mount Temple*, *King George*, *Cambrian Range*, and *Georgic*. Having sufficient coal for four weeks, the *Yarrowdale* was then placed in charge of an armed crew, with Lieutenant Badewitz in command. This was the same German officer who had, on the *Möwe's* first voyage, taken the *Westburn* into Santa Cruz. He had been interned by the Spanish authorities, but had succeeded in making his way back into Germany



and rejoining the *Möwe* for her second voyage under the same commander, Burggraf Graf Nikolaus zu Dohna-Schlodien.

Proceeding north past Iceland, the *Yarrowdale* came to anchor in Swedish territorial waters, opposite the Island of Hven, on December 29th, where she was met by a German patrol-boat. While she was at anchor, two of the younger English prisoners jumped overboard in an endeavour to escape. Swimming strongly, one of them had actually succeeded in reaching a point little more than 200 yards away from the coast, when he was picked up by a searchlight and pursued and brought back with his daring companion. On December 30th the *Yarrowdale* again anchored in Swedish territorial waters, south of Drogden, and on January 1st, 1917, arrived at the port of Swinemünde by way of the Kattegat and the Sound. The British officers and crews were interned, first at Ostawine, and thence were transferred to the Neustrelitz Camp. The *Yarrowdale* was subsequently fitted out as a German commerce raider, and was sunk on March 16th, 1917, a little to the north of the Shetland Islands, after an action lasting for nearly fifty minutes, by H.M.S. *ACHILLES* and *DUNDEE*, all her hands going down with her.

By this time the *Möwe* had captured or sunk, in the waters of the North Atlantic, nearly 50,000 tons of shipping, and Captain zu Dohna-Schlodien decided to transfer his operations to more southerly seas. For this purpose, the collier *Saint Theodore* was dispatched, under the command of Lieutenant Kohler and a German crew, together with a number of neutrals who were already serving on board, to a rendezvous at which the raider intended to pick her up at a later date. To this end, Captain Hallam, together with his men, twenty-four in number, with two stowaways, were taken on board the *Möwe* on the evening of December 13th, after the *Yarrowdale* had been dispatched with her prisoners to Germany. The *Saint Theodore* then parted company from the *Möwe*.

It was thus, 490 miles S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. (true) from Flores on December 18th, 1916, that the *Dramatist* (5,415 tons) fell a victim of the German raider. This Liverpool steamer (master, Mr. W. J. Harris) had left the port of San Francisco on November 13th with a general cargo, bound for Liverpool via the Panama Canal. She had reached Bilbao

on December 1st and arrived at Colon at 8 o'clock in the evening of the same day. Leaving Colon two days later, with instructions to coal at Hampton Roads, she received an Admiralty warning from Jamaica on the morning of December 4th, to the effect that German submarines might be met anywhere in the Atlantic in the vicinity of the United States coast, and in the approaches of Jamaica, and that she was to keep a good lookout and avoid all trade routes.

For several days, at intervals, this urgent warning was repeated, and as the course to Hampton Roads would have brought the *Dramatist* close to Jamaica, Captain Harris decided that it would be more prudent to divert his vessel to Saint Lucia in order to coal, and altered his course accordingly. On December 7th he received a warning from Bermuda saying that submarines might be met anywhere in the Atlantic to west of  $60^{\circ}$  W. and that he was to show no unnecessary lights, and avoid all trade routes and converging points. He navigated at night with his vessel completely darkened, and arrived safely on December 10th at Saint Lucia, where he coaled, resuming his voyage to Liverpool the same day. All went well until December 18th, when, in lat.  $33^{\circ} 8' N.$ , long.  $37^{\circ} 32' W.$ , about midday, a vessel was sighted, three points before the port beam; she was on the same course as the *Dramatist*, but closing in towards Captain Harris's vessel. She was distant about seven miles.

Half an hour later the stranger—no other, of course, than the *Möwe*—altered course, apparently to cross the stern of the *Dramatist*, at the same time increasing speed. At 1.15 p.m. she rounded to alongside, broke out the German Naval Ensign, and signalled to the *Dramatist* to stop immediately and silence her wireless. At the same time her bulwarks were dropped, revealing her guns all trained upon the British vessel. The *Dramatist* was accordingly stopped, and soon after half-past one an armed crew from the German vessel boarded her; Captain Harris, his officers, engineers, and a portion of his crew, were conveyed a few minutes later on board the German vessel; the rest of the crew were removed about 7 o'clock in the evening. An hour and a half later the *Dramatist* was sunk by explosives which had been placed in her engine-room. The captain and crew of the *Dramatist* thus

became fellow-prisoners with the men of the *Saint Theodore*.

On December 23rd the *Möwe* reached the prearranged rendezvous and joined the *Saint Theodore*. During the next few days the *Saint Theodore* was fitted out with guns and wireless, evidently with the intention of converting her into a raider. While this work was in progress a French sailing-ship, the *Nantes*, was sighted, captured, and sunk. By December 28th the *Saint Theodore* had been transformed, and the two vessels parted company, the latter having been renamed, as afterwards became known, as the Auxiliary Cruiser *Geier* and placed under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Wolf. On January 2nd another French sailing-vessel, the *Asnières*, with a cargo of wheat, was also sunk by the *Möwe*, and a few days later a Japanese vessel, the *Hudson Maru*, was captured and taken in charge by this German raider.

The German raider was now operating on the Brazilian route. One hundred and ten miles east (true) from Pernambuco, on January 7th, 1917, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's steamer *Radnorshire* (4,310 tons) was captured. This vessel (master, Mr. X. L. Willats) was carrying a full cargo of coffee from Bahia to London. Steaming at full speed, without showing any lights, and making a little under 10 knots, it was at about half-past ten at night, on January 7th, the moon being full and the weather very fine and clear, that Captain Willats sighted the *Möwe* ahead of him, some two or three degrees off his port bow. Having been warned of the possible presence of a German raider, he at once altered his course to port, bringing the strange vessel upon his starboard beam and keeping her under very close observation. She then presented the appearance of an ordinary merchantman. The stranger followed suit by altering her course, thus bringing the *Radnorshire* right ahead of her. Captain Willats altered his course further, and noticed that he was being rapidly overhauled.

Although he still remained uncertain of the new-comer's identity, Captain Willats sounded the alarm, brought all hands on deck with lifebelts, and prepared everything in case the vessel should prove to be of enemy origin. His gunners loaded and stood by the one gun, all secret papers were brought to him on the bridge and packed into

weighted bags, while, in order to test whether the unknown vessel was really chasing him, Captain Willats again altered his course, bringing her off his port quarter. To this she at once responded by altering her course once more, and Captain Willats then began sending wireless messages, calling for help from any British men-of-war which might be in the neighbourhood. The suspected ship was then only about a mile away from him. The *Möwe* had at once tried to jam these messages while steadily drawing over to the *Radnorshire's* starboard quarter and firing a shell across her. At the same time the *Möwe* morsed signals that the British vessel was to stop instantly and cease sending wireless messages, while she switched her searchlight on to the *Radnorshire's* gun. The *Möwe's* bulwarks were then dropped and Captain Willats could see her heavy armament in the bright moonlight.

Having already been warned as to the weight and range of the *Möwe's* guns, Captain Willats realised it would be useless to fire. The raider was within half a mile of him, so he ordered his gunners to unship and throw overboard their breech-block. This was very pluckily done in the full glare of the enemy searchlight, and simultaneously Captain Willats stopped his engines and took way off the ship. The *Möwe* then lowered two boats to send across a boarding-party of some six officers and twenty men, all fully armed with revolvers. The German officer in charge, Lieutenant Paulman, ascended the bridge and, after asking Captain Willats various questions as to the destination and nature of his cargo, informed him he was going to sink the ship, but that the officers and crew would be given time in which to pack their personal belongings before being removed as prisoners to the German cruiser. Captain Willats was the last to leave the vessel, in company with Lieutenant Paulman, and about two minutes after he had done so, the bombs that had been placed just outside the port side of the stokehold exploded, the vessel finally sinking at 2.45 the next morning. Some time before this, Captain Willats had noticed the presence of the *Hudson Maru* in company with the raider, and he was now informed that, in a few days' time, he and his men would be placed on board her. He was then conducted below to the *Möwe's* after between-decks, where, together

with his men and the prisoners, both English and French, that had been accumulated since the departure of the *Yarrowdale*, he was confined within watertight doors.

The next British vessel to fall into the hands of the *Möwe* was the collier *Minieh* (3,806 tons), which had been employed in coaling H.M.S. AMETHYST. With this vessel she had been on patrol in the South Atlantic for some weeks, and on January 8th, she had coaled the AMETHYST for what was to prove the last time. At 6 p.m. on that day the master of the *Minieh* (Mr. J. R. Williams) had received orders from the commander of the AMETHYST to proceed at 6 knots to an appointed rendezvous, the AMETHYST herself following in the same direction some twenty miles astern. At daybreak on the morning of January 9th Captain Williams sighted the cruiser on his port quarter, about eight miles away, but soon afterwards she dropped astern until she was out of sight. At 4 p.m. on the same day the merchant officer saw smoke ahead, and, standing on, presently made out a steamer steering in the opposite direction, with a tall funnel, and two high straight masts fitted with wireless; she was moving at about 9 knots.

When she was abeam of the *Minieh*, and about half a mile distant, the vessel suddenly hoisted the "Stop instantly!" signal, and ordered that the *Minieh* should cease wireless communication. At the same time the German Naval Ensign was broken out from the stranger's flagstaff; her bulwarks fell down, her guns were swung out forward and a torpedo-tube aft revealed. Captain Williams stopped his steamer and ordered the wireless operator to send out the code signal asking, "What ship is that?" The operator, however, returned and said that, although he had sent out this signal three times, he was afraid that it would not be readable as the German vessel was jamming his wireless. Captain Williams then told him to try and send out the S.O.S. signal, but as he was endeavouring to do this, the *Möwe* fired a shot across his bows, and the operator reported that the wireless had broken down. The *Möwe* then brought up on the starboard side of the *Minieh*, about a ship's length away, and lowered three boats, whose crews proceeded to board the British collier. Captain Williams was ordered to swing his own boats in and make them secure, and to tell his crew that they

were to get into the German boats and proceed to the raider.

The German officer in charge of the boarding-party had meanwhile kept the master on the bridge, while the German sailors were searching the ship and looting everything that they could carry away. Captain Williams had taken the precaution of destroying all his papers, and nothing of any great value was discovered by the Germans. At 7 p.m. Captain Williams left the *Minieh* in the last boat, with the German officer, and when half-way across to the *Möwe*, heard two explosions of the bombs that had been placed on board his vessel in order to sink her. On arriving on board the *Möwe*, he was at once taken to Count Nikolaus zu Dohna-Schlodien, who conducted him into the chart-room and questioned him closely about the cruiser which he had last coaled. Captain Williams replied that he had coaled the *AMETHYST* on the day before, but when the *Möwe's* commander asked him where she was, he replied that he did not know, as he had left her and was bound for Pernambuco to finish discharging and to clean ship. Captain Williams was then taken below to join the other prisoners. The *Minieh* sank about 9 o'clock in the evening.

On the following day, January 10th, the British steamship *Netherby Hall* (4,461 tons) was added to the list of the German raider's captures. This Ellerman vessel (master, Mr. J. W. Jenks) had left Calcutta on December 3rd, 1916, with a general cargo of about 6,000 tons for various West Indian and Cuban ports. She had called at Delagoa Bay on December 22nd, arriving at Cape Town on the 28th. The same evening she sailed for Trinidad, passing St. Helena on January 3rd on a direct course for Cape San Roque. The voyage had been without incident. On January 10th, when her position at noon was lat. 7° 13' S., long. 29° 47' W., Captain Jenks went down to lunch, and on coming up again was informed that there was a steamer in sight on the *Netherby Hall's* port bow. The *Netherby Hall* was at that time steering a course N. 67 (true). Captain Jenks was unable to see the steamer distinctly, and concluded that it was probably bound for South America, proceeding to the northward. He altered course and brought the steamer right ahead, watching her for a few minutes to ascertain her character. She still appeared to be taking a northward course and there was nothing to

suggest danger. Captain Jenks, however, brought her a little on his starboard bow in the effort to make out her outline clearly, and then, coming to the conclusion that she was an innocent merchant steamer, he swung his ship back to her former course. At about 1.45 p.m. the distant vessel was on the *Netherby Hall's* starboard bow, about a mile away.

The mysterious ship suddenly altered course, running up the German Naval Ensign, and hoisting signals which could not be made out. Captain Jenks ordered his helm to be put hard to starboard, and rushed down below to get his secret code and other papers out of his cabin. He threw these overboard and was relieved to see them sink. He then called the Marconi operator and ordered him to send out a signal to the effect that he was being chased by a raider in lat.  $7^{\circ}$  S., long.  $30^{\circ}$  W. These precautions completed, he went back to the bridge and saw the German raider with her forward gangway down and a gun trained on the *Netherby Hall*; the "Stop instantly!" signal was up. The Marconi operator at this moment appeared to tell the usual story: his wireless signals were being jammed and the German had threatened to sink the *Netherby Hall* if attempts to call aid were not at once discontinued. A shot was now fired across the British vessel's bows, and, being by this time at point-blank range, Captain Jenks ordered his engines to be stopped, told the operator to discontinue his efforts, and had the lifeboat swung out. The *Möwe* was now lowering boats, and signalled to Captain Jenks to lower his port lifeboat. Three boats from the *Möwe* immediately came across and the *Netherby Hall* was boarded. The officer in charge of the German crew, having made inquiries as to his ports of origin and destination, told Captain Jenks to prepare to abandon his ship. At about 3.45 p.m. all the *Netherby Hall's* crew and certain stores had been transhipped to the *Möwe*, and Captain Jenks was ordered to get into one of the German boats. Bombs were placed on board, and soon afterwards Captain Jenks heard two explosions and saw his ship give a slight roll. After being questioned by the *Möwe's* commander, Captain Jenks saw that the *Netherby Hall* was still afloat with a freeboard of about five feet, and that the Germans were training a gun upon her from a distance of about three cables. A shot was

fired at her, and a second from about two cables' length a few minutes later. A third shot holed her below the water-line, and in a little while she had sunk by the head.

There were by this time well over 300 prisoners on board the *Möwe*, including the masters and crews of the *Saint Theodore*, *Dramatist*, *Radnorshire*, *Minieh*, and *Netherby Hall*, and two days later most of these were transferred to the Japanese steamer *Hudson Maru*, which had been kept in company with the German raider. This task was effected early in the morning of January 12th, the Japanese commander of the *Hudson Maru* being ordered to follow the *Möwe*, but at 6 p.m. he received orders to proceed to Pernambuco, which was safely made by sundown on January 15th.

On January 17th the *Möwe* reached the rendezvous to which the *Saint Theodore*, now known as the *Geier*, had been dispatched, the latter having captured in the meanwhile only one small Canadian sailing-vessel of 180 tons. Having coaled from the *Geier*, the latter was again dispatched as an auxiliary German raider, but when she was rejoined by the *Möwe* on February 11th, she had again only secured one small sailing-vessel, with a cargo of whale oil. She had, however, done better than the *Möwe*, which had made no additions to her list of captures. On February 14th, the rest of the coal on board the *Geier* was transferred to the *Möwe*, the late *Saint Theodore* being then sunk at about 1 o'clock.

That incident occurred on February 14th, and on the following day the steamer *Brecknockshire* (8,423 tons) was captured. This Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's vessel (master, Mr. J. G. A. Mackenzie) had left Liverpool on January 24th for Rio de Janeiro, and it was when she arrived at a position 1,200 miles south of the Equator and some hundreds of miles east of the usual trade route, upon the course prescribed by the Admiralty, that at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon Captain Mackenzie sighted a steamer almost directly ahead of him; the two vessels were roughly some 490 miles E. by N. (true) from Cape Frio, Brazil. Being suspicious of the stranger's character, Captain Mackenzie altered his course so as to place the new-comer astern of him, at the same time ordering full speed. Soon afterwards a shell passed over the *Brecknockshire*, followed by others which fell increasingly near the



ship, and Captain Mackenzie, realising that he was hopelessly outgunned and outranged, had no alternative but to stop. When about three miles distant, the approaching vessel hoisted the British Ensign and signalled "Stop instantly!" and "Want coal immediately."

For a few moments Captain Mackenzie believed that the vessel chasing him might, after all, be a British cruiser in disguise, needing coal. But, when half a mile distant, the true character of the approaching vessel became clear; she dropped her bulwarks, revealing her full armament, and broke the German Naval Ensign, at the same time hoisting a signal to the effect that Captain Mackenzie must prepare to abandon his ship. He had succeeded in sinking all confidential papers and had got out his boats before a boarding-party from the *Möwe* drew alongside. The officer in charge ordered the crew of the *Brecknockshire* to proceed at once on board the raider in their own boats. Having searched the ship and removed a considerable amount of stores, bombs were placed on board and Captain Mackenzie was directed to leave in the last of the German boats. Soon after leaving the *Brecknockshire*, the bombs were exploded and, while Captain Mackenzie was interviewing the *Möwe's* commander on the bridge of the latter vessel, he saw his own ship sinking by the bows.

On the same day, and in practically the same position, the *French Prince* (4,766 tons) met a similar fate. This Prince Line vessel was in Admiralty employment, and she had left Plymouth on December 22nd, 1916, and Bahia Blanca on February 6th, 1917. Her master (Mr. H. Jeffries-Davis) and crew, thirty-nine in number, were placed on board the *Möwe*. On the next day, in a position about 550 miles N.E. by E.  $\frac{3}{4}$  E. (true) from Cape Frio, Brazil, the steamship *Eddie* (2,652 tons) became the *Möwe's* next victim. This vessel (master, Mr. Richard Bradley) had left Cardiff on the September 16th, and at the time of her capture was bound from Saint Vincent to Fraybentos, River Plate, with a cargo of some 5,000 tons of coal. Her master and crew, twenty-five in number, joined the other British seamen on board the *Möwe*.

During the following seven days no other British vessels were lost to the German raider, but on February 23rd she captured the steamer *Katherine* (2,926 tons). This vessel,

which was in Admiralty employment, was carrying a cargo of grain, and had sailed from Rosario, Argentine, on the 4th of the month. It was at a point some 200 miles N.E. by N.  $\frac{3}{4}$  N. (true) from St. Paul Rocks that she was sunk, her master (Mr. Alexander Hall) and crew of twenty-four being added to the prisoners accumulated between-decks in the German raider.

This was the last British steamer sunk in the South Atlantic, and the *Möwe*, as afterwards became known, set her course once more for Germany. Her next capture was the steamer *Rhodanthe* (3,061 tons), which was sunk on March 4th, 1917, at a point 330 miles north-north-west (true) from Saint Vincent, in the Cape Verde Islands, her crew being taken on board the *Möwe* as prisoners. Not for more than a fortnight did another British vessel fall in with the *Möwe*, and then the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's steamer *Esmeraldas* (4,678 tons) was intercepted. She was bound to Newport News, U.S.A., having left Liverpool on February 24th. The *Esmeraldas* (master, Mr. F. W. Malin) was in ballast, and she had on board, in addition to her crew of fifty-six, some American and Dutch sailors returning home, as well as fifty-two American cattlemen. Navigating without lights, it was not until the *Möwe's* searchlights played upon her that Captain Malin became aware of the raider's nature. She was signalled to stop immediately. The *Esmeraldas* carried a small gun, but resistance was, of course, hopeless, and, her crew and passengers having been transferred to the *Möwe*, she was sunk in a position approximately 420 miles W. by N. (true) from Lisbon.

That incident occurred early in the morning of March 10th, in weather that was rapidly becoming very bad, and it was during a succession of heavy rain-squalls on the same day that the *Otaki* (9,575 tons) fought one of the pluckiest actions of the war against a German raider. This New Zealand Shipping Company's ship (master, Lieutenant Archibald Bisset Smith, R.N.R.) was travelling in ballast from London to New York, with a crew of seventy-one. She was about 350 miles east of St. Miguel, in the Azores, and was proceeding at about 15 knots, when, at 2.30 p.m., she sighted the *Möwe*. For some time the German vessel kept her under observation; the raider's speed enabled her, in spite of the heavy sea, to gain upon the *Otaki*.

The commander of the *Möwe* at last signalled to the *Otaki* to stop, which Captain Smith refused to do. The *Möwe* thereupon opened fire. To this the *Otaki* at once replied. She carried only one 4·7-inch stern gun, as opposed to the four 5·9-inch, one 4·1-inch, and two 22-pounder guns of the *Möwe*, but as it was a stern chase only a part of the armament could be brought to bear.

With just a little more luck, the *Otaki* might well have sunk the German raider. For twenty minutes the duel continued, at a range of about 2,000 yards, and during this time the *Otaki* scored several hits on the *Möwe*, causing considerable damage, and starting a serious fire which was only put out with difficulty. Firing nine rounds in all, the *Otaki's* shells killed five of the raider's crew and wounded ten others. She had, however, to sustain no less than thirty rounds from the guns of the *Möwe*, which also discharged torpedoes, and she lost, during the action, four of her crew, including the third engineer, two apprentices—one of whom, Basil Kilner, was killed while serving at the gun—and a deck boy; while nine others were wounded more or less seriously. By this time the *Otaki* was heavily on fire, and Captain Smith had no choice but to give orders for the boats to be lowered so that the survivors of the crew might have a chance at least of being rescued, although a very heavy sea was running and darkness was approaching.

The men, including the wounded, were at once transferred to the boats, Captain Smith, the chief officer (Mr. Roland L. H. McNish), and the carpenter remaining on board the *Otaki* for half an hour afterwards; the chief steward (Mr. F. Willis) had previously jumped from the vessel and was unfortunately drowned before he could be picked up. Mr. McNish and the carpenter then jumped together, thinking that Captain Smith was doing the same, but they never saw him again, and the presumption is that he had entered his cabin and went down with the ship that he had so pluckily fought in a forelorn hope. The *Otaki* disappeared with her colours still flying, Mr. McNish and the carpenter being picked up in about half an hour by one of the boats and taken aboard the German raider. For this action the captain of the *Otaki* was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross, "for conspicuous bravery and devotion to the country in the presence of the enemy when

he fought a very gallant action against overwhelming odds and all but succeeded in destroying the enemy, finally going down in his ship with the British colours still flying." This was one of the only two Victoria Crosses awarded during the whole course of the war to the Merchant Service. The chief officer was made a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, and two members of the gun's crew, Acting Leading Seaman Alfred Fulwood Worth, Royal Fleet Reserve, and Able Seaman Ellis Jackson, R.N.V.R., received the Distinguished Service Medal; the two apprentices (W. E. Martin and B. Kilner) and the carpenter were mentioned in despatches.

Several of the *Otaki's* shells had caused considerable damage to the *Möwe*, and by the end of the action she was making water rather rapidly. The leaks were, however, repaired, and the fires that had been started were got under control and finally extinguished, and, with the weather improving, she overtook the steamer *Demeterton* (6,048 tons) on March 13th. Employed by the Admiralty, this ship had left the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia, on March 6th, with a crew of thirty-three, including two gunners. She was carrying a cargo of timber, and when the *Möwe* was first sighted right ahead, the master of the *Demeterton* (Mr. A. Spencer) entertained no suspicions as to her real character. The raider was, at the time, steaming slowly, and was subsequently overhauled by the *Demeterton*; she did not reveal her true character until the latter vessel was within about 1,000 yards. The *Möwe* then suddenly increased her speed and put her helm hard over. Captain Spencer thereupon at once altered his course, whereupon the *Möwe* ran up the German Naval Ensign and signalled to the *Demeterton* to stop, firing a shot across her bows. Captain Spencer, seeing that resistance would be useless, brought his vessel to a standstill. A boarding-party from the *Möwe* placed explosive charges in the vessel, as, owing to her cargo, it was obvious that she would be difficult to sink. Captain Spencer and his crew having been removed to the *Möwe*, these charges were fired, and when last seen the *Demeterton* was observed to be floating bottom up, about 730 miles E. by N. (true) from Cape Race.

This was the last victim but one that was destined to fall to the *Möwe*, her final capture being the *Governor*

(5,524 tons), employed on Admiralty service. This vessel (master, Mr. G. Paëke) had left Liverpool on March 9th, and it was on the 14th, at about 10.30 a.m., 930 miles W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  S. (true) from the Fastnet, that she was captured. Captain Paëke made a very plucky attempt to escape, and did not surrender until his gun had been put out of action by the *Möwe's* first salvo, and the navigation bridge had sustained heavy damage. Four members of the crew were killed, including one of the gunners, nine others, including the chief officer and second officer, being more or less seriously wounded. The survivors, including the wounded, were transferred to the now densely crowded German raider, and the *Governor* was sunk by a torpedo.

Once again the *Möwe* succeeded in eluding the patrol-vessels, and arrived at Kiel on March 20th, 1917, with the officers and crew of the *Brecknockshire*, *French Prince*, *Eddie*, *Katherine*, *Esmeraldas*, *Otaki*, *Demeteron*, and *Governor* on board. These British seamen were sent to various internment camps to join the victims of the *Möwe's* first cruise.

## II. THE "SEEDLER"

Early in the war an old American sailing-ship, the *Pass of Balmaha*, a three-master, was intercepted by one of the vessels of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, and an officer and armed escort were put aboard with instructions to take her into Kirkwall for examination. While on the way to Kirkwall, the vessel was captured by an enemy submarine and taken into Bremerhaven, and it was decided by the German Government, after the Battle of Jutland, to fit her out as a German raider. She was accordingly placed under the command of Count Felix von Lueknor and equipped with two 4.2-inch guns, two machine-guns, a large supply of small arms and ammunition, a powerful wireless plant, and a 1,500 horse-power Diesel engine, capable of ensuring a speed of 14 knots. Various alterations were also made so as to make her resemble the *Irma*, a Norwegian ship. Early in November 1916 she was loaded with a cargo of heavy timber. False papers were then prepared and the crew carefully rehearsed in order that they might instantly obey the orders, all of which were to be given in the Norwegian language. On December

21st, 1916, the *Seeadler*, previously the *Pass of Balmaha*, sailed from Germany. She was examined by a British cruiser on December 25th, 1916, when about 180 miles south of Iceland, but her disguise was sufficiently ingenious to prevent any suspicion being entertained as to her real character, and it was not until January 9th, 1917, that the loss of the steamer *Gladys Royle* furnished the evidence that another enemy raider had succeeded in escaping on to the trade routes.

The *Gladys Royle* (3,268 gross tons) was bound with a cargo of 4,300 tons of coal from Cardiff to Buenos Aires. Leaving the former port on January 2nd, 1917, the voyage was peaceful until Tuesday, January 9th, when at 9.30 a.m., in clear but showery weather, with a fresh breeze blowing from the west, an apparently innocent sailing-vessel was sighted about five miles away, on the starboard bow. She was steering S.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W. (true) at about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots, had the Norwegian Ensign flying, and had Norwegian flags painted on her sides. When the two vessels had closed, she signalled the *Gladys Royle*, asking for a chronometer correction. The master of the British vessel (Mr. W. S. Shewan) replied, and the sailing-ship immediately ran up the German Naval Ensign, covered the Norwegian colours painted on the side, and fired a shot across the bows of the *Gladys Royle*, at the same time signalling to Captain Shewan to surrender his vessel. Captain Shewan took no notice, but ordered full steam ahead; he headed up the wind as the best means of escape, assuming that the German vessel had only sails to rely on. The *Seeadler*, however, at once lowered her sails, and utilising her motor engines, chased the *Gladys Royle*, opening fire when about half a mile off. Three of the raider's shells hit the British merchantman, one amidships and the others aft, the captain's cabin being set on fire. Fortunately nobody was hurt. As the raider was coming up fast and there was no chance of escape, the *Gladys Royle* was obliged to stop. The incident had closed at 11 o'clock. After being taken some way out of her course, the ship was sunk by bombs about 9 p.m., and the captain and crew, as well as some of the stores, were taken on board the *Seeadler*.

The policy of the *Seeadler*, in view of her rig, was apparently to come up in the wind on sighting an approaching vessel and wait; and the next day the *Lundy Island*

(3,095 tons) fell a victim to the same manœuvre as brought about the loss of the *Gladys Royle*. This Cardiff vessel was bound with a cargo of 4,500 tons of sugar from Mauritius to Nantes, for the French Government. She had left Manchester on November 29th, 1916, calling at Durban and Saint Vincent, and had sailed from the latter port on January 3rd. The *Lundy Island* steered a course north and east at an average speed of some  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots, and the voyage was uneventful until about 9 o'clock on January 10th, when she sighted a sail on her port bow, some five or six miles distant. An hour later the strange vessel drew close to the *Lundy Island*, with Norwegian colours painted on her sides, and showing the Norwegian flag. The usual courtesies of the sea were exchanged, and then the captain of the sailing-ship asked, as he had done in the case of the *Gladys Royle*, for a comparison of chronometers.

As soon as the *Lundy Island* had crossed his bows, he covered the Norwegian colours with canvas, hoisted the German Naval Ensign, and ordered her to stop. The master of the *Lundy Island* (Mr. David Barton) rang his telegraph for more speed, whereupon the German raider at once opened fire, his first shots passing astern of the *Lundy Island*. Though the British vessel was unarmed, the chase continued for about three-quarters of an hour; the *Seeadler*, having clewed her sails up, pursued under her motor power. While being chased, thirty-one shells were fired at the *Lundy Island*. Three of them struck the vessel; one of them holed her below the water-line astern, while another threw the steering-gear out of order and obliged Captain Barton to stop his vessel. During the bombardment the *Lundy Island* was also subjected to machine-gun fire. The master was then ordered at once to abandon his ship, but he had time to go below and destroy all confidential papers by burning them in the galley fire. Whilst he was doing this, his crew embarked in the two lifeboats, leaving Captain Barton alone on board. Upon his reappearance on deck, the captain of the *Seeadler* ordered one of his own boats to return for him, which it did. As soon as the *Lundy Island's* boats were clear, the *Seeadler* began a bombardment of the vessel, the German commander not troubling to send a boarding-party. After several rounds had been fired, the *Lundy Island* sank at about noon, 190 miles S.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. (true) from

Santa Maria, in the Azores. Captain Barton, who had made a fine effort to escape, was singularly unfortunate in that he had been captured before by the *Möwe*, while commanding the *Corbridge*.

It was not until January 28th that another British vessel fell into the hands of the *Seeadler*, which had, however, captured in the meantime a French vessel, the *Charles Gournard*, on January 19th. This was the wooden sailing-vessel *Perce*, of Liverpool (364 tons), bound to Santos, with a load of fish in drums and a big load of lumber. She was about 150 miles N.E. by N. (true) from St. Paul Rocks when the *Seeadler* appeared on the scene. Two shots were fired across her bow, and the master (Mr. Carl J. Kohler) had no alternative but to bring down his topsails, heave his vessel to, and surrender. The German raider then signalled to him that he must bring his crew on board, but Captain Kohler, who had just been married and had his wife aboard, signalled that this was impossible; a heavy sea was running at the time and the water was infested with sharks. The commander of the *Seeadler* accordingly sent across his motor-launch and brought the whole party on board, Mrs. Kohler being the first woman to be captured by the *Seeadler*. It is a tribute to Captain von Luckner's consideration that, on learning that Captain and Mrs. Kohler were on their honeymoon, he provided them with a special state-room. Bombs were then placed aboard the *Perce* and exploded, but when last seen by Captain Kohler from the deck of the *Seeadler*, the next morning, she was still afloat, after having been on fire throughout the night. On April 15th she was sighted by the *Benedict* in a derelict condition; the *Benedict* attempted unsuccessfully to sink her.

The French barque *Antoine*, of Dunkirk, was run down by the raider a few days later, and on February 19th the British schooner *Pinmore* (2,431 tons) was captured by the *Seeadler* at a point 540 miles N.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  N. (true) from St. Paul Rocks, while bound from Buenos Aires to England with a cargo of saltpetre. Having brought her master (Mr. Mullings) and her crew, mostly Norwegians, on board the *Seeadler*, Captain von Luckner placed a prize crew on board the *Pinmore*, and, being then only 100 miles from Rio, himself sailed the vessel into this port, impersonating Captain Mullings. While ashore he succeeded in



learning news of the movements of the British cruisers GLASGOW and AMETHYST, which he afterwards wirelessly to the *Möwe*. He also secured various supplies for which his chief officer signed on behalf of the British owners. Captain von Luckner had placed his right arm in a sling in order to afford a reasonable pretext for not signing the documents in a handwriting which might be recognised as not that of the man he was pretending to be. Three days later he brought the *Pinmore* back to the *Seeadler* and the former vessel was sunk by bombs.

A week after the *Seeadler* had seized the Italian ship *Buenos Ayres*, bound from Iquique to Gibraltar with a cargo of saltpetre, the *British Yeoman* (1,953 tons) fell in with her. She had sailed from Buenos Aires on January 4th, in fine weather, with a cargo of some 3,000 tons of wheat from Buenos Aires to Nantes, for the British Government, and all had gone well until February 26th. At 4 p.m., in lat. 4° N., long. 32° W., approximately, while proceeding in a north-westerly direction with all sails set, the master (Mr. H. E. Neilson) observed a full-rigged ship under sail heading to the south. She was about five miles away on the starboard side, but approached quickly, coming round the stern of the *British Yeoman*, close up on the weather side. Then, to the consternation of everyone on board the British ship, she dropped a section of her bulwark on the port side forward, revealing a large gun, at the same time breaking out the German Ensign. Captain Neilson was directed to clew up the sails and abandon his ship. At 5 p.m. the raider sent across a German prize officer, who claimed the *British Yeoman* and hoisted the German Ensign at her masthead. Captain Neilson decided that he had no alternative but to order his crew to take whatever belongings they could and get the boat out, and by 6 p.m. all were safely transhipped to the German raider. The Germans busied themselves in taking a large quantity of stores from the *British Yeoman*; the last boat left her at half-past eight, when four bombs were placed in her lower forward hold. They exploded eight minutes later, and the *British Yeoman* disappeared. Captain Neilson, like Captain Kohler of the *Perce*, had his wife on board, and Mrs. Neilson accordingly became the second woman to undergo imprisonment on board the *Seeadler*.

Two hours later the *Seeadler* captured the French barque

*La Roche Jaucquet*, and five days afterwards another French barque, the *Duplex*, and then she secured the *Horngarth* (3,609 tons). This vessel was in Admiralty employment, and was bound from Monte Video to Plymouth with a cargo of some 5,650 tons of maize. She carried a crew of thirty-two. While steaming north-east, with a fresh south-east wind blowing, she sighted the raider at 8.30 a.m. It was not, however, until 3.20 p.m. that the mysterious vessel was near enough to be recognised as a full-rigged sailing-ship; she was then about four points on the starboard bow. At 4 p.m. she was seen to be drawing nearer, and the second officer reported to the master (Mr. I. N. Stainthorp) that she was flying a signal which could not be distinctly made out on account of her sails. Twenty minutes later smoke was seen, and Captain Stainthorp became suspicious and ordered his firemen and engineers to cram on as much speed as they could, and at the same time he ordered an urgent wireless message to be dispatched. Immediately afterwards, on getting to windward of the strange vessel, she was perceived to be flying British colours, with a signal to the effect that she had a message for the *Horngarth*.

Captain Stainthorp, unsuspecting, replied, whereupon the stranger's signal flags were at once lowered, German colours broken out and fire opened. The raider was astern when this happened, and the shot passed close to the British ship. Captain Stainthorp, however, kept the *Horngarth* on her course, and a further shot from the *Seeadler* smashed the wireless house and unhappily also killed an apprentice. Captain Stainthorp continued at full speed under both shell and machine-gun fire until damage to his boilers caused these to give out; the engineers were forced to leave the engine-room, as they were unable to shut off steam. For nearly an hour Captain Stainthorp had manœuvred his vessel in a gallant attempt to escape, but now he was obliged to hoist a white sheet, as he was unable to get to his chart-house and signal-box. The raider thereupon ceased for a time to fire, but as it was not possible to stop the *Horngarth's* engines, firing soon commenced again. Two shells passed through the *Horngarth's* stern, the lifeboat being shot away. Twenty-four rounds in all were fired at her from the *Seeadler's* big gun. It was not until about 6 p.m. that the engines eased down and the

German prize crew came on board. His quarters having been burned to pieces, Captain Stainthorp was not able to save much of his personal property. He and the survivors of the crew were safely transferred to the *Seedler*, and the *Horngarth* was sunk by bombs a little after 10 p.m. in a position some 220 miles east-north-east (true) from St. Paul Rocks. Before being captured, Captain Stainthorp had succeeded in sinking all confidential instructions in weighted bags.

So far as British shipping was concerned, the career of the *Seedler* was now at an end, although she afterwards captured one French and three American vessels. The French vessel, the *Cambronne*, was captured on March 21st, and then all the prisoners on board the raider were ordered to pack their effects and to make ready for transshipment to the French barque. Before being allowed to part company from the raider, however, the crew of the *Horngarth*, who were the first to be transferred, had to begin unloading the *Cambronne*, other crews being subsequently sent over to assist in this work. The British seamen were also obliged to throw overboard all spare sails, while the German prize crew sawed through the spare and top-gallant masts. The commander of the *Seedler* subsequently sent aboard enough stores to last for eight days, this being considered sufficient, with what was on board the *Cambronne*, for the released prisoners until they should arrive at Rio de Janeiro. At half-past eight the German officer in charge of the prize crew on board the *Cambronne* mustered all hands on deck, formally released the prisoners, and made a speech directing the course that was to be taken to Rio de Janeiro; he then hauled down the German Ensign, and placed the ship in charge of the senior British master. The British Ensign was hoisted amidst thunderous cheers, to the accompaniment of a band playing on the *Seedler's* deck, and the *Cambronne* made sail and stood on her course, the raider steering in the same direction under motor power. At 1.30 a.m. on the 22nd the raider passed out of sight steering eastward, and nine days later the *Cambronne* arrived safely at Rio de Janeiro, having on board nearly 300 souls.

After capturing the small American vessels, the commander of the *Seedler* took his vessel, for purposes of

renovating and cleaning, to Mopelia Island, a remote and seldom-visited member of the Society Group, where, however, she was wrecked upon a coral reef by a tidal wave. Captain von Luckner, with a part of his crew, subsequently fitted out the whaleboat, with the intention of capturing a sailing-vessel and returning to Mopelia for the rest of his party. After various adventures, he was captured on September 25th, while at Wakaya Island, by Mr. Hills, an officer of the Fiji Constabulary, and ultimately removed to Auckland, New Zealand. Meanwhile Lieutenant Kling, who had been left in charge of the party on Mopelia Island, had captured a French schooner from Papeete, the *Lutece*, and this vessel, renamed the *Fortuna*, arrived at Easter Island on October 4th, 1917, being subsequently taken to Chile in January 1918. Of the remaining American prisoners who had been left on the island of Mopelia, with a small boat, four of them made their way to Pago, arriving there on September 29th, 1917, and the others were subsequently rescued as the result of the information thus provided of their whereabouts.

### III. THE "WOLF"

The third and last of the German raiders was the auxiliary cruiser *Wolf*, a vessel of about 6,000 gross tonnage. She had formerly been a German merchant steamship, known as the *Wachenfels*. Loaded with some 500 mines and armed with five 7·6-inch guns and four 18-inch torpedo-tubes, she was distinguished from her sister-raiders in that she carried a seaplane known as the *Wolfchen*. Sailing from Hamburg on December 17th, 1916, under the command of Captain Nerger, she succeeded in breaking through the British patrol line, and escaped into the Atlantic by way of Iceland, and then proceeded south to the neighbourhood of Cape Town, where she placed her first mine-field near Dassen Island. She then laid two small mine-fields in the region of Cape Agulhas, and on February 27th was sighted by a British steamship, the *Turritella* (5,528 tons), which she afterwards captured. This vessel, which was in Admiralty employment, was carrying some 7,600 tons of fuel oil, and had sailed from Singapore on January 13th, calling at Colombo on February 23rd. She was bound to Port Said for orders

when she fell in with the raider. The *Turritella* having stopped, in accordance with the orders signalled from the *Wolf*, her master (Mr. T. G. Meadows) and all her officers were ordered on board the German ship; forty to fifty firemen were left behind in order to work the vessel with the prize crew which Captain Nerger had placed on board. A number of mines were afterwards transferred from the *Wolf* to *Turritella*, and the latter vessel then proceeded towards Aden, where the mines were to be laid. She succeeded in reaching the neighbourhood of this port and laying her mine-field, but was sighted about 9.40 p.m. on March 4th by H.M.S. ODIN (Lieutenant-Commander E. N. Palmer).

The ODIN was in a position some six miles south of Elephants Bank, and the *Turritella* about four or five miles away on her starboard bow, proceeding on a south-westerly course at about 11 knots. She was showing no lights and appeared to be holding a steady course for proceeding up the Gulf of Aden. Commander Palmer altered his course in order to communicate with her, at the same time increasing his speed, although at that time he had no other grounds for suspicions than the fact that the steamer he had sighted was showing no lights. Between 10 and 11 p.m. he got into communication with her, and was informed that she was the *Turritella*, of London, a British ship under Admiralty charter proceeding to Port Said for orders. The spelling of some of the words in her signals, and the hesitation shown in making them, as well as certain peculiarities of phraseology, further aroused Commander Palmer's suspicions, and he continued to alter his course so as to keep the vessel on his port bow, working up to full speed as she began to draw away from him. At 11 p.m. he ordered her to stop and received a reply, "Why did you not stop me when I passed Aden? Meadows—master." It was not an unnatural signal for a British merchantman to make if he were suspicious that he was being followed by a German raider. Unfortunately, however, for the *Turritella* in her new guise of German mine-layer, the signaller had made the small slip of spelling Aden with a "t" instead of a "d." Commander Palmer, therefore, determined to keep the vessel under observation during the night, and either overtake her, or if he were unable to do this, to have her stopped at Perim. At

2 a.m., therefore, he signalled his position, course, and speed to all men-of-war, reporting that he was following a suspicious steamer.

In these circumstances he kept on a parallel course, inshore of the *Turritella*, which was some two points off his port bow. The distance between the ships, both of which were travelling about 13 knots, was not altered appreciably until about 4 o'clock in the morning, when the British cruiser began to overhaul the *Turritella*. At 4.30 a.m. Commander Palmer signalled to her that if she did not stop he would open fire. On receiving a reply that she was stopping at once, he ordered her to switch on her navigation lights, which she did. Commander Palmer brought his searchlight to bear on her, and signalled her to remain where she was as he was going to board her at daylight. He then steamed round to the northward of her, preparing to lower a boat in order to send a boarding-party over to her. The moon had now gone down, and it was very dark, but as soon as daylight came it was observed that there were boats in the water full of men, and soon afterwards, about 5.45 a.m., two loud explosions were heard. Within half an hour the *Turritella* had sunk in a position 600 miles W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. (true) from Minikoi. The first boatload from her to come alongside the ODIN consisted of Chinamen, and they immediately informed Commander Palmer of the true character of the abandoned vessel. By 7 o'clock two other boats had been picked up and the whole of the *Turritella's* crew had been safely taken on board the ODIN. The Germans, who had been the last to leave the vessel, were made prisoners. Learning that the *Turritella*, which with her single 2-inch stern gun had been, of course, quite unable to resist the *Wolf*, had been laying mines in the neighbourhood of Aden, Commander Palmer at once signalled back this information so that all necessary precautions could be taken.

It is interesting to note that the *Turritella*, which had been rechristened the *Iltis* by the German prize crew, had originally been the *Gutenfels*, a sister-ship of the *Wolf*. She had belonged to the Hansa Company of Bremen, and had been seized by the British Government, at the outbreak of war, in the Suez Canal.

In the meantime the *Wolf* had not been inactive. On

March 1st she captured in the Indian Ocean the steamer *Jumna* (4,152 tons). Carrying a cargo of salt, this ship had sailed for Calcutta from Torresvieja, in Spain, on February 2nd, 1917, and had left Suez on the 22nd of the same month, the master (Mr. W. S. Wickman) having received route instructions from the naval authorities at that port. Passing down the Red Sea, she entered the Indian Ocean, and it was towards 6 o'clock on the morning of March 1st, in a position some 650 miles west (true) from Minikoi, that she fell into the hands of the enemy. Captain Wickman subsequently placed on record an account of his experiences, constituting a unique story of a captive on board a German raider.

“About 5.30 a.m. I was in my bath when I heard the report of a heavy gun quite close. I naturally thought it was one of our own patrol cruisers, heaving us to in order to examine our papers—especially as I had been told at Suez there was no enemy vessel in the Indian Ocean. With this in mind, I took my time dressing to go on deck, thinking my chief officer would attend to the usual routine of the vessel, and answer the signals. After one or two minutes another shell came singing over the bridge, and there were no signs of my ship stopping. By this time I had arrived on the bridge, and at the first glance saw that it was a German-built ship and flying the German Naval Ensign. She was passing from port to starboard across my bows, and as I saw that everything was against us, and a German prison or the boats on a wide ocean in view, I tried to use my stem and followed her up at full speed, but she proved too fast for the slow *Jumna* and easily eluded us.

“The German commander, seeing my manœuvre, ordered the port after-gun to fire at my bridge. In their hurry, before the gun was properly trained and breech closed, the shell exploded, killing four of their own men and seriously wounding about twenty-eight others, shattering most of their port after-bulwarks, main rigging, and destroying an 18-inch torpedo which was on deck, just missing the war charge. It also riddled their motor pinnace which was on No. 5 hatch, and the fragments of the shell perforated two large mines in the poop deck, also doing other serious damage about the decks. On board of the *Jumna* we saw

the flash and heard the report, but could not make head or tail of it, as no shell came our way.

“ Seeing the game was up and it would have only been murder and suicide on my part to persist in resistance, I had the ship stopped and signalled ‘All stopped.’ When the enemy boarding officer came on board, which he did after about an hour’s circling around us, he informed me of the accident, and told me that my bridge and myself would have gone if the accident had not occurred. He asked me why I had tried to ram the ship; of course I said I never thought of such a thing, but that something had gone wrong with the steering, and I could not keep the ship sheering towards them. They were very suspicious, and kept my crew and self under very keen observation for some time. They were very bitter against us, and blamed us for the accident which caused such serious damage. They took my officers and self on board the *Wolf* at once, but kept the petty officers and crew to work ship and help in gutting her out. I will say that the crew had to do this against their wills, with guards at their elbows with orders to shoot if they disobeyed the orders.

“ We were captured no March 1st, 1917, and after gutting the ship of all coal, stores, and everything of value in the engine-room—copper pipes, brass fittings, and a lot of steel and iron gear—they sunk the old ship on March 4th, by blowing in her sides at the engine-room and No. 2 hold.

“ Our accommodation and treatment on board the *Wolf* for the first week or so was very hard, and we felt it acutely. Evidently the raider was not prepared for taking prisoners so soon, for they said they had other work to do first. I found out that this work meant the laying of mines at most of our principal Eastern sea ports and routes. In fact they informed me quite openly that the mine-laying was the main object of the expedition, and that they were greatly surprised when they found the steamers *Turritella* and *Jumna* so far out of the general track. The *Wolf* was dodging and hiding in these latitudes after laying mine-fields at Colombo and Bombay.

“ We were quartered in No. 5 ’tween-decks, which was full of old lumber, rails, lime, and also all sorts of old rubbish. They had been carrying coal here, which added to our discomfort in a tropical climate, and we had not



much water to wash with. We ourselves set to and gave the place a thorough clean out. At all times there was a strong guard over us. We slept in hammocks and were ordered into them about 8 p.m.

“The food at first was very bad both in quantity and quality, but later it improved, after complaining to the raider’s commander. I should say this, that the commander himself tried to treat us fairly well, although his officers and most of his men were up against us. He took great precautions for his own safety, but his officers and men took huge delight in our annoyance and added to it whenever possible.

“We were in the tropics, and the atmosphere in the ’tween-decks, our quarters, was about 100° Fahr. when battened down, as we were every night, for the weather was very hot and stifling. We had a large fan in the ’tween-decks for giving us fresh air, but it was not of much use, as it was continually under repair.

“Considering the length of time we were on board—my crew and self were over twelve months—the health of my people was good. We were allowed on deck from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the tropics, when there was no danger to themselves or anything in sight. When anything was sighted, or coming along, we were all driven below like a flock of sheep and battened down like rats in a trap, and a strong guard with hand-grenades and arms was placed over the small hatch, which was our only way out. I heard afterwards that they never intended us to get out if they had to fight or were captured. They never gave us an opportunity to try and break out, and in any case it would only have been a slaughter-house.

“We heard that the *Turritella*, which had been sent away to lay mine-fields off Aden, had been captured, and then the *Wolf* made full speed due south, knowing full well there would be a lot of vessels searching for her, as the Chinese crew would give a good description of her. Steaming down, about March 10th, bound for Australian waters, we quickly overhauled the British steamer *Wordsworth* (3,509 tons), of London, bound from Burmah with a full cargo of rice around the Cape of Good Hope to London. We came upon her very quickly, for she was not making much speed. I heard afterwards from the master and chief engineer that the coal they had received in

Colombo would hardly burn, and in no possible way could they get a head of speed. I think, if they had had good coal and made their average runs, the *Wordsworth* would have been well clear of the track that the *Wolf* came down on.

“The master of steamer *Wordsworth* proved to be my cousin, J. W. Shields, of South Shields, whom I had not met for a number of years. We met on his coming on board of the *Wolf*, just as if it was a common thing to meet on raiders. For the rest of our voyage, and also during our internment in Germany, we stuck together like limpets, and as all Shieldsmen or ‘Geordies’ do, we used to have a good ‘dust-up’ to break the monotony. Of course, I did the honours, and found him a good place to sling his hammock, and it was close to mine, so that we could talk about old times.

“The *Wordsworth* was a hard ship to board, for every time the Germans tried to get alongside with the *Wolf* to loot some of the cargo, she would commence to roll, and she kept it up for ten days or so, until they got tired and sunk her, after taking several tons of rice with boats.

“Getting down in the track from Good Hope to Australia, the raider seized and sunk a small Mauritius barque called the *Dee*. The master of her was a typical old windbag skipper, and he had not much use for we poor steam skippers.”

The captain of the *Wolf* had now decided not to operate any more in the Indian Ocean for a time, as it was assumed that the area was becoming dangerous; and keeping out of the track of vessels, he searched the Pacific in the hope of capturing some ship from which he could supply himself with coal. For several weeks, however, no vessel was sighted, and, as the *Wolf's* boilers were leaking badly, Captain Nерger decided to bring his vessel into harbour in Sunday Island (one of the Kermadec Islands) for refitting and repair. It was while lying here, on June 2nd, 1917, that the *Wairuna* (3,947 tons) passed close by, to the great consternation at first of the captain and crew of the *Wolf*, who believed her to be a British cruiser. This vessel, belonging to the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, was bound from Auckland, New Zealand, to San Francisco and was carrying a cargo of coal, Kauri gum,

pelts, and copra. The Germans were not slow to realise their mistake. Another victim had been delivered into their hands!

Unconscious that she had been seen and was in imminent danger, the *Wairuna* proceeded on her course, whereupon the *Wolf* sent after her the seaplane, which, flying low, dropped a canvas bag on the deck of the *Wairuna*. On being opened, this was found to contain a message, "Stop immediately—take orders from German cruiser. Do not use your wireless or I will bomb you." Upon this the captain of the *Wairuna* ordered his engines to ease down, but the vessel was not stopped until the enemy seaplane had dropped a bomb just ahead of her. By this time the *Wolf* herself had put to sea and was making a course to head the *Wairuna* off. The latter had, therefore, no alternative but to surrender. An armed prize crew proceeded on board with orders that the English vessel was to be brought under the lee of Sunday Island and there to anchor. All her officers, except the master (Mr. Harold Crichton Saunders), were then transferred to the raider, and upon the following day, owing to the wind changing, the *Wairuna*, in company with the *Wolf*, proceeded to the other side of the island, where the two vessels anchored, the *Wairuna* being secured alongside her captor. A large amount of provisions, vegetables, and some forty sheep were then transferred from the *Wairuna* to the *Wolf*, the work of transhipment lasting for about a fortnight owing to the variability of the weather. Preparations were forthwith made to sink the *Wairuna*, whose hatches were battened down, her cabin doors nailed up, and her lifeboats smashed. She was taken out to sea, but a sailing vessel was sighted, so the *Wairuna* was brought back to her anchorage. The enemy seaplane was then sent after the schooner, which was the American sailing-vessel *Winslow*, bound for Samoa, with a cargo of coal, case oil, and fire bricks. The *Winslow* having been captured, the *Wairuna* was again taken out to sea early the next morning and sunk by gunfire, the bombs which had been previously placed on board having failed to destroy her.

Soon after this the *Wolf*, with all her prisoners on board, left Sunday Island and headed for North Island, New Zealand, where mines were laid in the neighbourhood of Three Kings Island. The raider then made her way to

Cook Strait, where another mine-field was laid, and from thence she sailed to the Australian coast, laying some further mines in the region of the Gabo Islands. During this time, as the prisoners discovered when they were next allowed on deck, the ship's appearance had been altered, her masts and funnel having been shortened, and her paint-work coloured black. Two more American sailing-vessels were captured in these waters, and then the raider made her way towards New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. While on this passage she tapped a wireless message announcing that the steamer *Matunga* (1,608 tons) was on her way from various Australian ports to what had been German New Guinea. This vessel was on Admiralty charter, carrying coal and stores, as well as some passengers and an Australian military contingent for German New Guinea. The weather had become very cold, and the *Wolf's* prisoners, soon to be joined by the crew of the *Matunga*, felt it keenly after being so long in the tropics.

Unconscious that her whereabouts were known to the German raider and that her cargo of coal was particularly desired by the latter, no particular suspicion was aroused on board the *Matunga* (master, Mr. H. Donaldson) when, on the morning of August 6th, she first sighted what was presumably an ordinary merchant tramp steamer. Her true character was, however, soon revealed when the German Naval Ensign suddenly broke out from the *Wolf's* mast, and her forward bulwarks dropped, exposing her guns; a shot was fired across the bows of the *Matunga*. This was followed by a seaplane reconnaissance on the part of the *Wolfchen*, and soon afterwards an armed guard came alongside to take possession of the vessel. Before they arrived, however, all the *Matunga's* code-books and confidential papers had been thrown overboard. The *Matunga* was now ordered to keep company with the *Wolf*, and the two vessels proceeded together to a remote and well-concealed natural harbour on the north coast of Dutch New Guinea. Surrounded by high hills, and with an almost invisible entrance, this lagoon proved an almost ideal hiding-place from the German commander's point of view.

Upon one of the high surrounding hills a wireless plant was set up, and the *Wolf's* seaplane maintained a

patrol far out at sea. In this solitude the *Wolf* was cleaned, her hull scraped of barnacles, and several hundred tons of coal transferred to her from the *Matunga's* bunkers.

It was not until August 26th that the *Wolf* again put to sea in company with the *Matunga*, which she sank by bombs a few miles out. The raider now proceeded due west, passing through the Java Sea towards Singapore, in the vicinity of which port she planned to lay the remainder of her stock of mines. She ran up the Carimata Strait without meeting any vessel, and was nearing her destination when an alarm was raised on board and all hands were piped to their stations. It afterwards became known to the seamen prisoners that the cause of anxiety was the sight of a British cruiser of the JUNO class, but the attention of this man-of-war was attracted by another steamer which came up with all lights burning. It was a happy escape for the raider as well as for the seamen prisoners on board her, for if she had been sunk in action they would all inevitably have been killed, as they were at this time battered down below.

It was during this period that a little incident occurred that is perhaps worthy of mention. One of the prisoners on board succeeded in dropping, unperceived, a bottle into the sea containing the following two messages: "Prisoners on board German raider. Will finder please notify British authorities that German raider passed Celebes this day, 29th August, on her way, we presume, to mine Singapore, Pedra Blanca, having previously mined Cape Town, Bombay, Colombo, and North Island, New Zealand, Cook Strait, Gabo Islands. Crews of the following vessels are on board: *Turritella*, *Jumna*, *Wordsworth*, *Dee*, *Wairuna*, *Winslow*, *Valaga*, *Encore*, *Matunga*. She has on board 110 mines to mine, we think, Rangoon, Calcutta. She was formerly *Wachenfels* of German merchant service." The second message was a descriptive drawing of the vessel, giving particulars of her rig and armament. This bottle was found in the sea off Tolitoli, Celebes, by some natives on December 9th. It was afterwards forwarded to the naval commander-in-chief on the China Station by the Consul-General at Batavia.

We have Captain Wickman's diary for the events which now occurred:

“September 4th, 1917, 9 p.m.—Commenced laying mine-field in the neighbourhood of Singapore Straits, China Sea entrance, and completed same by 4 o'clock next morning. About 140 to 150 mines in all were dropped in groups of fives. This finished her complement of mines with which she left Kiel. I understand she left there with 500 on board. The *Wolf*, after completing her deadly task, ran back the way she came up, namely Carimata Straits, making for the Indian Ocean and passing through Lombok or Atlas Straits.

“In the vicinity of  $1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  degree Channel in the Indian Ocean, she rounded up the *Hitachi Maru*, a Japanese steamer bound from the East to London with all sorts of goods and eatables for the Christmas markets. She had a very valuable cargo on board as well as a great number of passengers bound to Europe. The Japanese master made a mistake when he sighted the raider, for he had on board a British 4.7 gun and he could have made a good running fight and done him a lot of damage, but he came alongside, lowered some of his boats with the passengers in, and then sent his crew aft to work the gun. He never had a ghost of a chance, for as soon as they (the officers of raider) saw what he was after, they peppered him with four of their 5.9-inch guns, and made great havoc and damage on board. The Germans were very poor shots, and I think any ship with a couple of guns on board would have given them all they required as long as they kept clear of the torpedoes. The Japanese vessel was looted, and all the old men and boys and women and children from the *Matunga*, the barque *Dee*, and the *Hitachi Maru* were put on board and she was sent away to a rendezvous until further notice.

“The *Wolf* was now on the lookout for prey and especially for a coal ship, for her bunkers wanted replenishing to get back to Europe. Nothing came along, so she cruised towards Mauritius and Delagoa Bay, where she seized the Spanish steamer *Igotz Mendi*. Just before the capture of the Spaniard, things were looking so black for the *Wolf* regarding coal, that he (the commander) had to sink the *Hitachi Maru*, for he could not keep two ships running on his supply, and he was getting short. He fully intended to try and take the Japanese ship to Kiel with him, if he had had fuel. The Germans cursed their luck

when the Spaniard turned up one or two days late. After coaling from the Spaniard, all the young and old, children, women, and sick were again transferred, this time to the *Igotz Mendi*, for now the German commander was going to try and make his way to Germany. They all seemed to be in doubt about reaching there, and so were we prisoners, but the *Wolf's* commander had made up his mind to try.

“ Our quarters had undergone a great change since I had first arrived on board. Now they were all painted white and kept scrupulously clean. Both the after 'tween-decks were used for captured crews. Masters, officers, and men were kept separate. Up to the present, I should think there would be about 400 prisoners on board, and of all nationalities—Japs, blacks, Scandinavians, Chilians, Chinese, lascars, Mauritius boys, and mixed Americans, but the majority of us were British. Preparations were made for our benefit for cold weather. Pipes for steam heating were laid throughout the after 'tween-decks, and later on, while trying to get through the Straits of Denmark (between Iceland and Greenland), we quite appreciated it. In fact we should have all died with the cold if there had not been some artificial heating apparatus; for the thermometer was always below freezing-point in the Arctic Seas.

“ We rounded Cape of Good Hope, keeping a good distance off and well clear of everything. We kept Mid-Atlantic, coaled several times from the *Igotz Mendi*, and eventually made the south part of Iceland and the Straits of Denmark on February 6th, 1918, which was full of pack-ice and small bergs. The raider tried to force his way through the ice for several days, but gave it up and turned back, to coast the south of Iceland. One night, when amongst the ice, the Japanese captain took it into his head to commit suicide, for he said he could not bear the disgrace of his ship being captured while he had a good gun on board, and also of going into Germany.

“ The officers and crew of the *Wolf* did not like the idea of cruising around Iceland, for they were awfully nervous about our cruisers, and also about falling in with our patrols. As far as we knew, nothing was sighted while running the blockade until we made the Norwegian coast, in the vicinity of Bergen. The commander kept well

within the three-mile limit all the way down the coast, for we could see the land close aboard, through the cracks in the poop doors. We were not allowed on deck from Iceland until we made the Little Belt, which we did on February 18th, 1918. We dropped anchor and lay in a German bay—the name escapes my memory—and lay several days waiting for the *Igotz Mendi* to turn up. The commander wanted to enter the port of Kiel with his prize and all his bunting flying, after his great adventure. The German Naval Authorities could not believe the *Wolf* had returned after being away nearly two years, for reports said she had been sunk. After lying about a week, news leaked through that the prize *Igotz Mendi* under the command of Lieutenant Rosa, with all the sick prisoners, old men, women, and children had gone ashore on or near the Skaw—so near and yet so far from her port of destination! Some of the German warships tried to get her off, but the Danish Government interfered, and she was interned, and all the prisoners on board were taken care of and afterwards sent to England.

“With the news of the stranding of the *Igotz Mendi* the *Wolf* hove up anchor, and proceeded into Kiel Harbour amidst quantities of flying bunting and with great blowing of steam sirens from other warships and motor-craft. There was also a great demonstration of air- and sea-planes doing all sorts of stunts to welcome Commander Neger back after his voyage. Luck attended him all through, even when the British and Japanese cruisers, which were close to him at times, were scouring the seas in search of him.

“For a few days we were the show-ship of the harbour, and thousands of people and naval officers visited the vessel to gaze and gloat over the prisoners, like animals in cages. Even the cinema people came on board and took films from the bridge, and all the prisoners were chased on deck so they could take the decks full. These pictures were shown on the screens all over Germany afterwards.”

In addition to the vessels thus captured by the *Wolf*, the following were lost in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope as a result of the mines that she had laid: the *Matheran* (7,654 tons) on January 26th, 1917; the *Cilicia* (3,750 tons) on February 12th, 1917, and the *City*



of *Athens* (5,604 tons) on August 10th, 1917. The *Tyndareus* (11,000 tons) and the *Bhamo* (5,244 tons) were also damaged by mines in the same neighbourhood, the former on February 6th and the latter on August 26th. Both, however, were successfully towed to Cape Town. In the Colombo mine-field the *Worcestershire* (7,174 tons) was lost on February 17th, 1917, and the *Perseus* (6,728 tons) on the 21st of the same month. In the Bombay mine-field, the *City of Exeter* (9,373 tons) was injured on June 11th, 1917, but succeeded in reaching Bombay; the *Mongolia* (9,505 tons) was sunk on June 24th, 1917, and the *Okhla* (5,288 tons) on July 29th, 1917. The *Croxteth Hall* (5,872 tons) struck a mine on July 6th, 1917, and was beached, but sank five days later while being towed into harbour. In Cook Strait, New Zealand, the *Port Kembla* (4,700 tons) was sunk on September 18th, 1917.

## APPENDIX A

### COPY OF INSTRUCTIONS TO MERCHANT CAPTAINS AS ISSUED BY THE ADMIRALTY

*Confidential.*

IN no Circumstances is this Paper to be allowed to fall into the Hands of the Enemy.

This paper is for the Master's personal information. It is not to be copied, and when not actually in use is to be kept in safety in a place where it can be destroyed at a moment's notice.

All previous orders on this subject are hereby cancelled.

Such portions as call for immediate action may be communicated verbally to the officers concerned.

10th February 1915.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR OWNERS AND MASTERS OF BRITISH MERCHANT SHIPS ISSUED WITH REFER- ENCE TO THE OPERATIONS OF GERMAN SUB- MARINES AGAINST BRITISH SHIPPING

#### SEC. 1.—INFORMATION RESPECTING SUBMARINES

A. British and French submarines have orders not to approach or communicate with merchant vessels (other than fishing-vessels) within the following area :

Latitude 43° N. to Latitude 63° N.

Longitude 4° E. to Longitude 13° W.

Within these limits any submarine which shows by her action that she is attempting to close or communicate with a merchant vessel should be treated as hostile.

B. Block sketches of British, French, and German submarines will be found in a pamphlet entitled "Submarines in Home Waters," issued confidentially to British ships through the Board of Trade. Every vessel navigating in home waters should have a copy of this pamphlet on board.

C. French submarines are likely to be met with off the French ports. British submarines may be met with east of Portland or south of Aberdeen, also off Devonport and in the Firth of

Clyde. Beyond these limits the probability is that any submarine seen is German.

D. The speed of a German submarine on the surface exceeds that of the average merchant ship, but the speed under water is low. A submarine cannot see under water. When submerged she is obliged at frequent intervals to put up a long tube, known as a periscope, in order to see where she is going. Some submarines are armed with a gun, but this is an inferior weapon, incapable of inflicting serious injury upon an iron steamer manned by a resolute crew.

All submarines carry torpedoes, but their supply is limited, and they will be very averse from firing them at merchant vessels. It is very difficult for a submarine to hit a moving ship with a torpedo, especially if she is kept nearly end on, and experience has shown that a great many torpedoes are fired without any result. In case the ship is struck by a torpedo, there will generally be ample time for the crew to escape in the boats, if the latter are kept ready for service.

## SEC. 2.—PROCEDURE IF AN ENEMY SUBMARINE IS SIGHTED

A. No British merchant vessel should ever tamely surrender to a submarine, but should do her utmost to escape. A vessel which surrenders is certain to be sunk, and the crew cast adrift in their boats. A vessel which makes a determined attempt to escape has an excellent chance of doing so. Even should she fail, and be unlucky enough to be struck by one of the enemy's torpedoes, the crew will, in most cases, have ample time to man their boats.

B. If a submarine is seen at a distance and on the surface, or if a periscope is sighted, alter course to bring the boat astern and proceed at full speed. If the boat follows you on the surface, make for the nearest land or shallow water, always keeping your stern towards her. If the boat opens fire with a gun, continue on your course at all costs—if you stop you will certainly be torpedoed. Gunfire from most submarines is not dangerous. When under fire the crew should go below, and be ready to plug any shot-holes near the water-line. If the submarine does not fire you may assume she has no gun, and in this case she cannot injure you if you keep your stern towards her and keep a sharp lookout for any torpedo. With the submarine in this position a touch of the helm will enable you to avoid the torpedo, the trail of which can be seen by a line of bubbles on the water.

C. If a submarine comes up suddenly close ahead of you with obvious hostile intention, steer straight for her at your utmost speed, altering course as necessary to keep her ahead.

She will probably then dive, in which case you will have ensured your safety, as she will be compelled to come up astern of you.

Arrange with your engine-room staff to have a turn of speed ready for emergency. A few minutes may be sufficient to save your ship.

D. A ship which is being pursued by, or is escaping from, a submarine should fly the largest ensign available half-mast at the foremast head or triatic stay.

E. No ocean-going British merchant vessel is permitted to go to the assistance of a ship which has been torpedoed by a submarine. Small coasting craft, trawlers, and other small vessels of light draught should give all the assistance they can.

F. Any vessel in the submarine area which is observed to be making signals of distress without obvious cause should be treated with suspicion and approached with caution, as it is possible she may be acting as a decoy for a submarine.

### SEC. 3.—APPROACHING OR LEAVING BRITISH OR FRENCH PORTS

A. Between Latitude 43° N. and Latitude 63° N., and east of Longitude 13° W., a sharp lookout should be kept for submarines, and vessels navigating in this area should have their boats turned out, full-provisioned, and ready for lowering. The danger is in the vicinity of the ports and off the prominent headlands on the coast. Important landfalls in this area should be made after dark whenever possible.

B. Submarines do not willingly operate by day in shallow water. Advantage should be taken of this whenever possible. At night submarines are likely to be found close inshore in sheltered water, and vessels are advised to keep well out.

C. So far as is consistent with particular trades and state of tides, vessels should sail at dusk and make their ports at dawn. If obliged to wait outside a port, keep under way, steam fast, and alter course at short intervals.

### SEC. 4.—LIGHTING, COLOURS, ETC.

A. At night it is important that British ships should as closely resemble neutrals as possible. Navigation lights should not exceed the brilliancy prescribed by statute. No bright lights should show about the ship, but in most cases it will not be advisable to darken ships completely. Should neutral ships adopt any particular system of lighting, this should be copied by British vessels.

B. The use of false colours and disguises by merchant vessels attempting to escape capture is a well-established custom in the history of naval war. It is not in any way dishonourable. Owners and masters will therefore be within their rights if they

use every device to mislead the enemy and induce him to confuse British vessels with neutrals. Exceptional methods of painting and conspicuous funnel marks, not resembling those of neutrals, should be avoided.

In cases where the build of the vessel or the service on which she is employed precludes any possibility of deceiving the enemy, no disguise should be attempted and a foreign ensign should not be worn.

Customs and other officials will be instructed not to interfere with the discretion of masters and owners in altering the appearance of their ships according to their judgment in the manner best calculated to deceive our unscrupulous enemy.

When ordered to stop by a British or Allied warship, or upon entering or leaving neutral port, the red ensign must be hoisted.

#### SEC. 5.—WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY

Hitherto British ships have not been allowed to use wireless telegraphy, or hoist their aerials, in British or Allied territorial waters.

In the interest of safety this prohibition will be relaxed in the case of particular ships, and subject to the following conditions :

1. When within 100 miles of any part of the British coast no wireless signals are to be made unless the ship is in grave danger either from the enemy or from natural causes.

2. A constant listening watch is to be kept as far as is possible with the operators on board.

3. A British ship fitted with wireless telegraphy which is attacked by a submarine and in need of assistance should make the S.O.S. signal, followed by a series of S's, to differentiate the call from a signal of distress due to natural causes.

On the receipt of this signal armed assistance will be sent, but large British merchant ships should not approach the vicinity.

Ships which desire to avail themselves of this privilege must make application to the Admiralty, when permission will be granted, subject to the condition that a switch, controllable only by the master, is fitted in the power leads of the wireless telegraphy apparatus in such a manner that no message can be sent from the ship without the master's knowledge and approval.

Ships to which this privilege is granted will be allowed to hoist their aerials shortly before clearing from British ports, and when homeward bound will be permitted to retain their aerials aloft until their arrival in port.

SEC. 6.—LIST OF PORTS AT WHICH ARMED ASSISTANCE IS USUALLY AVAILABLE, AND TO WHICH MERCHANT VESSELS CAN RETREAT IF PURSUED BY A HOSTILE SUBMARINE

*England and Wales*

River Tyne	Sheerness	Portland Harbour
River Humber	Ramsgate	Plymouth Harbour
Great Yarmouth	Dover	Falmouth Harbour
Lowestoft	Inside Isle of	Milford Haven
Harwich	Wight	Liverpool

*Scotland*

The Clyde (Ardrossan)	Kirkwall (Orkney Islands)	Peterhead Dundee
Stornoway	Lerwick (Shetland Islands)	Firth of Forth

*Ireland*

Queenstown	Blacksod Bay	Belfast
Berhaven	Lough Swilly	Kingstown
Galway Bay	Larne Harbour	Rosslare

*France*

Dunkirk	Le Havre	Lorient
Calais	Cherbourg	St. Nazaire
Boulogne	St. Malo	La Pallice
Dieppe	Brest	Mouth of Gironde
Fécamp		

In addition to the assistance available at the above-mentioned ports, the narrow seas of Great Britain and France are constantly patrolled by armed vessels, so that effective help in submarine waters is never far distant.

## APPENDIX B

### THE GERMAN COURT OF INQUIRY'S METHOD OF INTER- PRETING THESE ADMIRALTY INSTRUCTIONS

#### EXTRACT FROM THE FINDINGS OF THE GERMAN COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY (OFFICIAL TRANSLATION)

“ The entire conception of Fryatt's manœuvre points to his having attempted to ram.

“ In conclusion, it speaks for the accuracy of the conclusions arrived at by the Court, that Fryatt did not act in accordance with the regulations issued by the British Admiralty. Had he done so, he would have made every effort to escape from the U-boat.

“ The Secret Instructions issued by the British Admiralty dated 10th February, 1915, Section A, provide that :

(See Annex A)

“ Section 2 B provides that :

(See Annex A)

#### ANNEX A

A. No British merchant vessel should ever tamely surrender to a submarine, but should do her utmost to escape. A vessel which surrenders is certain to be sunk and the crew cast adrift in their boats. A vessel which makes a determined attempt to escape has an excellent chance of doing so.

B. If a submarine is seen at a distance and on the surface, or if a periscope is sighted, alter course to bring the boat astern and proceed at full speed. If the boat follows you on the surface, make for the nearest land or shallow water, always keeping your stern towards her. If the boat opens fire with a gun, continue on your course at all costs—if you stop you will certainly be torpedoed. Gunfire from most submarines is not dangerous. When under fire the crew should go below, and be ready to plug any shot-holes near the water-line. If the submarine does not fire you may assume she has no gun, and in this case she cannot injure you if you keep your stern towards her and keep a sharp lookout for any torpedo. With the submarine in this position a touch of the helm will enable you to avoid the torpedo, the trail of which can be seen by a line of bubbles on the water.

The German translation of the above, which is an extract from the original, is correct.

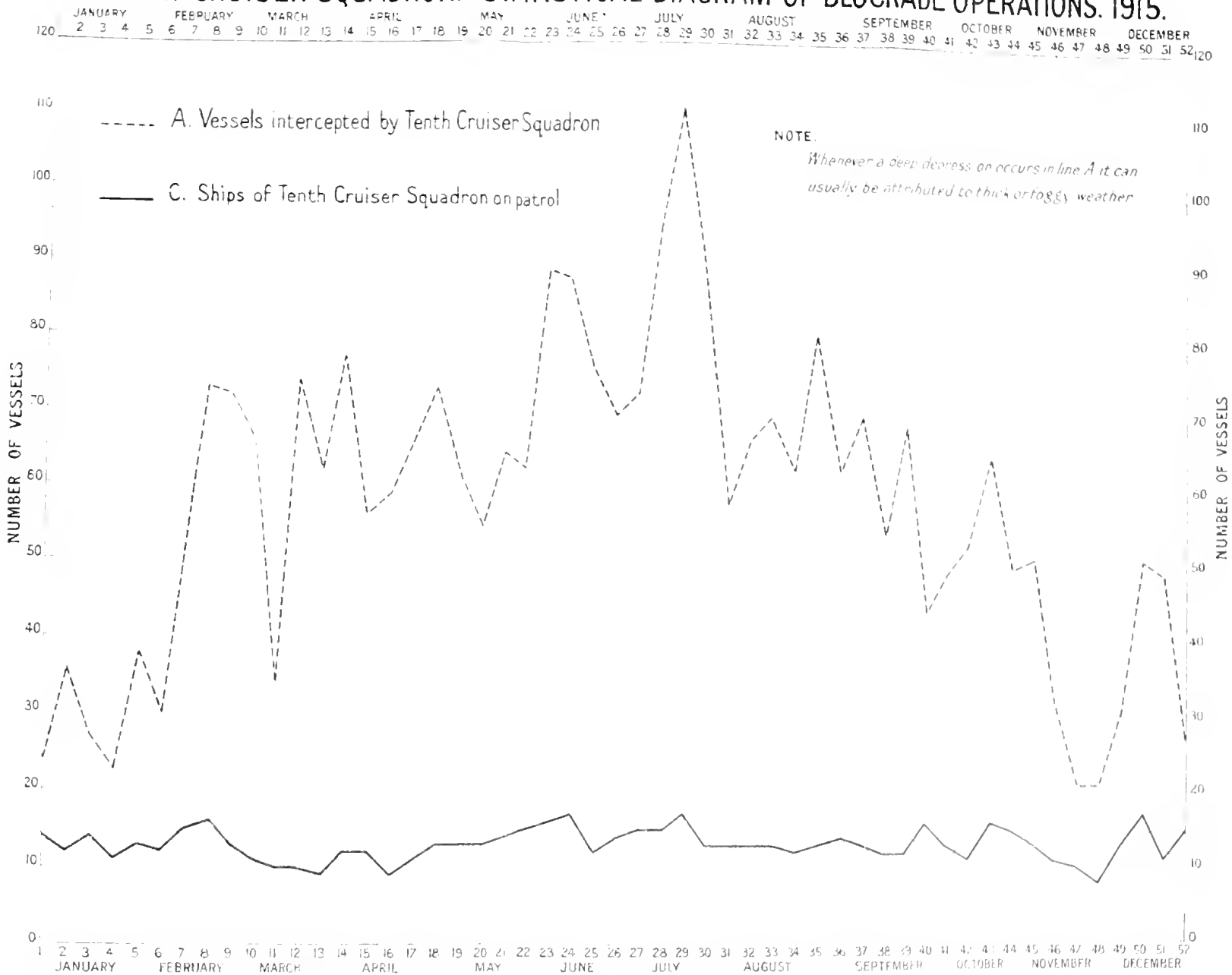
## APPENDIX C

### ANALYSIS OF VESSELS INTERCEPTED AND SENT IN BY THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON DURING THE YEAR 1915

Nationality.	Intercepted.	Sent in.
<b>AMERICAN :</b>		
Eastbound . . . . .	55	47
Westbound . . . . .	35	7
<b>OTHER NEUTRALS :</b>		
<i>Norwegian :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	469	271
Westbound . . . . .	380	25
Direction unknown . . . . .	8	—
<i>Swedish :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	183	131
Westbound . . . . .	117	35
<i>Danish :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	345	191
Westbound . . . . .	259	20
Direction unknown . . . . .	2	1
<i>Dutch :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	5	3
Westbound . . . . .	3	—
<i>Spanish :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	1	—
Westbound . . . . .	—	—
<i>Argentine :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	1	—
Westbound . . . . .	—	—
<b>BRITISH AND ALLIED :</b>		
<i>British :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	135	—
Westbound . . . . .	124	—
Direction unknown . . . . .	5	—
<i>France :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	7	—
Westbound . . . . .	10	—



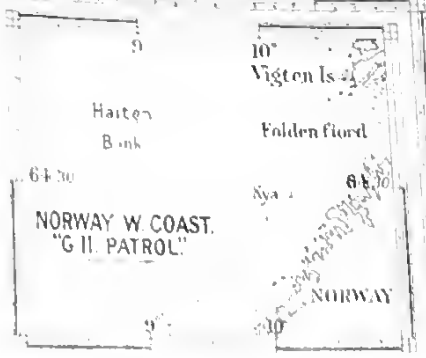
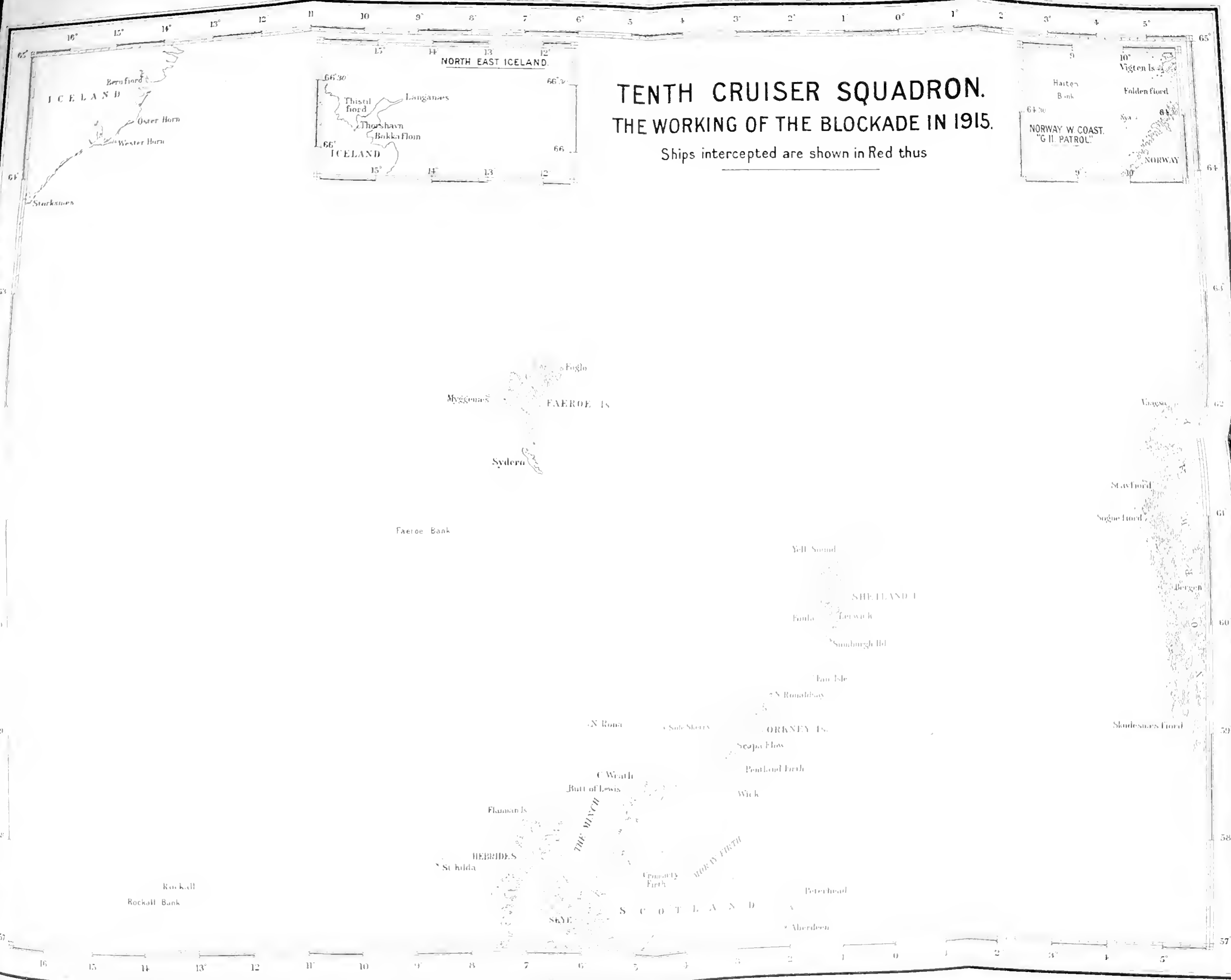
# TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON. STATISTICAL DIAGRAM OF BLOCKADE OPERATIONS. 1915.





# TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON. THE WORKING OF THE BLOCKADE IN 1915.

Ships intercepted are shown in Red thus





## ANALYSIS OF VESSELS INTERCEPTED

443

Nationality.	Intercepted.	Sent in.
<i>Russia :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	78	—
Westbound . . . . .	44	—
Direction unknown . . . . .	2	—
<i>Belgian :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	2	—
Westbound . . . . .	—	—
<i>Italian :</i>		
Eastbound . . . . .	—	—
Westbound . . . . .	—	—
Direction unknown . . . . .	1	—
NATIONALITY UNKNOWN :		
Eastbound . . . . .	1	1
Westbound . . . . .	5	—
Direction unknown . . . . .	1	—
FISHING CRAFT :		
<i>Norwegian</i> . . . . .	81	2
<i>Swedish</i> . . . . .	6	3
<i>Danish</i> . . . . .	90	5
<i>Dutch</i> . . . . .	29	—
<i>British</i> . . . . .	60	1
<i>French</i> . . . . .	5	—
<i>Russian</i> . . . . .	3	—
ENEMY VESSELS :		
<i>German :</i>		
Westbound . . . . .	3	—
Totals . . . . .	3,098	743 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 38 without armed guards.

## INDEX

- Aaro*, the s.s., torpedoed, 340  
*Abbotsford*, the s.s., 8  
*Abclia*, the s.s., sunk, 197  
*Acceptable*, the drifter, attacked, 286  
 ACHILLES, H.M.S., 403  
 ACTIVE, H.M.S., 277  
 Adams, Captain Henry V., master of the s.s. *Thorpwood*, 181  
 Admiralty, the, policy of extending the defensive armament of merchant shipping, 231-5; instructions, 235-7, 240, 436-9  
 Adriatic, the, demand for auxiliary craft, 165; drifters sent to, 166  
*Adriatic*, the s.s., armed, 232; case of, 242  
 ADVENTURE, H.M.S., 49  
 Ægean, the, 42  
*Ægusa*, the armed yacht, 69, 173, 174  
 Africa, South, troops dispatched to, 76  
*African Monarch*, the s.s., blown up, 24  
 AFRIDI, H.M.S., 254, 304  
 Agulhas, Cape, 422  
*Ajax*, the drifter, sunk, 284  
*Alacrity*, the s.s., disappearance of, 299; sunk, 300  
 Albany, W. Australia, 96  
*Albatros*, the s.v., 35  
*Albatross*, the armed trawler, 277-8  
*Alberta*, the trawler, sunk, 259  
 Alboran Island, 44  
*Alcantara*, the s.s., 121, 122, 125; action against the *Greif*, 153; sunk, 154  
 Aldeburgh Napes, 23, 260, 293  
 Alexander, H., 70  
 Alexandria, 84, 98  
*Alexandria*, the trawler, sunk, 289  
 Alexandrovsk, 68  
 Algeria, dispatch of French troops to, 75  
 Allen, Captain, master of the s.s. *Ning Chow*, 214  
 Allinson, Captain R. L., master of the s.s. *Goldmouth*, 302; awarded the D.S.C., 303  
 Allman, Sub-Lieutenant A. C., in command of the *Pearl*, 57; promoted Lieutenant, 60  
*Almanzora*, the s.s., 139  
*Alnwick Castle*, the s.s., 97  
*Alsatian*, the s.s., 106; flagship, 109, 113, 116, 122, 126, 127, 148; smoking-room, 111; new wireless telegraph direction-finder installed, 132  
*Amadawat*, the armed trawler, 45  
 ANALFI, the Italian cruiser, sunk, 165  
*Amanda*, the, 8  
 AMAZON, H.M.S., attacked, 284  
*Ambrose*, the s.s., 109, 116, 121, 122; attacked by a submarine, 120  
 America, South, admission of armed merchantmen to harbours, 333  
 America, United States of, protests against submarine warfare, 1, 12, 39, 304; regulations on armed merchant ships, 242-4, 334  
 American Rights League, protest against the execution of Captain Fryatt, 321  
 AMETHYST, H.M.S., 160, 407, 419  
*Ancona*, the Italian s.s., torpedoed, 290  
 Anderson, Sir Kenneth, President of the Chamber of Shipping, 202  
*Andes*, the s.s., 121, 122; action against the *Greif*, 153  
*Andoni*, the s.s., torpedoed, 373  
*Andrew Welch*, the American s.v., 146  
*Anglia*, the hospital ship, sunk, 261  
*Anglo-Californian*, s.s., attacked by a submarine, 18  
*Anglo-Columbian*, the s.s., 38; sunk, 39  
*Anglo-Egyptian*, the s.s., 92  
 Angus, Skipper C., in command of the *Nellie Nutton*, 278

- Antilochus*, the s.s., 190  
 Anti-submarine Division, 287  
*Antoine*, the French s.v., captured, 418  
 Antwerp, relief of, 86, 96  
 Anvil Point, 369  
 Anzac Day, 162  
*Apollo*, the s.s., sunk, 181  
*Appam*, the s.s., 386; captured by the *Möwe*, 387; at Virginia, 390; Newport News, 391; decree for the restitution, 391  
 Appson, Michael, 11  
*Apsleyhall*, the s.s., sunk, 367  
*Arabia*, the s.s., 17; torpedoed, 357  
*Arabian*, the s.s., sunk, 180  
*Arabic*, the s.s., v. 25; attacked by a submarine, 26; sunk, 27-9, 43; armed, 232  
*Aragon*, the s.s., 95  
 Archangel, 57, 67, 345  
 Arctic Ocean, submarine warfare, 345  
 Argentine Republic, regulation on armed merchantmen, 245, 333  
*Ariadne*, the s.s., sunk, 386  
 Arkley, Captain P. L., master of the s.s. *Dunsley*, 26  
 Arklow, South, lightship, 48  
*Arlanza*, the s.s., 121, 122; mined, 147  
*Armenian*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 6, 8-10; sunk, 10  
 Army, British, mobilisation, 74, 89; transport, 75, 78, 93; distribution, 78; transferred from Egypt, 90; from India, 94  
 Army Estimates for 1914-15, 78  
*Arndale*, the s.s., blown up, 6, 67  
*Artist*, the transport, 87; torpedoed, 377-9  
*Artois*, the s.s., 151, 152  
*Ashburton*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 304; sunk, 305  
*Ashmore*, the s.s., 37; attacked by a submarine, 38; sunk, 38  
*Asnières*, the French s.v., sunk, 405  
 ASPHODEL, H.M.S., 366  
 Asquith, Lieutenant Claude, in command of the *Onward*, 278; awarded the D.S.C., 279  
*Astereas*, the, 340  
*Astoria*, the s.s., sunk, 347  
*Astrum Spei*, the drifter, sunk, 170  
*Athenic*, R.M.S., 396  
*Atland*, the Swedish s.s., 135  
*Au Fait*, the drifter, 257  
 Australian Expeditionary Force, transport of, 89, 91, 96; land at Gallipoli, 162  
 Austrian U-boats, sunk, 169, 171  
*Author*, the s.s., looted and sunk, 384  
 Auxiliary Patrol, 266; work of the, 42, 67, 250, 259, 286-8; mine-sweeping in the Mediterranean, 158-65; in the Adriatic, 165; number of vessels, 251  
*Ava*, the s.s., sunk, 376  
*Aresta*, the Swedish s.s., 143  
*Avon*, the trawler, 160  
 Avenmouth, 8, 10, 95, 97  
*Bacchante*, the armed yacht, 42  
 Bachmann, Admiral, 290  
 Bacon, Admiral Sir Reginald, 253; attack on Zeebrugge, 248-50; anti-submarine measures, 251; tribute to the crews of the drifters, 256, 285; on the result of the mine barrage, 257, 258, 270  
 Bacon, Lieutenant-Commander S. K., master of the s.s. *Patuca*, 123  
 Badewitz, Lieutenant, 395, 402  
 Balfour, Earl, mission to the United States, 156; tribute to Admiral Sir D. de Chair, 156  
*Balgownie*, the s.s., attacked by aircraft, 202  
 Ballantyne, Commander E. C., in command of the *Viknor*, 123  
 Ballard, Admiral, 73  
 Ballycotton Light, 10  
*Baltic*, the s.s., armed, 232  
*Balto*, the Norwegian s.s., sunk, 355  
 Bamford, Midshipman C. A., 139  
 Bang, Captain, master of the *Trondhjemsfjord*, 132  
*Baralong*, the s.s., 43  
 Bardsey Island, 42  
 Barnes, Lieutenant Alfred H., 250  
 Barnett, Captain L., master of the *Strathness*, 345  
 Barra Head, 51, 56, 125  
 Barry Roads, 33  
 Barton, Captain David, master of the *Corbridge*, 382; taken prisoner, 383, 418; master of the *Lundy Island*, 417  
 Bather, Commander, in command of the *Hilary*, 122  
 Batz, Ile de, 12  
*Bayano*, the s.s., 109, 113, 116, 122; sunk, 119, 147  
*Baycraig*, the s.s., torpedoed, 368  
 Bayly, Admiral Sir Lewis, 42, 49, 287

- Beale, Captain S. P., master of the *Treneglos*, 187
- Beatrice II*, the trawler, 160
- Bedouins, take seamen prisoners, 223-30
- Beechbank*, the Norwegian s.v., 151
- Beeching, Captain, master of the *Brussels*, 307
- Belford*, the s.s., torpedoed, 197
- Belgian refugees, number of, 88; troops, transport of, 87
- Bell Rock, 60, 140
- Belle Isle, 178
- Bellview*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 344
- Bempton*, the trawler, 49
- Benalla*, the s.s., attacks a submarine, 195
- Benedict*, the s.s., 418
- Bengut, Cape, 306
- Bennion, Cadet F., 299
- Benson, Captain R., in command of the *Cedric*, 122
- Benson, Commodore, 148
- Berehaven, 13, 49, 297
- Bergen, 433
- Bergensfjord*, the Norwegian s.s., captured, 107, 114, 124
- Bernays, Commander L. A., in command of the mine-sweeping expedition, 68
- Bernstorff, Count, vi, 35, 40, 338
- Berry, Skipper Alfred E., awarded the D.S.O., 161
- Berteghem, Mlle Arens de, 319, 320
- Bessfield*, the Norwegian s.v., 127
- Bhamo*, the s.s., damaged by mines, 435
- Bianca*, the s.s., 56, 133
- Biarrütz*, the mine-layer, 252
- Binavor*, the, 293
- Birch, Captain J. H., master of the *Franz Fischer*, 294
- Biscay, Bay of, 178, 373
- Bishop Rock, 12, 25, 33, 39, 297, 353
- Blackloch, J., 299
- Blaikie, Captain James, master of the *Caledonia*, 366
- Blair, Lieutenant D., 33
- Blockade, Ministry of, 156
- Bombardier*, the trawler, 68
- Bombay, 94; mine-field off, 435
- Bon, Cape, 189
- Booty, Captain E. L., in command of the *Otway*, 123
- Borkum, 43
- Borthwick, Captain T. R., taken prisoner, 367
- Borulos*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 180
- Bottelar, Colonel von, 321
- Bougie, 350
- Boulogne, 82, 84
- Bowen, Mr., 27
- Bowling, Captain Alfred, master of the *Enosis*, killed, 188
- Bowring, Commander V. L., in command of the *Ambrose*, 122; of the *Patia*, 123
- Bradley, Captain Richard, master of the *Eddie*, 411
- Brandon Quay, 35
- Brantingham*, the s.s., fate of, 345; torpedoed, 346
- Bray, Lieutenant H. J., in command of the *Searanger*, 273
- Brazil, attitude to armed merchant ships, 245, 333
- Brecknockshire*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 410; sunk, 411
- Bremen*, the German commercial submarine, 347; sunk, 348
- Brierton*, the s.s., sunk, 358
- Brighton Queen*, the paddle-steamer, 45, 248; sunk, 256
- Brigi*, the trawler, captured, 355
- British Army, mobilisation, 74, 89; transport, 75, 78, 93; dispatched to Egypt, 76; distribution, 78; transferred from Egypt, 90; from India, 94
- British Empire, the, military mobilisation of, 89-96
- British Transport*, the s.s., 279
- British Yeoman*, the s.s., sunk, 419
- Broadstairs, 286
- Brockett, Captain John, master of the *Dromonby*, 383
- Brocklebank, Commander H., in command of the *Changuinola*, 122
- Bromley, Captain A., in command of the *Columbella*, 122
- Brown, Commander P. G., in command of the *Patuca*, 123
- Browne, Captain John, master of the *Strathnavin*, 7
- Bruges, 67, 312
- Brunton, Commander C. W., in command of the *Ambrose*, 120, 122; of the *Orcoma*, 123
- Brussels*, the s.s., attacked by submarines, 307-11; captured, 311
- Buckler*, the drifter, attacked, 286
- Buckley, Captain R., master of the *Cedarwood*, 293



- Buenos Ayres*, the Italian s.v., captured, 419  
 Bull Rock, 64  
 Burghead Bay, 264  
 Burnett, Captain John, master of the *King George*, 400  
 Burnley, Captain Samuel W., master of the *Edinburgh*, taken prisoner, 392  
*Bursfield*, the s.s., sunk, 180  
*Bush*, the armed trawler, 56; attacked by a submarine, 56  
*Busiris*, the s.s., sunk, 196  
 Busta Voe, 150  
  
 C24, H.M., submarine, 54  
 C27, H.M., submarine, 54  
*Cabotia*, s.s., attacked by a submarine, 351  
*Cæsarea*, the, case of, 118  
*Caledonia*, the s.s., 95; torpedoed, 366  
*Caliban*, the, 134  
*Californian*, the s.s., torpedoed, 187  
*Calistoga*, the drifter, 169  
*Calyx*, the s.s., 109, 111, 112, 116; withdrawn, 120  
*Cambrian Range*, the s.s., captured by the *Möwe*, 400; sunk, 401  
*Cambridge*, the paddle-steamer, 45  
*Cambronne*, the French s.v., captured, 421  
 Cameron, W., 299  
*Campania*, the drifter, 34  
 Campbell, Captain A. T., master of the *Westburn*, 394  
 Canadian Expeditionary Force, transport of, 89, 92  
 CANOPUS, H.M.S., 160  
 Cantire, Mull of, 103  
 Cape Verde Islands, 395  
 Capelle, Admiral von, 291  
 Capelle, West, 251  
 Carden, Admiral, 159  
*Caria*, the s.s., sunk, 185  
*Caribbean*, the, 109, 113, 116, 118, 122  
 Carimata Strait, 431, 432  
*Carmania*, the trawler, 252  
*Caroni*, the s.s., sunk, 178  
 Carr, Commander H. C., in command of the *Bayano*, 122  
 Cartagena, 179  
 Carter, Commander J. O., master of the *Cedric*, 122  
 Carter, Lieutenant S. F., 149  
*Casswell*, the trawler, sunk, 355  
*Catania*, the armed yacht, 170  
 Cattaro, 43, 44, 158, 172  
  
*Caucasian*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 14-16; sunk, 16  
*Cawdor Castle*, the s.s., escapes from a submarine, 197  
*Cedarwood*, the s.s., blown up, 293  
*Cedric*, the s.s., 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 122  
 Cerigotto Channel, 175; Island, 179, 188  
 Ceuta, 183  
*Chancellor*, the s.s., sunk, 39  
*Changuinola*, the s.s., 109, 113, 116, 122  
*Chantala*, the s.s., 305; sunk, 306  
*Charles Gournard*, the, captured, 418  
 Charlton, Admiral, 262  
 Chassiron, 178  
 Chatterton, Captain H., in command of the *Teutonic*, 123  
 Chatterton, Lieutenant-Commander E. Keble, ix  
 Chile, attitude to armed merchant ships, 245, 333  
 Chilvers, Captain J., master of the *Sailor Prince*, 180  
 Chittenden, Captain Albert, master of the *Duendes*, 299; awarded the D.S.C., 298  
 Christiansund, 147  
 Churchill, Captain James S., master of the *Bellview*, 344; awarded the D.S.C., 344  
*Churston*, the s.s., sunk, 34  
*Cilicia*, the s.s., sunk, 434  
*Città di Palermo*, the Italian transport, strikes a mine, 168  
*City of Athens*, the s.s., sunk, 435  
*City of Birmingham*, the s.s., sunk, 358-60  
*City of Exeter*, the s.s., 435  
*City of Marseilles*, the s.s., 358; attacked by a submarine, 190  
*City of York*, the s.s., escapes from a submarine, 184  
*Clan Campbell*, the s.s., sunk, 305  
*Clan Chisholm*, the s.s., attacked by submarines, 361-3  
*Clan Leslie*, the s.s., sunk, 355  
*Clan Macalister*, the s.s., 184; sunk, 185  
*Clan Macfarlane*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 197, 198; sufferings of the crew, 198-202  
*Clan Maclaren*, the s.s., 192  
*Clan Macleod*, the s.s., sunk, 192  
*Clan Macnaughton*, the s.s., 109, 114, 116, 122; founders, 120, 147  
*Clan Mactavish*, the s.s., 388;

- attacked by a submarine, 389 ;  
 sunk, 390  
 Clark, Alexander, 213  
 Clark, Captain A. G., master of the  
*Hallamshire*, 188  
 Clark, Gerald, 205  
 Clarke, P. B., 133  
*Clavis*, the drifter, sunk, 170  
*Cleon*, the armed trawler, 44  
*Clintonia*, the s.s., sunk, 24  
*Clover Bank*, the drifter, 257  
 Clyde, the, 120  
*Coath*, the s.s., 88  
*Cober*, the s.s., sunk, 32  
 Cockman, Commander C. W.,  
 master of the *Benalla*, 195 ;  
 awarded the D.S.C., 196  
*Colchester*, the s.s., 308  
*Coleby*, the s.s., captured, 380  
*Colenso*, the s.s., sunk, 191  
 Collins, Captain R. D., master of  
 the *Teutonian*, 296  
 Colomb, Sir John, on the need for  
 arming merchant vessels, 231  
 Colombo, mine-field off, 435  
*Colorado*, the s.s., 232  
*Columbella*, the s.s., 109, 116, 121,  
 122, 133  
*Commodore*, the s.s., sunk, 195  
*Comrades*, the drifter, 270, 271  
 COMUS, H.M.S., 154  
*Conch*, the oil-tanker, on fire, 369-  
 72 ; founders, 372  
 Condon, J., 188  
*Consort*, the trawler, 277  
 Cook, Commander E., master of  
 the *Victorian*, 123  
 Cook Strait, 430, 435  
*Coquet*, the s.s., attacked by a  
 submarine, 216 ; sunk, 217, 291 ;  
 sufferings of the crew, 218-21 ;  
 taken prisoners by the Bedouins,  
 223-30  
 Corbett, Commander G. E., in com-  
 mand of the *Orotava*, 123  
 Corbett, Sir Julian, *Naval Opera-  
 tions*, 79 note  
*Corbridge*, the s.s., captured, 382,  
 391 ; sunk, 392  
*Cornubia*, the s.s., sunk, 178  
 CORNWALLIS, H.M.S., torpedoed,  
 176  
*Corona*, the Norwegian s.s., 145  
 Corsewall Point, 119  
*Corsican*, the s.s., 95  
*Costello*, the s.s., sunk, 25  
*Cottingham*, the s.s., sunk, 197  
 Crafter, Lieutenant, 257  
*Craigard*, the s.s., sunk, 14  
*Craigston*, the s.s., sunk, 180  
 Crawford, Lieutenant, 131  
 CRESCENT, H.M.S., 102, 108  
 Crete, 178  
 Crighton, J., 10  
 Crimea, troops dispatched to, 75  
*Cromer*, the s.s., 308  
 Crookhaven, 13  
 Cross Sand Light-vessel, 305  
*Crown of Aragon*, the s.s., 201-2  
*Croxteith Hall*, the s.s., sunk, 435  
 Cruiser Squadron, the Tenth, vii,  
 122 ; blockade of Germany, 101 ;  
 mobilisation, 102 ; duties, 105 ;  
 reconstruction, 106, 109, 117 ;  
 condition of the ships, 108 ;  
 crews, 110 ; patrol work, 115,  
 124-56 ; disposition of the ships,  
 116 ; additional ships, 121 ;  
 new base, 126, 127 ; loss of ships,  
 147 ; value of wireless tele-  
 graphy, 148 ; analysis of vessels  
 intercepted, 442  
 Cuba, attitude to armed merchant  
 ships, 245  
 Cullen Bay, 264  
*Cymbeline*, the s.s., attacked by a  
 submarine, 34 ; sunk, 35, 43  
*Dancæ*, the French s.s., sunk, 133  
 Dannreuther, Commander T., in  
 command of the *Patuca*, 123  
 Dardanelles Expedition, 96 ; mine-  
 sweeping trawlers, 158-65  
 Dare, Admiral, 47  
 Dassen Island, 422  
*Daturn*, the drifter, sunk, 284  
 David, Commander H. F., master of  
 the *Teutonic*, 123  
 Davies, Captain D. T., master of  
 the *Patagonia*, 38  
 Davies, H. O., 10  
 Davies, Henry, 354  
 Davies, T., awarded the D.S.M., 10  
 Davison, Captain W. C., master of  
 the *Natal Transport*, 178  
 de Chair, Admiral Sir Dudley, in  
 command of the Tenth Cruiser  
 Squadron, 102 ; condition of his  
 ships, 108 ; flagship the *Alsatian*,  
 109, 148 ; extract from his  
 diary, 111-14 ; inspection of the  
 new base, 137 ; naval adviser  
 to the Ministry of Blockade,  
 156 ; LL.D. conferred, 156 ;  
 tribute to, 156  
*Decisions of the Supreme Court of  
 the U.S.A.*, 332 note  
*Dee*, the s.v., sunk, 428

- Defensively Armed Merchant Ships and Submarine Warfare*, 241
- Demerara*, the s.s., 4; attacked by a submarine, 5
- Demeter-ton*, the s.s., sunk, 414
- Den of Crombie*, the s.s., 185; sunk, 186
- Denmark, Straits of, 124, 433
- Dennis, Captain W. S., master of the *Andoni*, 373
- Denver*, the s.s., 113
- de Robeck, Admiral, 161, 162
- Destro*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 341
- Deutschland*, the German commercial submarine, 347; sunk, 348 *note*
- Devonport, 93
- Dewa*, the s.s., sunk, 342
- Dewsland*, the armed trawler, 34
- Dickinson, Captain J., master of the *Alacrity*, 300
- Digby*, the s.s., 109, 113, 114, 116, 122, 129, 130; attacked by a submarine, 120
- Dilwara*, the transport, 95
- Dinion Fjord, 141
- Diomed*, s.s., attacked by a submarine, 30; sunk, 31
- Dobbins, Quartermaster E., 299
- Dogger Bank, mine-field, 53, 66, 266
- Doggerbank*, the Dutch lugger, 279
- Dohna-Schlodien, Korvetten-Kapitän Burggraf Graf Nicholas zu, in command of the *Möwe*, 381
- Donald, Captain R. N., master of the *Chancellor*, 39
- Donaldson, Captain H., master of the *Matunga*, 430
- Donnelly, Captain Geoffrey, master of the *Clintonia*, 24
- Donstad*, the Norwegian s.s., 374; sunk, 375
- Dover, raids on, 44, 283-6; barrage, 268-70
- Dover*, the patrol trawler, 13
- Dovey*, the trawler, founders, 259
- Dowse, Captain B., master of the *City of Marseilles*, 190
- Dragonera Island, 345
- Dramatist*, the s.s., 403; sunk, 404
- Drammenfjord*, the s.s., 132
- Drifter Divisions, 283, 284
- Drifters, sent to the Adriatic, 166; duties, 167; work of, 253; tribute to, 256; operations against submarines, 270; sunk, 276
- Drogden, 403
- Dromonby*, the s.s., attacked, 383  
sunk, 384
- Drumcree*, the s.s., sunk, 2-4
- DRYAD, H.M.S., 102
- Duart*, the s.s., sunk, 340, 341
- DUBLIN, H.M.S., torpedoed, 165
- Duchess of Cornwall*, the s.v., sunk, 400
- Duendes*, the s.s., escapes from a submarine, 299
- Duff, Admiral A. L., head of the Anti-submarine Division, 287
- Dugmore, Commander E. V., in command of the *Ebro*, 122, 152
- Duke of Cornwall*, the s.s., 150
- Dulcie*, the s.s., torpedoed, 8
- Dulcie Doris*, the drifter, 169
- Dumfriesshire*, the s.s., sunk, 8, 63
- Dunbar, 141
- Dunbar, Captain Thomas, master of the *Meadowfield*, 20
- Dunera*, the transport, 94
- Dunkirk, 88
- Dunluce Castle*, the transport, 97
- Dunn, Lieutenant R. H. A., master of the *Columbella*, 122
- Dunphy, Lieutenant B., master of the *Bayano*, 122
- Dunrobin*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 344
- Dunsley*, the s.s., sunk, 25, 26
- Duplex*, the French s.v., captured, 420
- Durazzo, 168
- E.B.C.*, the drifter, damaged, 284
- E.E.S.*, the drifter, 254
- Eagle Point*, the s.s., captured, 302
- East Loch Roag, 137
- Easter Island, 422
- Easty, Sub-Lieutenant Alfred M., 143, 144
- Ebro*, the s.s., 121, 122, 137, 151-2
- Eddie*, the s.s., captured by the *Möwe*, 411
- EDGAR, H.M.S., 102, 106, 107, 108
- Edinburgh*, the s.v., sunk, 392
- Editor*, the trawler, 277
- Edmonds, Captain Bertram, master of the *Baycraig*, 368
- Edmondson, Captain J., master of the *Huntsvale*, killed, 356
- Edwards, Captain H., in command of the *Hildebrand*, 122
- Edwards, Lieutenant-Commander H. O., 54; awarded the D.S.O., 55
- Edwards, Sub-Lieutenant D. L., 139, 141-3

- Eemdijk*, the Dutch s.s., founders, 260
- Egypt, British expedition to, 76; anti-submarine patrols, 173
- Egyptian War, 80, 84
- Eileen*, the, armed yacht, 53
- Eimstad*, the s.s., case of, 29
- Ellesmere*, the s.s., torpedoed, 21
- Ellis, Petty Officer, 70
- El Zorro*, the oil-tanker, sunk, 49, 197
- Empress of Fort William*, the s.s., sunk, 293
- Endurance*, the drifter, catches a submarine, 270, 271, 272
- ENDYMION, H.M.S., 102; captures the *Bergensford*, 108
- English Channel, 43, 101; submarines in the, 197
- Englishman*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 301; sunk, 302
- Enosis*, the, s.s., torpedoed, 188
- Equinox*, the armed trawler, 44
- Era*, the trawler, 278; sunk, 279
- Erna Boldt*, the s.s., torpedoed, 8
- Escallonia*, the trawler, 158, 160
- Eskimo*, the s.s., 109, 116; withdrawn, 120
- Esmeraldo*, the s.s., sunk, 412
- ESSEX, H.M.S., 389
- Etonian*, the s.s., chased by a submarine, 22
- Evangel*, the trawler, 47
- Evans, Captain Phillip, master of the *Lomas*, 12
- Evening Star*, the drifter, 167, 169
- Expeditionary Force, British, mobilisation, 76; sent to France, 81; numbers embarked, 82, 83
- Eynon, Captain W. J., master of the *Halizones*, 181
- Fabian*, the s.s., 352; attacked by a submarine, 353
- Faeroe Islands, 111, 114, 116, 141
- Fair Island, 12, 107, 140, 247
- Falaba*, the s.s., sunk, 1.
- Falkenhayn, General von, Chief of the Great General Staff, v; appeal for naval co-operation, 337
- Falmouth, 63
- Fanshawe, Captain Basil H., in command of H.M.S. SUTLEJ, 396
- Farringford*, the s.s., 381; sunk, 382
- Fasnet, the, 13, 23, 34, 35, 38, 43, 296, 305, 306, 350, 397, 415
- Fawcner, Rear-Admiral, 137
- Fenay Bridge*, the s.s., sunk, 301
- Fentonian*, the trawler, 160
- Ferens, T. R.*, the trawler, 68, 69
- Fernando Noronha, 392
- Fimreite*, the s.s., torpedoed, 133
- Finch, Captain W., master of the *Arabic*, 26
- Finisterre, Cape, 43, 376, 384
- Firth*, the s.s., sunk, 23
- Fish, supply of, 50, 72
- Fisher, Admiral of the Fleet, Viscount, First Sea Lord, 266
- Fisher Girl*, the drifter, 171
- Fisher Prince*, the trawler, sunk, 281
- Fishing industry, 71
- Fishing-smacks, attack on submarines, 70
- Fishing-trawlers, value of, 50; number sunk, 52, 276, 281; armed, 53; number of, 73
- Fisker, Captain M. M. A., master of the *Scawby*, 181
- Fitzgerald, Sub-Lieutenant W. F., 286
- Flamborough, 275
- Flamenco*, the s.s., 392; attacked by a submarine, 393; sunk, 393
- Flamm, Professor, 346
- Flannan Island, 125
- Flekkefjord, 150
- Flemish coast, mine-barrage, 251-8
- F. Matarazzo*, the s.s., torpedoed, 358
- Folden Fjord, 128
- Folkestone-Grisnez mine-field, 270
- Forth, the, 141; Firth of, 60, 261; mine-field, 276
- Fortier, Lieutenant R. L., master of the *Andes*, 122
- Fortuna*, the s.v. (ex-*Lutece*), 422
- Foster, Rt. Hon. H. O. Arnold, *The Army in 1906*, 76 note
- Foula Island, 106, 133
- France, alliance with England, 77
- France-Hayhurst, Commander C. H., in command of the *Patuca*, 119, 123; death, 119
- Francisco*, the s.s., 232
- Frankenfels*, the s.s., 185
- Franz Fischer*, the s.s., destroyed by a Zeppelin, 294-6
- Frascati*, the trawler, 160
- Freestia*, the trawler, 49
- French, Mr. A. A., on the sinking of the *Roddam*, 343
- French Prince*, the s.s., sunk, 411
- French troops, dispatched to Algeria, 75; transport of, 87
- French, Viscount, 250

- Frechny*, the drifter, blown up, 168
- Friedrich Arp*, the German s.s., sunk, 130
- Frio, Cape, 410
- FRIPPONE, the French patrol vessel, 343
- Fry, Captain, master of the *Lesbian*, taken prisoner, 373
- Fry, Lieutenant H. C. C., 167
- Fryatt, Captain Charles, master of the *Brussels*, 307; attacked by a submarine, 307-11; taken prisoner, 311-15; trial, 315-18; condemned to death, vii, 318-21; shot, 321; German Committee of Inquiry on his trial, 322-9, 441
- Fulton*, the Norwegian s.s., 376
- Funchal, 390
- Furnes, 253
- FURY, H.M.S., 130
- G. and E.*, the trawler crew, 70; attack on a submarine, 70
- Gaba Tepe, 162
- Gabo Islands, 430
- Gabrielsen, J., drowned, 11
- Gadsby*, the s.s., sunk, 14
- Galata Island, 189
- Galley Head, 64
- Gallipoli, attack on, 157
- Galloper Lightship, 248
- Gansser, Kapitän-Leutnant, in command of U33, 308, 309
- Garrett, Captain Richard, master of the *Rappahannock*, 346
- Garrigill*, the drifter, 168, 170
- Gartside-Tipping, Lieutenant-Commander H. T., captain of the *Sanda*, 255; drowned, 256
- Gaspe Bay, 93
- Gavdo Island, 178, 181, 186, 191, 196, 197
- Geier*, the s.s. (ex-*Saint Theodore*) 405; sunk, 410
- GENERAL WOLFE, the monitor, 253, Georgevitch, Guido von, 145
- Georgic*, the s.s., torpedoed, 401
- Gerard, Mr., 314
- Germany, submarine warfare, 1; devices, 360; condition of the crews, 366; protest from the United States, 1, 12; blockade of, 100, 104; operations of the Grand Fleet, 101; watchword "ruthlessness," 133; failure of ingenious ruses, 155; proclamation of war-zones, 233; number of mines sunk, 253, 262; mine-laying, 259-63, 275; raids on Dover Straits, 283-6; Committee of Inquiry into the case of Captain Fryatt, 322-9, 335, 441; policy of *spurlos versenkt*, 346
- Gibraltar Straits, 43; anti-submarine patrols, 173
- GIBRALTAR, H.M.S., 102, 127
- Gillard, Lieutenant G. S., master of the *Demerara*, 5
- Girdleness, 55, 147, 278
- Gladys Reyle*, the s.s., sunk, 416
- Glamis Castle*, the trawler, 277
- Glance*, the Norwegian s.v., 131
- Glanville, Skipper P. P., 45
- GLASGOW, H.M.S., 393, 419
- Gleaner of the Sea*, the drifter, 253; sunk, 284
- Glen Aron*, the paddle steamer, 45
- Glen Usk*, the paddler, 264
- Glenby*, the s.s., 25
- Gloria*, the s.s., 134
- GLOUCESTER, H.M.S., 171
- Gothland*, the s.s., 124
- Goble, Lieutenant C. J., master of the *Arlanza*, 122
- Golding, Skipper J. W., 51
- Goldmouth*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 302; sunk, 303
- Good Hope, Cape of, 433
- Goodson, Captain, master of the *Balgownie*, 202
- Goodwins, South, 269, 272
- Goss, W. A., quartermaster of the *Armenian*, awarded the D.S.M., 10
- Gotaland*, the Swedish s.s., 136
- Govan Ferry, 121
- Governor*, the s.s., captured by the *Möwe*, 414; sunk, 415
- Gowan Lea*, the drifter, shelled, 171
- Gozo, 367
- GRAFTON, H.M.S., 102, 107, 108; captures the *Wilhelm Behrens*, 103
- Grampian*, the s.s., armed, 232
- Grangewood*, the s.s., sunk, 23, 133
- Grant, Mr., account of the torpedoing of the *Persia*, 208
- Grant Dalton, Captain J., in command of the *Hildebrand*, 122
- Granton, 275; port of, naval base, 60
- Granton*, the trawler, 68
- Grantully Castle*, the transport, 91, 97
- Greenbriar*, the s.s., 124

- Greenland, 101  
*Greif*, the German raider, action against the *Alcantara*, 153; sunk, 154  
*Greta*, the armed yacht, 49  
 Grey, Lord, 314  
 Grisnez, 284  
*Groningen*, the s.s., 20  
 Groom, Captain Arnold C. B., master of the *Coquet*, 216; cast adrift, 218-21; reaches land, 221  
 Groundwater, Lieutenant R. G., master of the *India*, 123  
*Guido*, the s.s., 18; torpedoed, 20  
*Gunner*, the armed trawler, attack on a submarine, 60-2  
*Gutenfels*, the German s.s.; see *Turritella*  
*Gwenllian*, the trawler, 160
- Haack, Bernhard, taken prisoner, 289  
 Haggard, Captain V. H. S., in command of H.M.S. *VULCAN*, 54  
 Haldane, Lord, Secretary of State for War, 76  
 Hall, Captain Alexander, master of the *Katherine*, 412  
 Hall, Captain W. H. S., master of the *Persia*, 205  
 Hallam, Captain G., master of the *Saint Theodore*, 402  
*Hallamshire*, the s.s., torpedoed, 188  
 Holloway, Captain J. A., master of the *Swedish Prince*, 341; taken prisoner, 341  
 Hameln, prison camp at, 390  
 Hammond, Able Seaman K., 70  
 Hamond, Lieutenant C. E., 70; awarded the D.S.C., 71  
 HAMPSHIRE, H.M.S., sunk, 261, 276  
 HANNIBAL, H.M.S., 366  
 Hansen, Joe, 148  
 Hansen, Lieutenant-Commander, 59  
*Haracaibo*, the Danish s.v., 146  
*Harfat Castle*, the trawler, sunk, 355  
 Harland, Lieutenant R. J., 254  
*Harmaires*, the s.s., sunk, 297  
 Harnden, Captain F. J., master of the *West Point*, 349  
 Harris, Captain W. J., master of the *Dramatist*, 403  
 Harrison, Captain H. C., master of the *Appam*, 386; taken prisoner, 387  
 Hartlepool, 281  
 Hartnell, Captain, master of the *Brussels*, 307; taken prisoner, 311-15
- Hasker, Captain F. O., master of the *Minneapolis*, 300  
 Hatcher, Commander O., in command of the drifters, 166  
*Haugar*, the Norwegian s.v., 141-3  
 Haughton, Captain Wilfred J., master of the *City of Birmingham*, 359  
*Haverford*, the s.s., armed, 232  
 Havre, 82; evacuation of, 84, 85  
 HAWKE, H.M.S., 102, 106; sunk, 107  
 Hawley, F. J., 198  
*Haydn*, the s.s., sunk, 179  
*H. C. Henry*, the s.s., sunk, 179  
 Heard, Captain H., in command of the *Columbella*, 122  
*Heatherbloom*, the drifter, 169  
 Heaton, Commander Gervase W. H., tribute to the mine-sweepers, 265  
 Hebrides, the, 56, 116  
*Heighington*, the s.s., torpedoed, 340  
 Helfferich, Karl, 339  
 Heligoland, 43  
 Heligver Light, 134  
*Helizones*, the s.s., sunk, 181  
 Helles, Cape, evacuation of, 165  
*Helmsmuir*, the s.s., torpedoed, 195  
 Hely, Lieutenant H. M., master of the *Digby*, 122  
 Hemming, Captain H. C., master of the *Den of Crombie*, 186  
 Herbert, R. H., 39  
*Heron*, the armed trawler, 65  
 Hering, Kapitän-Leutnant Otto, 177  
*Hesione*, the s.s., sunk, 39  
 Heslop, Captain C. W., master of the *Ellesmere*, 21  
*Hesperian*, the s.s., 34; attacked by a submarine, 35-7; sunk, 37  
*H. E. Stroud*, the armed trawler, 283, 285  
 Higginbottom, Captain, master of the *Apsleyhall*, 367; taken prisoner, 367  
 Highton, Lieutenant William, 265  
*Hilary*, the s.s., 109, 112, 116, 122  
*Hildebrand*, the s.s., 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 122, 131, 145  
 Hill, Captain J., master of the *Turbo*, 298  
*Hillhouse*, the s.s., 135  
 Hillier, Able Seaman, 295  
 Hills, Mr., 422  
*Hitachi Maru*, the Japanese s.s., captured, 432; sunk, 432  
 Hodgson, Captain A., master of the *Drumcree*, 3

- Høevdi Grund, 106  
 Holder, Captain F. A., master of the *Eimstad*, 29  
 Holland, attitude to armed merchant ships, 244; on the execution of Captain Fryatt, 322  
 Holloway, Captain J., master of the *Orange Prince*, 188  
 Holland, Lieutenant-Commander J. A., master of the *Orcoma*, 123  
 Holtzendori, Admiral von, Chief of the Naval Staff, 290, 339  
 Holyhead, 21  
 Home Counties Territorial Division, transferred to India, 90; transport of, 95, 96  
 Hook Point, 11  
*Horace*, the s.s., captured, 394; sunk, 395  
*Horngarth*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 420; sunk, 421  
 Hudson, Sub-Lieutenant C. H., in command of the *Gunner*, 62; awarded the D.S.C., 62  
*Hudson Maru*, the Japanese s.s., prisoners transferred to, 410  
 Hughes, Captain D. William, master of the *Horace*, 394  
 Hughes, Captain Robert, master of the *Woodfield*, 182  
 Hugo, Captain T. N., master of the *Mimosa*, 35  
 Humber, the, 73, 261, 281; minefield, 259  
 Hunt, Captain A. L., master of the *Bursfield*, 180  
*Huntly*, the s.s., torpedoed, 197  
*Huntsman*, the s.s., escapes from a submarine, 184  
*Huntsvale*, the s.s., sunk, 355  
*Huronian*, the s.s., torpedoed, 49  
 Hurren, Skipper R. G., 254; awarded the D.S.C., 254  
 Hven, Island of, 403  
*Hyacinth*, the drifter, shelled, 250  
  
*Iberian*, the s.s., sunk, 23  
*Ibis*, the trawler, 277  
 Iceland, 51, 101, 433  
*Idaho*, the s.s., 232  
*Igotz Mendi*, the Spanish s.s., captured, 432; interned, 434  
*Illis*, the German raider; *see Turritella*  
*India*, the s.s., 43, 121, 123; attacked by a submarine, 124; torpedoed, 134-6, 147  
 Indian Army, 78  
 Indian Ocean, 425  
  
 Inglefield, E. F., 376  
*Inglemoor*, the s.s., sunk, 14, 16  
*Ingonia*, the transport, 94  
*Inkonka*, the transport, 98  
*Inkum*, the s.s., torpedoed, 8  
 INTREPIDO, the Italian destroyer, sunk, 167  
*Inventor*, the storeship, case of, 85  
*Inverberire*, the s.s., 342  
*Inverlyon*, the ketch, attacked by a submarine, 46  
*Invicta*, the s.s., 88  
*Iona*, the s.s., 12; sunk, 13  
*Ionian*, the transport, 95  
 Irickey, Captain James, master of the *Armenian*, 8; awarded the D.S.C., 10  
 Irish coast, submarine raid, 47  
 Irish Sea, 42  
*Irma*, the Norwegian s.s., 415  
 Islay, Isle of, 301  
 Ismailia, 84  
*Istrar*, the s.s., sunk, 364-6  
 Italy, result of the policy of neutrality, 157; entry into the war, 158; loss of ships, 167  
  
 Jackson, Able Seaman Ellis, awarded the D.S.M., 414  
 Jackson, Captain James D., master of the *San Melito*, 32; Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve, 33  
 Jacob, Captain Maxwell M., master of the *Istrar*, 364; account of the sinking, 364-6  
 Jago, Captain Thomas B., master of the *Iberian*, 23  
 Jalo, 229  
 James, C., 183  
 James, F. S., Administrator of Nigeria, on board the *Appam*, 386; allowed to land, 390  
 Jameson, Captain W. S., master of the *Saxon Prince*, 397; interned, 397  
 Jan Mayen Island, 125  
*Japanese Prince*, the transport, escapes from a submarine, 183  
 Java Sea, 431  
*Jeanette*, the, armed yacht, 42  
 Jedabia, 227  
 Jeffreys, Commander R., in command of the *Clan Macnaughton*, 122  
 Jeffries-Davis, Captain H., master of the *French Prince*, 411  
 Jehan, E. M., 46; awarded the D.S.C., 46

- Jellicoe, Admiral of the Fleet, Viscount, 56, 73, 145, 149, 265
- Jenkins, Captain A. H., master of the *Japanese Prince*, 183
- Jenkins, Daniel, mate of the *Saidieh*, 7
- Jenks, Captain J. W., master of the *Netherby Hall*, 408
- Jessie*, the s.s., 298
- Jevington*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 373; sunk, 374
- John, Captain Henry, master of the *Whitefield*, 34
- John Hardie*, the s.s., sunk, 43
- Johnson, Captain Edward B., master of the *Destro*, 341; awarded the D.S.C., 341
- Johnson, Lieutenant W. C. M., master of the *Viknor*, 123
- Jones, Captain Evan, master of the *Trader*, 385
- Jones, Captain Isaac, master of the *Larchmore*, 17
- Jones, J. T., 178
- Jones, Captain John Parry, master of the *Marquette*, 181; of the *Farringford*, 382; taken prisoner, 382
- Jorstadmoen, internment camp, 136
- Jumna*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 425; sunk, 426
- Jutland, battle of, 274, 339
- Kapunda*, the s.s., torpedoed, 358
- Karachi, 94
- Kashgar*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 190
- Katherine*, the s.s., captured by the *Möve*, 411; sunk, 412
- Kennedy, Commander W. G., in command of the *India*, 123, 135
- Kentish Knock, 294
- Kephez Point, 159
- Kermadec Islands, 428
- Kiel Harbour, 434
- Kilner, Basil, killed, 413
- Kimberley*, the trawler, 274
- King, Skipper G., 56
- KING EDWARD VII, H.M.S., sunk, 260, 381
- King George*, the s.s., 399; sunk, 400
- King Malcolm*, the s.s., sunk, 358, 365
- Kingsway*, the s.s., sunk, 189
- Kirkwall, 13, 143, 144
- Kitchener, Field-Marshal Earl, Secretary of State for War, 79; military policy, 89; drowned, 261, 276
- Kling, Lieutenant, 422
- Knight, Captain R. A., master of the *Voltaire*, 398; interned, 399
- Køline, Naval Chaplain, 320
- Kohler, Captain Carl J., master of the *Perce*, 418; taken prisoner, 418
- Kohler, Lieutenant, 403
- Kohler, Mrs., taken prisoner, 418
- Konsul Schultze*, the German s.s., 128
- Kophamel, in command of U35, 172, 174
- Kotka*, the Norwegian s.v., attacked by a submarine, 62, 64; towed into Queenstown harbour, 65
- Kristianiafjord*, the Norwegian s.s., 125
- Kron Prinz Wilhelm*, the German raider, 380
- Kuroki, General, 80
- Kya Island, 128
- Kyarra*, the hospital ship, 96
- Kyoto*, the trawler, sunk, 354
- Lady Blanche*, the, armed yacht, 42
- Lady Plymouth*, the s.s., escapes from a submarine, 184
- Lady Salisbury*, the s.s., sunk, 6, 8
- Laghi, Cape, 168
- Lamble, Lieutenant, 387
- Land's End, 275, 304
- Langford, Captain Walter, master of the *Kingsway*, 189
- Langton Hall*, the s.s., sunk, 191
- La Panne, 253
- Lapland, 345
- Larchmore*, the s.s., sunk, 17
- Largo Bay, 141
- La Roche Jaucanet*, French s.v., captured, 420
- Launch Out*, the drifter, sunk, 284
- Laurentic*, the s.s., 109
- Lawson, Lieutenant-General Sir H., 85
- Lawson, Vivian Oldry, 377
- Leader*, the smack, 70
- Learmouth, Captain J. W., master of the *Haydn*, 179
- Le Cateau, battle of, 82
- L. C. Tower*, the s.v., 13
- Leith Roads, 141
- le Marchant, Rear-Admiral, 173
- Lemnos, 97
- Leonora*, the Spanish s.s., 375
- Lerwick, 68, 105, 139, 149, 150, 152
- Lesbian*, the s.s., sunk, 373
- Letitia*, the hospital ship, 360



- LE TROMBE**, the French torpedo-boat, 271  
*Leuctra*, the s.s., torpedoed, 8  
 Lewis, Butt of, 51, 56, 57, 128, 153  
**LIGHTFOOT**, H.M.S., 277  
*Lily Reich*, the drifter, founders, 169  
*Lindenhall*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 361  
 Linguetta, Cape, 167  
*Linkmoor*, the s.s., sunk, 179  
 Lizard, the, 15, 32  
*Loch Awe*, the trawler, 48  
 Lofoten Islands, 42  
 Logan, P. G., 27  
 Loire, River, 82, 84  
*Lomas*, the s.s., sunk, 6, 8, 12  
 Lombok or Atlas Straits, 432  
*Lord Cromer*, the s.s., 194  
*Lord Denman*, the trawler, 68  
*Lord Tredegar*, the s.s., sunk, 342  
*Lord Wimborne*, the trawler, 164  
*Lottie Leask*, the drifter, sunk, 167  
 Lowestoft, 68, 69  
*Lowlands*, the s.s., torpedoed, 297  
 Luckner, Count Felix von, in command of the *Seedler*, 415, 418; taken prisoner, 422  
*Ludlow*, the paddler, sunk, 263  
*Lumina*, the s.s., sunk, 184  
 Lundy Island, 8, 197  
*Lundy Island*, the s.s., 416; sunk, 417  
*Lupina*, the drifter, 47  
*Lusitania*, the s.s., sunk, v, 1, 12, 204  
*Lutece*, the s.v. (renamed *Fortuna*), captured, 422  
*Lux*, the s.s., sunk, 377  
*Luxembourg*, the Belgian s.s., sunk, 392  
**LYDIARD**, H.M.S., 301  
*Lynfield*, the s.s., torpedoed, 373
- MacAuley, Norman, 28  
*Macfarlane*, the trawler, 250  
 Mackenzie, Captain G. A., master of the *Brecknockshire*, 410  
 Maclean, Allan, 215  
 Mahmoud, Prince, 180  
 Mahon, Captain R. F., in command of the *Digby*, 122  
*Maid of Honour*, the armed yacht, 59  
 Main, Captain W. S., master of the *Hesperian*, 35  
 Main, Lieutenant-Commander F. M., master of the *Alicantara*, 122
- MAJESTIC**, H.M.S., 21; sunk, 163, 177  
 Malin, Captain F. W., master of the *Esmeraldas*, 412  
 Malin Head, 115, 301  
*Malinche*, the, sunk, 191  
*Mallow*, the mine-sweeper, 207, 212  
 Malo-les-Bains, 88  
*Maloja*, the s.s., sunk, 261, 292  
 Malta, anti-submarine patrols, 173, 175  
*Manchester Engineer*, the s.s., torpedoed, 302  
*Mangara*, the s.s., sunk, 23  
*Manhattan*, the transport, 93  
*Manitoba*, the s.s., armed, 232  
 Manley, Captain F., master of the *Phrygia*, 299  
**MANSFIELD**, H.M.S., 10  
*Mantua*, the s.s., 106, 109, 112, 113, 114, 116, 123, 126  
*Manx Hero*, the trawler, 160; sunk, 160  
*Manzanita*, the drifter, 167  
 Maraca Island, 392  
*Marere*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 291; sunk, 292  
*Marie Frederic*, the French trawler, 187  
*Marie Glaeser*, the German s.s., captured, 103  
*Marietta*, the Norwegian s.v., 112  
*Marina*, the s.s., torpedoed, 350  
 Marne, battle of the, 81, 82  
*Maroni*, the French s.s., sunk, 397  
*Marquette*, the s.s., sunk, 181  
 Martello, Cape, 181, 184  
 Martin, T., 341  
 Martin, W. E., 414  
*Martin*, the trawler, 277  
 Martorell, Captain Norman, master of the *Flumenco*, 392; taken prisoner, 393  
*Massalia*, the Greek s.s., 195  
 Masters, Captain W., master of the *Californian*, 187  
 Matapan, Cape, 179, 180, 187, 197  
*Matheran*, the s.s., sunk, 434  
 Matthews, Captain C., master of the *Ashburton*, 304  
*Matunga*, the s.s., captured, 430; sunk, 431  
 Maxse, Mr., 310  
*Maxton*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 45  
 May Island, 141, 275  
*Mayfly*, the trawler, 289  
 McClory, Lieutenant J. R., killed, 285

- McCullough, Captain A., master of the *Craigarc*, 14
- McGill, Captain G. B., master of the *Orteric*, 196
- McLean, Neil, killed, 20
- M'Loughlin, Lieutenant J., 270; awarded the D.S.C., 272
- McNish, Roland L. H., 413
- Meadowfield*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 20; sunk, 21
- Meadows, Captain T. G., master of the *Turritella*, 423
- Mediterranean, the, 43; demand for auxiliary craft, 157; submarine warfare, 172; trawlers sent to, 173
- MEDUSA, the Italian submarine, torpedoed, 165
- Mekong*, the armed yacht, 53
- Mello, Captain P. E., master of the *Marere*, 291
- Mellor, Commander William, in command of the trawler *Escalonia*, 158
- MENTOR, H.M.S., 19
- Mercantile Marine, work of transporting troops, 79-81, 83, 86, 89-99; number of troops transported, 98; blockade of Germany, 101; number of ships sunk, 182, 304; relations with the Royal Navy, 245
- Merchant ships, system of defensive armament, 231-5; instructions, 235-7, 240, 436-9; number armed, 237-40; system of training, 239; attitude of neutrals, 241-5, 333-5; result of armed, 360; list of ports, 440
- Merceian*, the transport, escapes from a submarine, 183
- Merewether, Sir E. M., Governor of Sierra Leone, on board the *Appam*, 386; allowed to land, 390
- Merganser*, the s.s., sunk, 189
- Merion*, s.s., armed, 232; case of, 242
- Meteor*, the German minelayer, 67, 260
- Miami*, the s.s., 11
- Middleton*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 191; sunk, 192
- Miles, Sub-Lieutenant Oswald E., drowned, 112
- Milford Haven, 12
- Mills, Captain G., master of the *Artist*, 87, 377
- MILNE, H.M.S., 10
- Miltiades*, the s.s., 92
- Mimosa*, the s.s., 34; sunk, 35, 43
- Mine, salving a, 264
- Mine-fields, 66-9, 159, 248, 253, 259-63, 268, 276, 381, 422, 429
- Minehead, 42
- Mine-sweepers, work of the, 66-9, 262-5
- Mingary*, the yacht, 275
- Minieh*, the collier, attacked by a submarine, 407; sunk, 407
- Minikoi, 424
- Minneapolis*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 300; sunk, 301
- Minona*, the, armed yacht, 60
- MIRANDA, H.M.S., 19
- Mitchell, Captain C., master of the *Cottingham*, 197
- Mizzen Head, 127
- Mohacsfield*, the s.s., sunk, 372
- MOHAWK, H.M.S., attacked, 285
- Mombassa*, the s.s., torpedoed, 349
- Monarch*, the cable ship, blown up, 250
- Mongolia*, the s.s., sunk, 435
- Monnikendam*, the Dutch s.s., 32
- Mons, retreat from, 84
- Montagu of Beaulieu, Lord, account of the torpedoing of the *Persia*, 212-15; tribute to the crew, 212
- Montezuma*, the s.s., armed, 232
- Montreal*, the s.s., armed, 232
- Moore, John B., *Digest of International Law*, 331 note
- Moore, Captain W. E. J., master of the *Cambrian Range*, 400
- Moorhouse, Captain W. A., master of the *Englishman*, 301
- Moorina*, the transport, attacked by a submarine, 184
- Mopelia Island, 422
- Mora*, the s.s., sunk, 178
- Moray Firth, mine-field off, 260
- Mordant*, the, 346
- Moresby*, the s.s., sunk, 358
- Morning*, the s.s., wreck of, 148
- Morning Star*, the drifter, blown up, 168
- Morralee, W., 33
- Motagua*, the s.s., 109, 110, 114, 116, 123, 124
- Motor-launches, number of, 266-8; work of, 267
- Mount Temple*, the s.s., sunk, 399
- Möwe*, the German raider, 260, 291, 292; cruises of, 380-415
- Moxey, F. W., 70
- Moxon, Captain W., master of the *Umeta*, 195

- Muckle Flugga, 133, 139, 149  
 Mullings, Captain, master of the *Pinmore*, 418  
 MUNSTER, H.M.S., 154  
 Murray, Captain J. C., master of the *Winlaton*, 22  
 Myggenaes, 139  
 Myles, Captain J., master of the *Diomed*, killed, 30  
  
*Nadine*, the Belgian trawler, 47  
 Nantes, 82  
*Nantes*, the French s.v., sunk, 405  
 Narrows, the, mine-fields, 159  
 NASTURTIUM, H.M.S., 301  
*Natal Transport*, the s.s., sunk, 178  
 Naumann, Major, 315  
*Navahoe*, the American s.s., 119  
 Neal, F., 19  
 Needles, the, 261  
 Neilson, Captain H. E., master of the *British Yeoman*, 419  
 Neilson, Mrs., taken prisoner, 419  
*Nellie Nutten*, the trawler, 278; sunk, 279  
*Neptunian*, the trawler, 250  
*Néréide*, the, case of, 331  
 Nerger, Captain, in command of the *Wolf*, 422; returns to Germany, 434  
*Netherby Hall*, the s.s., 408; attacked by a submarine, 409; sunk, 410  
 Netherlands, the, refusal to admit armed merchantmen, 334  
*Neuralia*, the hospital ship, 292  
 Neustrelitz camp, 403  
 New Zealand, 429; Expeditionary Force, transport of, 89, 90, 95  
*Newland*, the armed trawler, 135  
 Newport News, 391  
 Newton, Captain Harry, master of the *Aaro*, taken prisoner, 340  
 Newton, Captain Robert, master of the *Welbury*, 13  
*Ning Chow*, the s.s., 214  
 Noble, Captain G. A., master of the *Ashmore*, 37  
 Norris, Captain D. T., in command of the *Arlanza*, 122  
 North Hinder Lightship, 248  
 North Island, 429  
 North Sea, 7, 45, 53, 68, 72, 107  
*North Wales*, the s.s., 346; fate of, 347  
 Norway, attitude to armed merchant ships, 244  
 NUBIAN, H.M.S., torpedoed, 284  
*Nugget*, the s.s., sunk, 23  
  
 Nuri Bey, 229  
 NYMPHE, H.M.S., 371  
  
*Oceanic*, the s.s., 123; wrecked, 106  
 ODIN, H.M.S., 423  
*Okhla*, the s.s., sunk, 435  
*Oku*, the trawler, 273  
 Old Head of Kinsale, 25, 42, 49, 65, 197  
 Older, R. C., 303  
 Olive, Captain St. John, master of the *Gadsby*, 14  
 Oliver, Captain W. N., master of the *Clan MacIavish*, 388; taken prisoner, 389; awarded the D.S.C., 390  
 Oliver, Mr., 27  
 Olua Firth, 127  
*Ombra*, the armed yacht, 283, 284  
*Onward*, the trawler, 278; sunk, 279  
 Oppenheim, Mr., on the right of resistance to capture, 332  
*Orange Prince*, the s.s., torpedoed, 188  
*Orcades*, the trawler, sunk, 259  
*Orcoma*, the s.s., 121, 123  
*Orduna*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 22  
 Orfordness, 34  
 Orkneys, the, 261  
*Orlando*, the Swedish s.s., 132  
*Orcnsay*, the s.s., sunk, 367  
*Oropesa*, the s.s., 109, 113, 116, 121, 123; collision with the *Patia*, 137  
*Orotava*, the s.s., 109, 113, 116, 123, 125, 150; damaged, 151  
*Orteric*, the s.s., torpedoed, 196  
*Orvieto*, the mine-layer, 252  
*Oscar II*, the Swedish s.s., collision with the *Patuca*, 129  
*Osprey*, the patrol-vessel, 48  
*Osprey II*, the trawler, 21  
*Osta*, the trawler, 252  
 Ostavine camp, 403  
 Ostend, evacuation of, 86-8  
*Ostrich*, the trawler, 252  
*Otaki*, the s.s., 412; attacked by a submarine, 413; sunk, 413  
 Otranto, Cape, 172; Straits, 165  
*Otter*, the trawler, sunk, 281  
*Otway*, the s.s., 109, 112, 116, 123  
*Our Allies*, the drifter, shelled, 171  
 Outer Silver Pit mine-field, 66, 259  
 Outram, Commander E., master of the *Asiatian*, 122  
 Oversay Island, 120, 301

- Oversea transport, problems of, 75, 79
- Owen, Captain G., master of the *North Wales*, 347
- Oxlade, Lieutenant-Commander C. H., master of the *Patia*, 123
- Pacific, the, 428
- Packe, Captain G., master of the *Governor*, 415
- Paddle-steamers, sent to the Mediterranean, 176
- Page, Second-hand, 70
- Pago, 422
- Palm Branch*, s.s., attacked by a submarine, 363
- Palma, Island of, 388
- Palmer, Captain Walter B., master of the *Arabia*, 357
- Palmer, Lieutenant-Commander E. N., in command of H.M.S. *ODIN*, 423
- Palmer, R. P., 300
- Pantellaria, 175
- Papa Westra Island, 142
- Parslow, Captain Frederick, master of the *Anglo-Californian*, 18; killed, 19
- Parslow, Frederick, awarded the D.S.C., 19
- Pass of Balmaha*, the American s.v., converted into a German raider, 415; see *Secadler*
- Patagonia*, the s.s., torpedoed, 38
- Patia*, the s.s., 109, 113, 114, 116; 121, 123; collision with the *Orcpesa*, 137; damaged, 150
- PATRIOT, H.M.S., 279
- Pattison, Captain Arthur, master of the *Seatonia*, 354; taken prisoner, 354
- Patuca*, the s.s., 109, 116, 119, 123; collision with *Oscar II*, 129
- Paul*, the Belgian s.s., 295
- Paulman, Lieutenant, 406
- Pearce, D., 303
- Pearl*, the armed trawler, attack on U41, 57-9
- Pégou*, the, case of, 331
- Peninsula War, 80
- Pentland Firth, 107
- Perce*, the s.v., attacked by a submarine, 418
- Périère, Arnauld de la, in command of U35, 174, 176
- Pernambuco, 393
- Perseus*, the s.s., sunk, 435
- Persia*, the s.s., 204; torpedoed, 192, 197, 204-15
- Perth*, the s.s., torpedoed, 305
- Peru, 245
- Peter, Lieutenant W. A., 47
- Peterfield, Captain John J., master of the *Cober*, 32
- Peterhead, 277
- Petrel*, the trawler, 289
- Petunia*, the s.s., 346
- Phillimore, Captain V., in command of the *Motagua*, 123
- Phillimore, Rear-Admiral, 69
- Phillips, Skipper, 46
- Philps, Captain W., master of the *Sea Serpent*, killed, 299
- Phabe*, the fishing-trawler, fight with a submarine, 51
- Phrygia*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 299
- Pinnore*, the s.v., captured, 418; sunk, 419
- Piper, W., 32
- Pistoye et Duverdy, *Traité de Prises Maritimes*, 331 note
- Pleasance*, the drifter, 270, 271
- Pleasants*, the drifter, 284
- Pleiades*, the drifter, 270
- Plover*, the tug, 129
- Plymouth Sound, 93
- Pola, 158
- Pola*, the s.s., escapes from a submarine, 184
- Polarine*, American s.s., 144
- Ponto*, the Norwegian s.s., 3
- Poole, William, taken prisoner, 341
- Port Dalhousie*, the s.s., torpedoed, 297
- Port Kembla*, the s.s., sunk, 435
- Port Pantellaria, 341
- Port Rush, 115
- Potomac, army dispatched to, 76
- Potter, Captain R. H., master of the *Scottish Monarch*, 10
- President Stein*, the Belgian trawler, 10
- Preston, Captain L. G., 265
- Price, Captain W. J., master of the *Fabian*, 352; account of the submarine attack, 353
- Price, Lieutenant T. E., in command of the *Quickly*, 62; awarded the D.S.C., 62
- PRINCESS ENA, H.M.S., 18
- Princess Juliana*, the trawler, 132
- Princess Margaret*, the mine-layer, 252
- Prior, T. J., 250; awarded the D.S.M., 251
- Puerto de Mazarron, 179

- Quarry Knowe*, the drifter, 170  
 Quebec, 93  
*Queen*, the s.s., 88 ; sunk, 284  
 Queenstown harbour, 29, 49, 65  
*Quickly*, the armed trawler, attack on a submarine, 60-62  
  
 Race, Cape, 401, 414  
*Radnorshire*, the s.s., 405 ; sunk, 406  
 Raffray, H. L., 369  
*Ramazan*, the transport, sunk, 179  
*Rambler*, the trawler, 62, 64 ;  
   tows the s.v. *Kotka*, 65  
 Ramsgate, raid on, 286  
*Ranza*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 24  
*Rappahannock*, the s.s., sunk, 346  
 Ras Amama, 216  
 Rathlin O'Beirne Island, 125  
 Rattray, Captain H., master of the *Middleton*, 191  
 Rattray Head, 20  
*Rattray Head*, the s.s., 371  
 Read, H. O., 19  
 Reade, Lieutenant-Commander A. H., master of the *Changuinola*, 122  
*Reapwell*, the s.s., sunk, 358, 365  
 Redmond, Captain M. J., master of the *Apollo*, 181  
 Reed, Captain Robert, master of the *Ariadne*, 386  
*Remembrance*, the s.s., 181  
*Rena*, the German s.s., 153  
*Renfrew*, the s.s., sunk, 17  
 Rennie, Commander A., master of the *Virginian*, 123  
 Rennie, John, 31  
*Restore*, the drifter, attacked by a submarine, 166  
*Restivo*, the trawler, 160, 161  
*Re Umberto*, the Italian transport, sunk, 167  
*Rhodanthe*, the s.s., sunk, 412  
 Rich, J. P., 196  
 Richardson, F. A. McGowan, 30 ;  
   awarded the D.S.C., 31  
 Richborough, 85  
 Richmond, Skipper, 64  
*Richmond*, the s.s., sunk, 14  
 Rigg, Commander W. G., 256  
*Rigoletto*, the trawler, 281  
 Rio de Janeiro, 421  
*Rio Tiete*, the s.s., captured, 302  
 Ritchie, Captain D., master of the *Iona*, 13  
*River Clyde*, the s.s., 164  
 Robinson, Captain F. H., master of the *Caucasian*, 15 ; saves his dog, 16 ; awarded the D.S.C., 16 ; master of the *Luz*, 377  
 Robinson, Lieutenant F. W., master of the *Oropesa*, 123  
*Roburn*, the drifter, sunk, 284  
*Roddam*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 342 ; sunk, 343  
*Rodino*, the trawler, 273  
 Rosa, Lieutenant, 433  
 Rose, Commander Hans, in command of U53, 347 ; humanity, 348  
*Rosies*, the drifter, sunk, 170  
 Ross, J. C., 374  
 Rosslare, 47  
*Rothesay*, the s.s., torpedoed, 297  
 Rouen, 82, 85  
*Roumanie*, the s.s., sunk, 34  
 ROYAL ARTHUR, H.M.S., 102  
*Royal Edward*, the transport sunk, 172, 177  
*Royal George*, the transport, 186  
 Royal Naval Motor-Boat Reserve, 266 ; work of the, 266  
*Royal Scot*, the s.s., 129, 130  
*Ruel*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 32, 33 ; sunk, 33  
 Ruhleben camp, 312  
 Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter, on the sinking of the *Persia*, 215  
*Russ*, the Danish s.s., 125  
 Russell, Captain H., master of the *Commodore*, 195  
 Russell, Mr., 350, 362  
*Russell*, the trawler, 252  
 Russian refugees, 87  
 Russo-Japanese War, 80  
 Ruytingen Shoal, 284  
 Ryall, Captain J. R., master of the *Saidieh*, 7  
  
*Sabrina*, the armed yacht, 42  
*Safa-el-Bahr*, the yacht, 173  
*Saidieh*, the s.s., sunk, 6, 7  
 Sailing-ships, demand for, 62 ;  
   number sunk, 63  
*Sailor Prince*, the s.s., sunk, 180  
 St. Abb's Head, 42  
 St. Andrew's Bay, 60  
*St. Cyr*, the trawler, 68  
*St. Elvies*, the paddler, 264  
 St. George's Channel, 25  
 St. Ives, 11  
 St. Kilda, Island of, 34, 51, 57, 124  
 Saint Lucia, 404  
 St. Mar, 34  
 St. Nazaire, 82

- St. Paul Rocks, 412, 418, 421  
*Saint Theodore*, the s.s., captured by the *Möwe*, 402; converted into a German raider and re-named *Geier*, 405; sunk, 410  
 St. Vincent, 392, 412  
*Salmon*, the motor-boat, 280  
*Salonika*, auxiliary patrol at, 164  
*Salybia*, the s.s., sunk, 301  
 San Francisco, 63  
*San Melito*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 32  
*Sanda*, the armed yacht, sunk, 255  
 Santa Cruz, 396  
 Santa Maria, 418  
*Sapphire*, the armed yacht, 42  
 Sasseno Island, 167  
*Saturnia*, the transport, 95  
 Saunders, Captain Harold Crichton, master of the *Wairuna*, 429  
*Saxon*, the armed trawler, 134, 136  
*Saxon Prince*, the s.s., sunk, 397  
 Scapa Flow, 57, 103  
 Scarborough, mine-field off, 68, 259  
 Scarlett, Skipper Laurence, 250; awarded the D.S.C., 251  
*Scawby*, the s.s., sunk, 181  
 Schalvigne, Mr., 319  
 Scheer, Admiral, in command of the High Seas Fleet, 290, 338  
 Schonwenbank Lightship, 311  
 Schraum, Dr., 335  
 Schröder, Admiral von, 313  
 Scillies, the, 32, 42, 346  
*Scotian*, the s.s., armed, 232  
 Scott, Frank, drowned, 112  
 Scott, Lieutenant Grough, 371  
 Scott, Sir William, 330; see Stowell  
*Scottish Monarch*, the s.s., 6; attacked by a submarine, 8, 10; sunk, 11  
*Sea Serpent*, the s.s., sunk, 299  
*Seal*, the trawler, sunk, 281  
*Searanger*, the trawler, 273  
*Seatonia*, the s.s., sunk, 354  
*Secadler*, the German raider (ex-*Pass of Balnaha*), 415; captures ships, 415-21; wrecked, 422  
 Senior, William, *The Master Mariner's Authority*, 329 note  
 Senussi, rising, 173  
 Serbian Army, Auxiliary Patrol assists evacuation of, 167  
 Sergeant, Captain A. H., in command of the *Mount Temple*, 399  
 Serrat, Cape, 340  
*Shackleton*, the trawler, 252  
 Sharp, Captain J. T., master of the *Merganser*, 189  
 Shetland Islands, 59, 106, 107, 116, 403  
 Shewan, Captain W. S., master of the *Gladys Royle*, 416  
 Shields, Captain J. W., master of the *Wordsworth*, 428; taken prisoner, 428  
 Shipping Conference, 63  
 Ships, number sunk, 6, 16, 24, 34, 39, 181, 182, 339, 340, 342, 363, 376  
 Shipwash Lightship, 263  
 Sidero, Cape, 180, 183  
 Sidi Idris, head of the Senussi tribes, 226  
*Simla*, the s.s., torpedoed, 305  
 Simpson, Rear-Admiral, 273  
 Singapore, 431  
*Sir Mark Sykes*, the trawler, 68  
*Sir Richard Audry*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 186; sunk, 187  
 Sizewell buoy, 23  
 Skagerrak, 105  
 Skerryvore, 120  
 Sklydeema, 226  
*Skomvaer*, the Norwegian s.v., 149  
 Slater, Captain W. F., in command of the *Oceanic*, 123  
 Slott, Captain Edwin, master of the *Conch*, killed, 369  
 Smalls, the, 63, 197, 353, 378  
 Smith, Andrew, master of the *Morning*, 148  
 Smith, Commander H., master of the *Oceanic*, 123  
 Smith, Commander H. H., in command of the *Virginian*, 123  
 Smith, Lieutenant Archibald Bisset, master of the *Otaki*, 412; drowned, 413; awarded the V.C., 413  
 Smith, Lieutenant H. P. B., master of the *Hildebrand*, 122  
 Smith, J. C., first engineer of the *Strathnairn*, 8  
 Smith, Dr. Monroe, on the execution of Captain Fryatt, 321  
 Smith, Walter Ernest, account of the torpedoing of the *Persia*, 209-12  
 Smith's Knoll, 45, 46, 69, 70  
 Smyrna, blockade of, 164  
 Snyth, Commander A. H., in command of the *Teutonic*, 123  
*Soldier Prince*, the trawler, 160  
*Somali*, the hospital ship, 97  
 South Ness, 106  
 Southampton, 82, 95

- Southward, Captain H. S., master of the *Clan Macleod*, 192; wounded, 193, 194
- Southwold mine-field, 259
- Spain, attitude to armed merchant ships, 244
- Speedwell*, the trawler, 59; attack on a submarine, 289
- Spencer, Captain A., master of the *Demeterion*, 414
- Spickernell, Acting-Paymaster F. T., 54
- Spotless Prince*, the drifter, 284
- Springband*, the Norwegian s.v., 134
- Spurr, W. F., 297
- Stadlandet, 128
- Stainthorp, Captain I. N., master of the *Horngarth*, 420
- Stanley, Commander N. L., in command of the *Oropesa*, 123
- Stanley Weyman, the armed trawler, 59
- Star of the Empire*, the trawler, 160
- Startin, Admiral James, 275; success of his stratagem, 60-2
- Stately*, the drifter, 270
- Statesman*, the s.s., sunk, 355
- STAUNCH, H.M.S., 130
- Staunton, Commander H. G., master of the *Otway*, 123
- Steel, Captain R., master of the *Hesione*, 39
- Steele, F. F., 26, 28
- Stenhouse, W. J., 33
- Stephano*, the s.s., sunk, 348
- Stephens, Skipper William, 169
- Stevenson, Captain J. F., master of the *Renfrew*, 17
- Stileman, Rear-Admiral Henry, 115
- Stonehouse, Captain A. W., master of the *Inglemoor*, 16
- Storesand*, the Norwegian s.v., sunk, 43
- Stornoway, 126, 145
- Story, Captain Henry, master of the *Ruel*, 33
- Stowell, Dr. Ellery, on the execution of Captain Fryatt, 321
- Stowell, Lord, on the right of resistance to capture, 330; see Scott
- Strade Bianchi, 172
- Strathcarron*, the s.s., torpedoed, 8
- Strathdene*, the s.s., sunk, 348
- Strathklossie*, the trawler, 160
- Strathnavin*, s.s., sunk, 6, 7
- Strathness*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 341, 345
- Strathord*, the trawler, 160
- Stretting, Captain T. H., master of the *Jevington*, 373; taken prisoner, 374; landed at Cape Finisterre, 376
- Suandere river, 159
- Submarine warfare, 1, 163, 165, 166, 172, 247, 338
- Submarines, German, sunk, 55, 254, 271, 274; fight with trawlers, 277-9; raid on fishing-craft, 281; devices, 360; condition of the crews, 366
- Suddes, H. F., 19
- Suez, 96
- Sule Skerry, 143, 260
- Summers, Captain A. H., master of the *Georgic*, 401
- Sunbeam*, the s.v., captured, 18
- Sunday Island, 428
- Sussex*, the French s.s., torpedoed, vi, 303
- Sutherland, Duke of, in command of the *Catania*, 170
- SUTLEJ, H.M.S., at Santa Cruz, 396
- Suvla, evacuation of, 164
- Swain, Skipper Alfred, awarded the D.S.O., 161
- Swan*, the armed trawler, 59
- Swanston, Captain F. J., master of the *Clan Macfarlane*, drowned, 198-200
- Swarbacks Minn, 126, 137, 150
- Swarte Bank mine-field, 66, 260
- Swedish Prince*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 340; sunk, 341
- SWIFT, H.M.S., 106; attacked by a submarine, 107
- Swinemünde, 399, 403
- Sydero Island, 116, 141
- Symns, Lieutenant B. H., master of the *Ambrose*, 122
- Syringa*, the trawler, 160
- Taen Island, 135
- Talbot, E. G., awarded the D.S.M., 10
- Tangistan*, the s.s., sunk, 7
- Tanis*, the s.s., sunk, 189
- Taranaki*, the armed trawler, 54
- Taranto, 165, 166, 170
- Tarbert, Loch, 117
- Taylor, Lieutenant F. H., in command of H.M. Submarine C24, 54; awarded the D.S.C., 55
- Taylor, Captain James A., master of the *Mohacsfield*, 372; taken prisoner, 372
- Taylor, Lieutenant - Commander

- J. W., master of the *Clan Macalister*, 184
- Taylor, Quartermaster T., 299
- Taylor, Captain T. M., master of the *Orduna*, 22
- Tenby Castle*, the armed trawler, 130
- Territorial Force, replace garrisons at Gibraltar, Malta, and Egypt, 89, 91; replace Indian troops, 90, 94, 95, 96
- Teucer*, the s.s., escapes from a submarine, 197
- Teutonium*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 296; sunk, 297
- Teutonic*, the s.s., 106, 109, 112, 113, 114, 116, 123, 128, 133
- The Marchioness*, the s.s., 351
- Themistocles*, the transport, 96
- The Ramsay*, armed boarding steamer, 260
- THESEUS, H.M.S., 102, 106, 107, 108
- Thistle*, the trawler, sunk, 289
- Thomas, Captain Evan, master of the *Lindenhall*, 361
- Thomas, James Parry, 377
- Thompson, Captain David, 342
- Thompson, Captain G. R., master of the *Dunrobin*, 344; awarded the D.S.C., 344
- Thomson, Captain R. F., master of the *Mombassa*, 349
- Thornaby*, the s.s., sunk, 293
- Thornton Ridge, 248
- Thorpwood*, the s.s., sunk, 181
- Three Kings Island, 429
- Thursby, Rear-Admiral Cecil F., 162, 165
- Tibbetts, Captain C., in command of the *Mantua*, 123
- Tielmen, 340
- Tindle, Captain Howard, master of the *Sir Richard Awdry*, 186
- Tintoretto*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 196
- Tirpitz, Grand-Admiral von, *My Memoirs*, 41; resignation, 291
- Tobermory harbour, 120
- Tolitoli, 431
- TORPEDO-BOAT 95, H.M., 43
- Torre vieja, 216
- Torrilla*, the transport, attacked by a submarine, 195
- Tory Island, 351; mine-field, 66, 68, 259
- Toines*, the paddler, mined, 263
- Trader*, the s.s., sunk, 385
- Trafalgar*, the s.s., 179
- Tranter, Captain W., master of the *Tintoretto*, 196
- Traquair*, the s.s., 20
- Trawlers, work of the, 44, 288; armed, 53; submarine warfare, 54, 277; mine-sweeping, 68, 158-72; demand for, 173, 286; sent to the Mediterranean, 173
- Tregantle*, the s.s., 390
- Treneglos*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 187; sunk, 188
- Trevoise Head, 2, 8, 42, 288
- Trewly, Captain G., in command of the *Alsatian*, 122
- Tricase harbour, 170
- Tringa*, the s.s., sunk, 189
- TRIUMPH, H.M.S., sunk, 163, 177
- Tromp*, the s.s., 281
- Trondhjemsfjord*, the Norwegian s.s., attacked by a submarine, 131
- Tronsdale, Commander C. W., in command of the *Andes*, 122
- Tukush Island, 184
- Tunisian*, the s.s., torpedoed, 8
- Tupper, Vice-Admiral Reginald, in command of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, 156
- Turbo*, the oil-tanker, escapes from a submarine, 298
- Turnbull, 312
- Turquoise*, the s.s., sunk, 23
- Turritella*, the s.s. (ex-*Gutenfels*, renamed *Illis*), captured, 422; sunk, 424
- Tuskar, the, 20, 42, 47
- Tyndareus*, the s.s., damaged by mines, 435
- Tyne, the, 276; mine-field, 259
- Tyrwhitt, Commodore, 73
- U3 submarine, 52; U4, 46; U10, sunk, 253, 255; U21, 163, 165, 172; U22, 43; U24, 25, 43; U25, 43; U27, sunk, 43; U33, 43, 172, 308; U34, 43, 127, 172; U35, 43, 172, 174, 372; U38, 10, 43; U39, 17, 43, 172; U40, sunk, 55; U41, 57-9; U44, sunk, 170; U46, 279; U49, sunk, 279; U52, 279; U53, 347; U65, 366; U68, 24; U69, sunk, 279; U74, sunk, 274
- U-BOAT VI, Austrian, sunk, 169; XX, sunk, 171
- UB3, sunk, 163, 253, 254; UB14, 172; UB15, 165; UB26, sunk, 272
- UC-boats, mine-laying, 66, 275; UC5, 247, 250; sunk, 253:



- UC9, sunk, 261; UC10, sunk, 280; UC22, 367, 368; UC32, sunk, 289
- Umata*, the s.s., sunk, 195
- United States*, the Danish s.s., 145
- Urbino*, the s.s., sunk, 39
- Urquhart, Captain P., master of the *Clan Chisholm*, 361; on the submarine attack, 362
- Uruguay, attitude to armed merchant ships, 245
- Ushant, 24, 42
- Valand*, the Swedish s.v., 139-41
- Valdavia*, the hospital ship, 356
- Valentiner, Kapitän-Leutnant Max, awarded the Order pour le Mérite, 197
- Van Stirum*, the transport, attacked by a submarine, 47; sunk, 48, 197
- Vanessa*, the armed yacht, 59
- Vardo, 347
- Varing*, the Swedish s.s., 355
- Vereker, Lieutenant L. G. P., master of the *Ebro*, 122
- Vergaelen, Mr., 319
- Veria*, the s.s., sunk, 196
- VERONICA, H.M.S., 37
- Vibert, Captain F. W., master of the *Mantua*, 123
- Victoria*, the s.s., 88
- Victorian*, the s.s., 123, 128
- Vidonia*, the trawler, 160
- Vigilant*, the Danish s.v., 152
- Viknor*, the s.s., 109, 112, 114, 116, 123; sunk, 147
- Virginia, 390
- Virginian*, the s.s., 109, 112, 113, 116, 123; runs ashore, 121
- Viturgia*, the oiler, 49
- Vivian, Captain G. W., in command of the *Patia*, 123
- Voltaire*, the s.s., sunk, 398
- Vossische Zeitung*, the, 50
- VULCAN, H.M.S., 54
- Wachenfels*, the German s.s.; see *Wolf*
- Waddell, Judge, 391
- Waimana*, the s.s., case of, 243
- Wairuna*, the s.s., 428; sunk, 429
- Wakaya Island, 422
- Walker, Captain, master of the *Mercian*, 183; awarded the D.S.C., 184
- Walker, Captain T. P., in command of the *Ægusa*, 174
- Wallace, Lieutenant-Commander R., master of the *Motagua*, 123
- Walter, Commander F. H., in command of the *Caribbean*, 122; of the *Victorian*, 123
- Ward, Lieutenant R. S., master of the *Orotava*, 123
- Wardle, Captain 153
- Wardle, Commander T. E., in command of the *Alcantara*, 122
- Warman, J., 70
- Warren, Commander A., in command of the *Digby*, 122
- Warrior*, the tug, 65
- WARSPITE, H.M.S., 275
- Watson, T., 143
- Waverny*, the drifter, sunk, 284
- Webster, Captain J., in command of the *Motagua*, 123
- Wedel, Baron Hans Adam von, arrested, 115
- Wehberg, Dr., on the right of defence, 333
- Welbeck*, the trawler, 252
- Welbury*, the s.s., sunk, 13, 14
- Welcome Star*, the drifter, 270
- Weldrich, Lieutenant G. J., master of the *Clan Macnaughton*, 122
- Wellington, Duke of, 80
- Wemyss, Rear-Admiral R. E., 162
- Wessex Territorial Division, transferred to India, 90; transport, of, 94
- West, Sub-Lieutenant E. T., 280
- West Point*, the s.s., sunk, 348
- Westborough, William, 265
- Westburn*, the s.s., 393; captured, 394; used for prisoners, 395; at Santa Cruz, 396; sunk, 396
- Westfjord, 43
- Westward Ho!* the paddle-steamer, 45
- Whistling buoy, 270
- Whitefield*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 34
- White Sea, 67; mine-field, 262
- Wickman, Captain W. S., master of the *Jumna*, 425; taken prisoner, 426-8; extracts from his diary, 431-4
- Wieder, Lieutenant, 316
- Wilhelm Behrens*, the German s.s., captured, 103
- Wilkinson, George, 393
- Willats, Captain X. L., master of the *Radnorshire*, 405; taken prisoner, 406
- William Dawson*, the s.s., blown up, 248

- William T. Lewis*, the s.v., 44  
 Williams, Captain J. R., master of the *Minieh*, 407  
*Willie*, the s.v., sunk, 297  
 Willis, F., drowned, 413  
 Wilson, Captain George, master of the *Strathdene*, 349  
 Wilson, President, protests against the submarine warfare, v  
*Winstaton*, the s.s., 22  
*Winslow*, the American s.v., captured, 429  
 Wintour, Captain Charles T., 107  
 Wireless telegraphy, value of, 148  
 Wolf, Lieutenant-Commander, 405  
 Wolf Rock, 14, 17  
*Wolf*, the German raider (ex-*Wachenfels*), 422; captures ships, 422-35; number of prisoners, 433; at Kiel harbour, 434  
 Wolfe, Captain J. A., master of the *Caria*, 185  
 Wood, H. G. S., 205  
 Wood, J. H., 7  
*Woodfield*, the s.s., attacked by a submarine, 182; sunk, 183  
 Woods, Lieutenant-Commander C. H. M., master of the *Caribbean*, 122  
*Woolwich*, the s.s., sunk, 183  
*Worcestershire*, the s.s., sunk, 435  
*Wordsworth*, the s.s., 427; sunk, 428  
 Worth, Alfred Fulwood, awarded the D.S.M., 414  
 Wrath, Cape, 34, 43, 117, 260  
 Wray, Lieutenant C. M., master of the *Hilary*, 122  
*Wrexham*, the s.s., 308  
 Wylie, Skipper T. C., 272  
 Wynn, Lieutenant, 151, 152  
 Yacht Patrol, 266  
*Yarrowdale*, the s.s., captured by the *Möwe*, 401; sent to Swinemünde, 403; converted into a German raider, 403; sunk, 403  
 Yeats, Captain Ralph, master of the *Author*, 384  
*Yeddo*, the s.s., sunk, 197  
 Young, Commander C. B., in command of the *Andes*, 122  
 Yukanskië, 69  
 Zäpfel, Dr., 313  
 Zeebrugge, 67, 307; port closed, 88; base for U-craft, 247; attack on, 248-50  
 Zembra Island, 189  
*Zent*, the s.s., sunk, 306  
 Zeppelin raid, 44; L19, founders, 296

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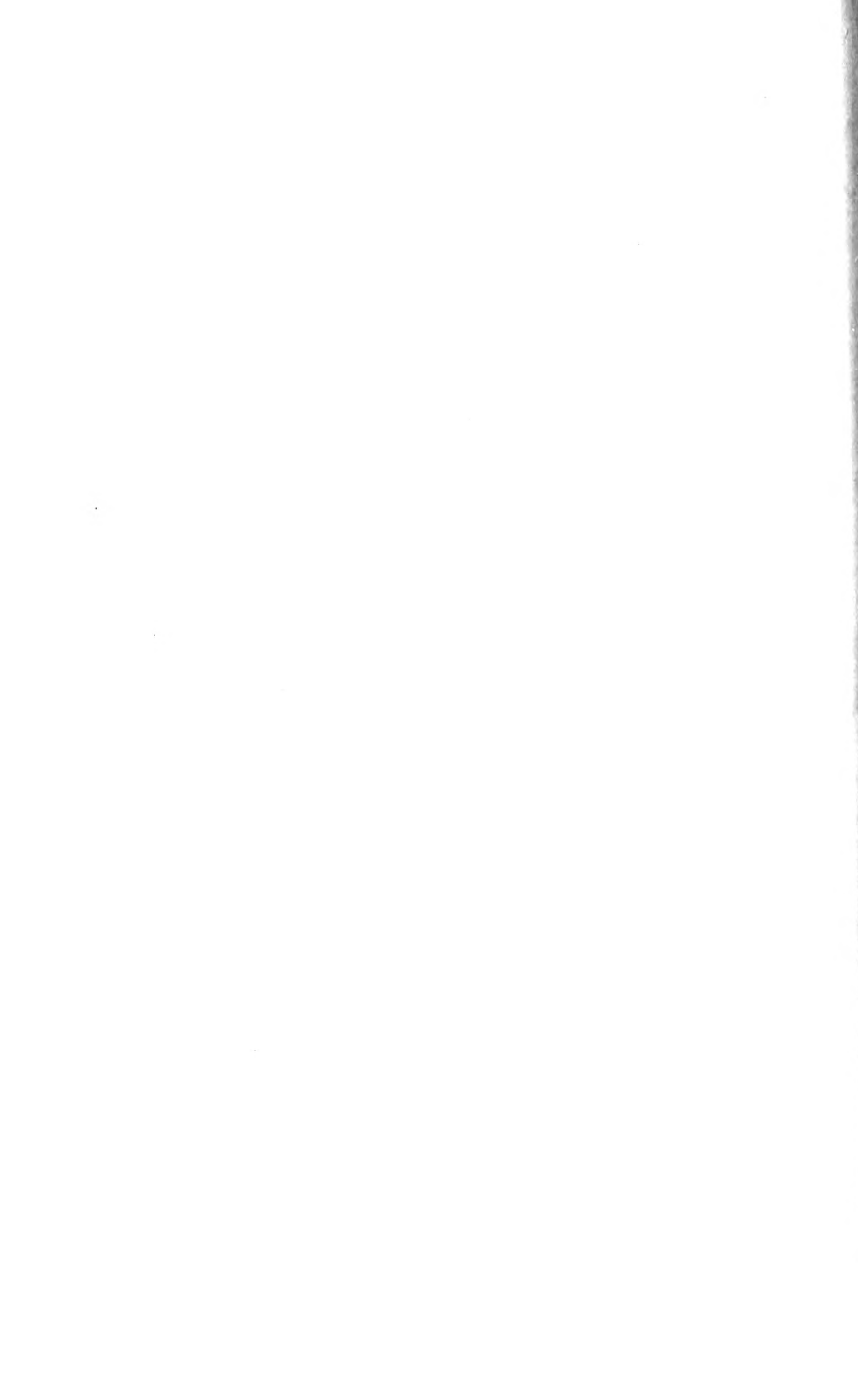
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