UNDER THE PERISCOPE

UNDER THE PERISCOPE

BY

MARK BENNETT
(LATE LIEUT. R.N.R.)

LONDON: 48 PALL MALL
W. COLLINS SONS & CO. LTD.
GLASGOW MELBOURNE AUCKLAND

TO

C. K.

But for whom this book would never have been written.

PREFACE

For those who have no knowledge of the ways and habits of submarines, a preface is unnecessary, and my only hope is that this book may enlighten them on points on which they were formerly in ignorance. One is often asked, 'What does it feel like to be below the sea?' and a host of questions of a similar character, and it is just these questions that I have endeavoured to answer. The incidents recorded are all founded on fact, and many of them are personal experiences.

Of my one-time comrades of the Submarine Service, however, I have a favour to ask. I beg them not to be too critical nor to point out its deficiencies, but rather to remember that this book was written while the War was still with us, and that a large amount of detail had therefore to be omitted.

Moreover, the boat described is of one particular class, and if they themselves have never served in that class of submarine, 'more's the pity.'

All luck to our successors in the next war, and may they fight in the open air.

M. B.

PREFATORY NOTE

Mr Bennett's admirable book tells us of the officers and men of the Submarine Service and of the working of that wonderful vessel, the submarine. The author served throughout the war as an officer in H.M.S. submarine No.——, so that he writes of his own knowledge. Mr Bennett is a professional sailor; when he is not fighting for king and country he is an officer in His Majesty's Mercantile Marine; and yet there is many a professional writer who may envy Mr Bennett's skill in the craft of writing. As a rule, the man who does things is the least capable of writing about them; but when he can write, he is best of all. And of such is Mr Bennett.

The naval architect, when (in a rash moment) he gave the submarine to the Royal Navy, offered a new and a perilous enterprise to the indomitable spirit of the seaman. How that enterprise is achieved, with what courage, endurance, cheerfulness, enthusiasm, with what extraordinary skill,

Mr Bennett tells us with a seamanlike modesty and precision. The task set to the Navy was how to wield a new weapon, an invisible weapon striking with the torpedo. It was not until 1910 that a British submarine went without escort into deep water and proved her capacity to cruise and fight as an independent unit. During the war, we heard a deal of the German submarine, and very little of our own Submarine Service. Mr Bennett narrates the story of one submarine, and in so doing, informs us more vividly and truly than all the official reports can ever inform us.

With the submarine, Germany very nearly defeated the entire British Navy, but not quite. The difference between victory and failure resided not in the submarine, which is machinery, but in the officers and men. Had the positions been reversed: had the British held the German strategical position, had the Germans owned the British Grand Fleet; there would have been very little left of that tremendous armada ere six months were over. The submarine, handled as Mr Bennett describes, has in fact made an end of the old Navy.

PREFATORY NOTE

There is now the Navy that swims, the Navy that flies, and the Navy that dives. These three are one: and into what this triple machine will evolve, none knows. But it is enough to know something of the quality of the officers and men, for these are the masters of the machine.

L. COPE CORNFORD.

LONDON, *April*, 1919.

[*Printed after books were bound.*]

CONTENTS

UNDER THE PERISCOPE

I

We know the ships of Carthage,
We know how history speaks,
We know the Roman galleys,
The triremes of the Greeks.
We know the cogs and frigates,
The privateers and sloops,
We know the line-of-battle ships,
And lofty Spanish poops.

II

We know the great Armada,
We know the ships of Drake,
We know the three-decked wooden walls,
Of Nelson's battle wake.
We know the Super-Dreadnoughts,
We know the cruisers lean;
But, save our foes, speak up, who knows
The British Submarine?

PATROL

His Majesty's Submarine '123' lay alongside her depot ship *Parentis*, her lean, gray superstructure showing up ghostly white against the dark outline of the larger vessel.

The night was warm, though dark and overcast, and the light south-easterly breeze merely ruffled the waters of the harbour, causing a lap-lapping noise between the two vessels, the only sound that broke the intense silence of the summer night.

As the great fleet, anchored in the harbour, swung to the turn of the tide, '123' exposed her broadside, a long low hull bulging outwards at the centre, and supporting the superstructure, on the fore part of which the gun was mounted. Amidships rose the conning-tower and the little bridge, the standard and the two periscopes, pointing up to Heaven like the fingers of an avenging angel.

The after deck was bare save for the dark rings of the hatches, leading down to her steel internals.

The anchored fleet showed up in dark blurs and splotches, as far as the eye could see. Line after line of battleships, battle cruisers, destroyers and torpedo boats, backed up by a host of merchant ships of every type and size.

A light gleamed suddenly from the submarine,

faded away, flashed out, and disappeared. Figures moved quietly along the deck, and the sound of subdued voices rose, broken now and then by the clump of a wet rope's end or the clang of a closing deck locker.

Then the conning-tower hatch opened and Lieut. Commander John Raymond, R.N., in command of H.M. Submarine '123,' rose to view, heaving himself through the narrow opening by painful sections.

He was a big, strongly-built man of about thirty-three, clad in an old—a very old—suit of uniform, a muffler, sea-boots, a pair of binoculars, and his own inborn modesty.

After him came the navigator, an R.N.R. Lieutenant, lovingly clasping the gyro compass repeater to his bosom, and muttering imprecations the while on the coil of electric cable which trailed up after him like a spider's web.

'Phew!' he said, sniffing the air. 'Dark night.'

The captain glanced quickly fore and aft.

'All ready, coxswain?' he queried.

A burly figure now loomed up on the now crowded conning-tower.

'All ready, sir.'

Raymond leant down and pulled a lanyard, and a bell rang below in the control room.

'Sir,' boomed a voice as a face appeared in the circle of the hatch.

'All ready below?'

'All ready, sir.'

'Group down?'[1]

'Grouped down, sir.'

'Let go fore and aft,' cried Raymond to the waiting men on the superstructure.

'All gone, sir.'

At the fore part of the conning-tower a small pedestal rose containing the magnetic compass and steering gear and a number of small switches.

Raymond pressed two of these and a hooter or 'Klaxon Horn' sounded below, a bell rang, and the twin screws began to revolve.

'Astern both it is. Helm amidships.

''Midships, sir,' from the coxswain.

'Keep a look out aft, Boyd,' said Raymond, turning to the navigator.

'Ay, ay, sir,' came the answer, then 'all clear aft, sir.'

'The Klaxon's sounded again.'

'Ahead starboard, astern port. Hard-a-starboard!' snapped Raymond.

'Hard over, sir,' chorused the coxswain.

'123' stopped coming astern, gathered herself together, and then slowly surged ahead and swung round as sedately as a dowager.

'Stop port. Ahead port,' snorted the 'Klaxon.'

''Midships,' from Raymond. 'Steady. Take her out.'

'Take her out, sir.'

The boat steadied on her course and travelled

[1] When in parallel the batteries are said to be 'grouped down'; when in series they are 'grouped up.'

silently down the harbour on her electric motors, carefully picking her way between the dark shapes of the anchored vessels.

Conversation on the bridge was at a premium. Tempers are apt to be short and livers out of order at one o'clock in the morning.

Presently Raymond looked ahead through his binoculars and jerked the bell lanyard impatiently.

'Group up!' he called down the shaft.

'Grouped up, sir,' came the answer.

The subdued churning of the twin screws ceased and as suddenly started with redoubled energy as the batteries came in series, thrashing up the water astern and causing the boat to vibrate fore and aft as she leapt forward to the touch of the grouper switch.

Down in the electric lit interior the L.T.O.[1] and an S.T.[2] were working the motor switches, 'making and breaking' in obedience to the telegraph lights, to which the 'Claxtons' called attention. Right aft in the engine-room the Chief E.R.A.[3] was hovering over the tail shafts with an oil can and a lump of dirty waste, with the air of a demon of the revels.

Forward of him were the air compressors and main motors, and the engine clutches, and then the great eight-cylinder Diesel engines, a mass of burnished steel and brasswork in a narrow electric lit tunnel. The faint hum of the motors and the

[1] Leading Torpedo Man. [2] Engine Room Artificer.
[3] Seaman Torpedo Man.

smell of fuel oil pervaded the air, but the cheery faces of the stokers on watch robbed the scene of its romance.

One of them who was whistling 'Tennessee' three tones flat, and bending over a clutch with a dignified expression, straightened up as a man came down the engine-room hatch.

''Ere, Sam, you remember that gell wot——' he began.

''Strewth,' quoth the new-comer. 'Ain't it got dark sudden?'

'It usually does,' broke in another voice from behind the engine, 'at night-time.'

'No, I don't remember any gall,' replied Sam with some asperity; 'and wot's more, if that clutch ain't ready pretty damn soon, you'll be spoke to.'

'Way down in Tennessee——' continued the worker, ignoring the insult, in a masterly manner.

Through the door in the engine-room bulkhead came the Chief E.R.A. to hurl an insult at a tardy message-bearer, but the hoot of the telegraph sent him diving back to his lair almost immediately.

'Stop 'er,' cried the L.T.O., working the switches to the accompaniment of a hiss and crackle of blue sparks.

'Engines!' came Raymond's voice from above. 'Three hundred revs.!'

'Engines!' shouted Furness, the L.T.O., into the engine-room. 'Three 'undred!'

'The 'Chief' waved a reply, and with a snip of switches the motors started again. Then the

engine clutches came home and the Diesels began to heave with a fizz bump, fizz bump, fizz, fizz, fizz, as the needles of the ammeters came back from discharging, past zero and on to charging.

Once more Hoskins waved a grimy hand and the motor workers broke their switches. She was away on her engines at ten knots now, her exhaust, which had started in oily puffs, rapidly thinning astern to a white semi-transparent vapour.

Into the battery-room at this juncture came the 'Sub' of the boat, an ingenuous youth of nineteen, bearing upon his youthful shoulders as second in command all the anxieties and troubles of the world.

'All right, Furness?' he asked.

'Yessir, she went off very well.'

'Good,' replied Seagrave, looking at the voltmetre on the low-power switchboard. 'Keep the lighting down to a hundred and ten.'

He wandered off under the mess tables, clipped up to the steel ceiling of the compartment to examine the gyro master-compass, a large mushroom-shaped object of steel and electricity, whose rotor buzzed round at the rate of over eight thousand revolutions a minute.

On his left were the electric cooking range, lockers and battery ventilators, and overhead were the great vents which let the air out of the main ballast tanks when the boat dived.

Presently, satisfied with the 'Sperry' compass, he stepped forward through the watertight door

into the control room, a regular holy of holies, on whose shrine were offered many tins of 'Brasso' daily and much elbow grease and bad language by heated and voluble 'matlows.'[1]

Here were the levers which opened the great Kingston valves in the bottom of the boat and flooded the tanks for diving. Here was the adjusting pump, by means of which water could be pumped from any one tank to another and into or from the sea. Aft was the periscope, a long steel tube sticking up through the roof, fitted with an eye-piece and graduated rings at its lower end. On the port side were the hydroplane and diving rudder wheels, and the depth and pressure gauges. Forward was the air manifold, by means of which, on opening the Kingston valves, air could be blown into the tanks at a pressure of over 75 lbs. to the square inch, and so force the water out of them when the captain wished the boat to rise.

In the centre, up through the ceiling, was the conning-tower shaft, gained by a steel ladder, above which was another periscope and the torpedo firing gear.

Another watertight door led into the fore compartment where the battery-ventilating fans were running, and the ceiling was interlaced with the usual profusion of vents and shafts. Right aft an operator was tuning the wireless installation, beyond which were the crew's lockers and the flag racks. On the port side was the chart table

[1] Seamen.

and two bunks, one high up, and the other formed by a drawer, which on being pulled out and stayed up, disclosed the bedding all neatly stowed away. Underfoot, as in the after compartment, was the great hundred-and-twenty volt battery which fed the hungry motors, and forward were the air bottles and fuel tanks.

In the bows were the torpedo-tubes, whose brass doors winked in the electric light, hiding the wicked torpedoes behind their shining faces. A turn of the bow cap and a pull at a lever, and they would be off at forty knots to reap a harvest of death and destruction. Abaft the tubes were spare torpedoes, shining steel cylinders with copper war-heads, holding sufficient T.N.T. to sink a Dreadnought.

The men were moving quietly about their work, the watch below preparing to turn in while the remainder were cleaning and adjusting and getting ready generally for the coming sea trip.

Once out of the harbour, '123' lifted gently to the swell, and with her hydroplanes turned out and all hatches closed, with the exception of that from the conning-tower, was cutting through the water like a great porpoise.

By now the crew had settled down to sea routine, and only the captain, navigator, and coxswain were on the conning-tower bridge, and an occasional seaman or stoker up for a breather or smoke-oh.

Boyd, who had been looking aft intently, lowered his binoculars and glanced at the compass.

'Bearing's on, sir,' he reported. 'Course is fifty-six.'

'All right. Steer fifty-six. That'll do, coxswain. Helmsman to the wheel.

The coxswain was relieved and bustled below, and a young A.B. took the wheel, or rather the electric switch which, by a movement of the finger, altered the direction of the ship's head.

'Wonder if we'll see anything this time,' continued the skipper. 'Fritz doesn't seem to be over-anxious about coming out lately. I never seem to have any luck, but he'll be a nasty customer to tackle if ever we do run across him. He won't give in while he's got a kick left in him.'

'Gets a bit monotonous,' admitted Boyd. 'My brother's in France. Sometimes I wish I were out there too. They do see something of the scrapping at any rate. What gets on my nerves is this constant being on the alert and never seeing anything. If you were told you were to go out and strafe a Hun one wouldn't mind. It's the uncertainty of the business that shakes me.'

'Now, I can't allow you to complain of your lot,' replied Raymond. 'Here you are in one of the latest inventions of the twentieth century, and even that doesn't satisfy you. When you have met George Willie in his little sardine tin you won't be quite so anxious.'

'Two o'clock,' he continued, glancing at his watch. 'We'll dive at half-past five. Call me at a quarter past.'

'All right. I'll stop up till then. No need to wake Seagrave.'

Raymond's legs disappeared down the hatch.

'Call me if you see anything,' he said as he went down, and if you should run across Fritz, man the gun and Hun him instanter. I'll be up before you get the first round off.'

'Very good, sir. Good-night.'

'Good-night.' And the captain vanished below, like a stage demon down a trap.

Left to himself, Boyd lit a pipe, took a look round with the glasses and peered into the compass, where a thin circle of light showed up the figures on its face.

The night was clear now for the clouds had rolled away, but it was still very dark. All round was the dark rim of the horizon, and just below, quite close, was the greedy ocean, lapping up over the superstructure as the boat hurried on. The stars gleamed tranquilly and the night seemed very still.

A queer feeling this, with only the helmsman and the click of the gyro compass for company; like being adrift on the open sea in a small motor-boat. Darkness and the faint chug-chug of the engines leant an eeriness to the situation, and the proximity of the water only added to its intensity. Down through the hatch Boyd could see a small circle of the control room, where a messenger was sitting on a camp-stool reading a penny magazine with evident enjoyment. Above and all around,

nature and solitude; below, men, the smell of cocoa, the engines of death and . . . a penny magazine.

The watch dragged slowly on, and Boyd, seated on the little round stool screwed into the deck, began to feel the chilliness of the dawn. He rose and commenced pacing the 'bridge.'

Not much room to walk here, for the periscope standard rose abaft the conning-tower hatch, and beyond that were the bridge berthing wires. Three steps and turn. Three steps and turn. . . .

Then suddenly a broad white finger of light shot up over the horizon on the port bow, cleaving the darkness with an eerie suddenness.

Boyd rang the bell.

'Tell the captain that a searchlight is visible from the enemy coast,' he called to the messenger in the control room.

A minute's pause, the light wavered, steadied, and went out.

'Captain says all right, sir,' came the voice up the hatch.

'Thank you,' replied Boyd, relighting his pipe and settling down on the stool again.

The boat sped on through the darkness. Somewhere away ahead, as evidenced by that broad beam of light, lay the hostile coast towards which the lean, grim-looking craft was racing as fast as Heaven and Hoskins could make her go.

A brawny stoker rose for a breath of air like some giant seal, and, in deference to the officer, took his stand on the other side of the bridge. He

was followed by the signalman, and the two men lit their pipes and conversed in low tones.

Not much room up here for four men; the little bridge was crowded now.

When they had gone down, Boyd rang the bell again and muttered the magic words, 'food and cocoa,' to the face that appeared in the circle of light below, and presently a hand shot up out of the hatch bearing a steaming mug which he hastily relieved of its burden.

The hand disappeared and returned with a biscuit-tin, and finally vanished altogether.

The dawn was now paling the eastern sky, and the wedge of fore-deck began to take shape and harden as the light gained strength. The faint glow in the compass died out, and the coast ahead became visible: a distant, mountainous country, looking menacing in the struggling dawn.

The navigator pulled out his watch.

'Five o'clock,' he muttered. 'Better get a star sight before diving.'

Telling the helmsman to ring the bell if he saw anything, he went below into the control room, where the thump and bang of the engines smothered all other sounds, and through into the fore compartment, treading lightly and dodging under the hammocks and over the sleeping men stretched out on the deck.

Passing through the long green curtains, he stepped into that space dignified by the high-sounding name of 'Ward Room,' where Seagrave

and Raymond were sleeping, and culling from a drawer his sextant and a watch, returned on deck.

By the time he had taken his sights the dawn was well advanced, and after a careful look round the horizon he once more rang the bell.

'Call the captain and tell him it's five-fifteen, please.'

'Ay, ay, sir.'

Presently Raymond came up and took a long look at the distant coast.

'Well, young feller,' he said, lowering his glasses, 'seen anything?'

'Not so as you'd notice it,' replied Boyd. 'That light only showed up for five minutes or so. I got some sights by the way, as the land's too far off for decent bearings.'

'What you'll suffer from, my lad,' said Raymond with a grin, 'is sextantitis if you carry on as you're doing now. It's a very common complaint among R.N.R. Lieutenants, and comes from the constant habit of taking sights. The patient rises at one in the morning and tries to find his latitude with a hambone and a piece of string.'

'Better to be sure than sorry, anyway,' answered Boyd.

'Well, you brought it on yourself. If you only knew what an effort it costs me to be funny at this hour in the morning you wouldn't ask for it. I tell you it completely defeats me. When we get back I shall have to take a course of something, or drink unpleasant mixtures out of green bottles.'

'If it's whisky you mean I can quite believe

you,' returned Boyd, with his legs down the hatch. 'Well, so she goes. Course fifty-six. Fine weather and no fish.'

'Give Seagrave a shake when you get below,' the skipper called after him. 'Tell him I'm going to dive in ten minutes.'

'Achchha, Sahib,' and Boyd vanished below.

Raymond sat down and lit a pipe, keeping a careful lookout over the oily swell of smooth water. Presently he pressed the telegraph switches and the engines stopped.

'Diving stations!' he ordered. 'Shut off for diving! Lower deck control!'

'Both engine clutches out, sir,' bellowed a voice from below.

'Ay, ay,' returned the skipper, and then turning to the helmsman,—

'Down below,' he added.

The sailor closed the magnetic compass lid and screwed it well home, unshipped the gyro repeater and decamped to continue his task at the steering position in the control room.

Raymond took a final look round, and collecting the spare glasses and all the odd gear about the bridge, clambered down the conning-tower, shutting the lid after him, and screwing the strong back well into position. On the order 'Diving stations,' the scene below had become one of ordered confusion. Every man had his own station and duty to perform, both when diving and rising, and by the time Raymond got below all was ready.

Hoskins, the Chief E.R.A., was at the air manifold, ready to let the air out of the smaller tanks and so admit the water.

The L.T.O. and an S.T. stood by to start the motors, while the remainder were closing battery ventilators, giving a final wrench at a hatch batten, and standing by the great vent valves. Forward the T.I.[1] was fussing over a tube door, while in the engine-room the E.R.A.'s and stokers were saying soothing words to the silent engines.

Over all this Seagrave reigned supreme. This was his 'pidgeon,' and he ran his crew of twenty-three with the capability of a veteran in spite of his youthful appearance.

Boyd sat working out his sights. He didn't come into this part of the business.

'Shut off for diving, sir,' came a voice from the engine-room, and 'All ready, sir,' from Seagrave.

The captain pressed a small switch and the periscope slid upwards till its lower end was at a comfortable height. He applied his eye to it and looked carefully round.

The voice of the musical stoker filtered in from the engine-room,—

> 'Mother takes in wringings-out,
> So does sister Anne.
> Everybody works in our boat,
> But the L.T.O.'

[1] T.I. Torpedo Instructor.

'You shut yer 'ead,' came the answer. 'Pity you ain't got more to do than——'

'Flood 1 and 4,' ordered Raymond.

'Open 1 and 4 Kingstons and 1 and 4 main vents!' shouted Seagrave.

Two stokers wrenched back the Kingston levers, while a couple of seamen reached up and screwed open the vent valves. The coxswain and second coxswains took their stand by the hydroplane and diving rudder wheels.

'Flood 2.'

'Open No. 2 Kingston and No. 2 main vent,' from the 'Sub.'

A hiss and a spurt of water came from the air manifold, and Hoskins looked over his shoulder as he worked at the spindles.

'1 and 4 full, sir,' he reported.

A slight cant forward could now be felt in the boat as the tanks filled and she settled down in the water.

'How is she, coxswain?' asked Raymond with his eye still at the periscope.

'Three degrees by the head, sir.'

'Right. Flood 3.'

'Open No. 3 Kingston and No. 3 main vent. Close 1 and 4 vents!' cried Seagrave.

'Vents closed, sir,' came the reports.

'2 full, sir,' said Hoskins. A pause, and then '3 full, sir,' he added.

'How is she now, coxswain?' asked the captain again.

'Two degrees by the stern, sir.'

'Thank you. Close main vents. Another 500 in the fore trim, Seagrave.'

'Ay, ay, sir; 500 in the fore-trim,' repeated the 'Sub.'

'Horizontal, sir,' from the coxswain.

The needle of the depth-gauge trembled, moved slowly, reached four feet and stopped.

'Four feet,' announced Seagrave.

'That'll do,' replied Raymond. '10,000 in the auxiliary and flood the buoyancy.'

The depth-needle shivered and crept on to 'fifteen.'

'How is she?' asked the captain again.

'Horizontal, sir, fifteen feet,' replied the coxswain.

'Start the motors. Full fields,' ordered Raymond. 'Thirty feet. Take her down.'

The two coxswains spun their wheels forward with eyes glued on the depth-gauge.

The needle moved slowly on. Twenty, twenty-five, twenty-seven feet, it recorded. They were whirling their wheels aft now to check her from going too deep.

Thirty feet, thirty-two, thirty-four the metre registered, and then slowly the needle swung back a little and stopped.

'Thirty feet, sir,' said the coxswain.

'Right. Crack the vents and let me know if she gets heavy,' replied the captain, lowering the periscope. 'Finished diving stations.'

'Everybody works in our boat
But the L.T.O.'

floated forward again

Raymond smiled as he watched the men leaving their posts. A humorist in a boat is worth his weight in gold

The crew dispersed about their various jobs, some to continue their watch in the engine-room or at the wheels, while the watch below turned in their hammocks or stretched out on deck, leaving a courteous gangway to the curtained-off space, anywhere they could find room for a blanket and pillow.

The second coxswain set the diving rudders, spat on his hands, bit off a chunk of tobacco, and retired aft. She would do now, and the coxswain alone could keep her at her depth with the hydroplanes, the great horizontal rudders at the fore-end of the boat that steered her up or down in the same manner as an ordinary vertical rudder steers a surface ship to left or right.

Raymond spent a few minutes satisfying himself that all was well and the helmsman on his course, and then stepped through into the fore-compartment and looked at the chart.

Seagrave and Boyd had both turned in, and in the 'Ward Room' it seemed strangely silent. When on the surface the thump and bang of the Diesels filled the boat, and down below one could always hear the water lapping over the super-

structure, and feel the vibration and general sense of resistance and energy. But now she was submerged there was an intense stillness, a sort of dead stillness, and only the faint hum of the motors indicated that she was under weigh. There was no motion, no vibration, and no feeling of strain or energy. She might have been at anchor in harbour, except that the hatches were closed and the steering chain rattled now and again.

At one moment noise and rushing water, the next, 'Diving stations!' a clang, a hiss or two, and . . . silence.

The men's voices drifted in from the after-compartment, and the clatter of knives and forks indicated that the cook was getting breakfast ready.

After a while Raymond went back to the control room, inhabited now by only the coxswain and helmsman.

'Eighteen feet,' he said.

The coxswain spun his wheel until the depth-needles steadied once more.

'Eighteen feet, sir,' he announced.

At this depth the lowered periscope was just below the surface of the water and still invisible from above. The captain pressed the switch and it slid up to its required height, bringing its upper lens about three feet above the surface, a thin brass cylinder being all that was apparent to any hostile craft.

With his eye to the lens at the lower end,

Raymond obtained a view much like that seen through ordinary binoculars.

As he turned the instrument round he could see the horizon and the wake of the periscope lying astern in creamy bubbles, then the enemy coast about twenty miles away filling the whole of his view to the eastward, then a glimpse of his own hydroplanes, again the horizon and the circle was complete.

Nothing in sight. He lowered the periscope, and giving the order 'thirty feet,' returned to the fore-compartment and sat down by the chart-table with a magazine.

Every ten minutes he went back to the control room, the boat rose to eighteen feet, the periscope was hoisted, and he took his careful survey. Then down to the patrolling depth again and back he went to the silent 'Ward Room' to glance at the chart or anything that would pass the time.

Towards eight o'clock, the cook came forward to ask Raymond what time he wanted breakfast.

'Now,' answered the skipper laconically, picking up the dividers and sticking them into Seagrave's leg, as the cook departed.

The sleeper grunted and turned over.

'Wake up, young feller,' said Raymond. 'Don't you want any breakfast?'

The 'Sub.' sat up and rubbed his eyes.

'Oh, Lord!' he groaned. 'Why can't you leave a chap alone?'

'Come on now; it's good for children, invalids,

and the aged. Shake a leg and let's get that table out.'

Seagrave staggered over to the folding basin.

'As usual,' he grumbled, 'no bally water now, and I can't see out of my eyes till I've had a wash.'

'My goodness, you do look a picture of a promising young officer,' grinned Raymond, 'and let me tell you, you wash far too often. None of the really classy people in submarines ever wash. When I was up the Marmora I didn't wash for a month.'

'Nor since, either, I should imagine,' retorted Seagrave.

'This flippancy in one of tender years is very galling. You don't follow my august example. Look at Boyd, for instance. Gets out of his bunk as if he were going to be Queen of the May.'

Between them they pushed in the lower bunk and hauled out a table flap, on which the meal was laid by the cook, who bore in the eggs and sausages with the air of one who has achieved a culinary triumph.

'Just look at those sausages,' said Seagrave sitting down. 'They look as if they'd spent their palmier days on a cab rank.'

'You've been spoilt,' replied the skipper. 'You've been brought up on Service bangers, and now you think that our best Vienna sausages, provided by me at great personal expense, are beneath you.'

'I'd have been glad enough to see any sort of sausages when I was apprentice in a wind-jammer,'

put in Boyd. 'Cracker hash was what we got. However, I don't blame you. If I felt like you look, I don't think I *could* eat a fried egg.'

'A most appalling example of a youthful officer on his way to the bow-wows,' put in Raymond. 'Eighteen feet.'

The meal over, Seagrave went aft to look at his beloved motors and engines, while the captain and navigator consulted the chart.

'Near enough to the land, I think,' said Raymond; 'we don't know exactly where their mine-fields are. We'll steer an opposite course till noon.'

'Very good, sir. Steer 236 deg., helmsman.'

'236 deg., sir,' came the reply as the wheel went over, and a little later,—

'Course, sir?'

'All "Sir Garnet" in the engine-room,' announced Seagrave, returning from his tour of inspection. 'The batteries are still up to twelve twenty-five.'

Raymond nodded approval.

'That's the sort. Hard-working 'Subs' of boats a pace forward, march! One of our world's workers, but died before attaining maturity. All the same this new battery of ours seems pretty good.'

'What always scares me,' returned the other, 'is shutting down the ventilators for diving. I know I shall forget it some day, and then we'll have chlorine gas in the boat and be as cold as

haddocks in about five minutes, like those poor beggars in "164."'

'The day you feel that coming on, you want to let me know. Suicidal mania is not one of my deficiencies. You let me know beforehand and I'll have you hanged, drawn, and quartered, and bits of you hung round the superstructure as a warning to others of the awful fate of 'Subs' who feel the first symptoms of incipent lunacy approaching.'

'What was it happened to "159" last trip, by the way?' put in Boyd.

'Oh, it wasn't much,' replied Raymond. '"Snatcher" told me about it. They were having tea at about thirty feet when they heard a rumbling stunt. He took her down to eighty feet and stopped there till he had recovered from the fit of nervous prostration into which he had been thrown. Then he went down to a hundred and twenty, took the opportunity of going round and seeing if the boat was right at that depth. When he was satisfied he came up and kept her at forty-five for the rest of the patrol.'

'What was it?' queried Seagrave.

'Seaplane bomb dropped from right above, and only just missed 'em. It was a smooth day, and the pilot must have been able to see the boat easily. The joke was that the stoker P.O., who was off watch at the time, was asleep, with his head against the skin of the hull, and when the bomb went off, the vibration of the boat's side gave him

a lump on the back of the chump as big as an ostrich egg.'

'Interesting and instructive experience,' remarked Boyd. 'Honest Herbert harried by the Hun! That's the reason there wasn't any gin in the boat yesterday. The shock to the nerves must have been too much for them.

'Let the Hun pass,
Though he's an ass.
I warrant he'll prove an excuse for the glass.'

'Yes,' said Seagrave, 'I heard "Bunty" trying to cadge a bottle off the mess-man before we left. But it wasn't any good. He pleaded that they might meet a "U" boat this time, and that after they'd finished her off they wouldn't have anything to celebrate the event in. Then he tried strategy, and told the mess-man that he was positive all the German boats were well supplied, on the off-chance of strafing one of our "E" boats.'

'What did the mess-man say?'

'Said "U" stood for 'Un and "E" for England, and handed him his mess bill, plus extras,' said Seagrave, hoisting himself into the upper bunk.

'Now, just watch me,' grinned Boyd, pushing back the table, 'in my wonderful impersonation of shut-eye Joe, the modern sleeping beauty. Warranted to sleep until the next meal, or, failing that, till Fritz shows us his world-famous tip-and-

run stunt. Bye-bye, good people. Call me when she swings.

Raymond was taking the periscope watch himself, as the others were fully employed on watch-keeping and other duties when on the surface. The morning dragged slowly away without incident, and the land was getting distant now and was barely visible by about eleven o'clock.

It was very still and peaceful once more, and the two off-watch slept the sleep of the just. Occasionally a man passed forward outside the curtains on his way to the lockers, or the sound of voices drifted in from the after compartment. Only the sunlight, visible on the water through the periscope, indicated that it was broad daylight.

Once an electric bell broke the stillness with a persistent clanging which caused Boyd to leap from his bunk and rush off muttering imprecations on the gyro compass. The bell stopped, and presently he reappeared.

Raymond looked an inquiry.

'Only the Count,' explained the other. 'That blessed twenty volt generator cut-out plays tricks every now and again,' and he relapsed into slumber once more.

He was up again at eleven o'clock, however, and telling Raymond that the sun would cross the meridian at a quarter past.

The captain shook his head sadly.

'It's no good,' he groaned. 'I've done my best for you and you don't get any better. I shall

have to humour you or you may become dangerous. However, I'll see what can be done,' and he went to the periscope with the air of a doctor who knows the case is hopeless.

'All right,' he called from the control room. 'We'll rise for it. Too far off the land for bearings. Wake Seagrave. Diving stations!'

Once more the men stood at their posts, and the captain kept his eye at the periscope, while Seagrave superintended and Boyd stood by with his sextant ready.

'Blow 2 and 3,' came the order.

'Open 2 and 3 Kingstons,' cried Seagrave.

The levers were drawn back and there was a faint jar and a rush of compressed air as Hoskins opened the blows and the water was forced out of the tanks

The depth-needle came slowly back to four feet and remained steady.

'2 and 3 out, sir,' said Hoskins.

The captain left the periscope and went up the dark shaft of the conning-tower hatch. Very gingerly he eased the strongback, and there was a rush of escaping air as the pressure was released from the boat.

Seagrave had his eye on the barometer, which had swung round while diving to 'off the map,' and was now rapidly decreasing to the external pressure.

'One inch!' he shouted up the hatch. 'Equal!'

The men could feel the change in the atmosphere

by a tickling sensation in the ears, much like having a drop of water in them. Raymond threw open the hatch and stepped out, followed by Boyd.

Up here the sunlight struck sharply on the eyes. In this trim the boat was half submerged and looked like some water-logged hulk wallowing on the surface. She dripped at every pore, and the calm sea washed sluggishly over her superstructure.

Three minutes later the sun crossed, and they were down again, Raymond closing the hatch behind him as he descended.

'Flood main ballast,' he ordered.

Once more the tanks filled, the Kingstons were closed, and in less than sixty seconds she was down to thirty feet again.

Ten minutes had sufficed for the whole business.

'You're getting a bit thick, Boyd,' grumbled the 'Sub' as they went back to the Ward Room. 'I can't get any sleep at all nowadays, what with your confounded sights and the skipper's blooming energy. Last trip I was just caulking the bunk good-oh when Raymond started a field-day of pasting notices into the pilots. He said the paste wouldn't stick the things unless there was a weight on them, and shoved the whole lot under me in the bunk. I ought to get extra pay for that sort of thing.'

'Now, now, you mustn't get in a state, dearie,' replied Boyd. 'Too much work is making you peevish. Here's lunch. Just try to pick a bit

of chicken, cold one, and you'll rise from the table like a lion refreshed.

'At one time,' said Raymond, sitting down, 'we didn't get much at sea, but in these new boats I always look forward to the trip on account of the change of grub.'

'And yet we growl,' put in Boyd. 'I never met any one at sea yet who hadn't a moan about the food.'

The meal was eaten in shirt sleeves, as the boat was getting rather hot now that the sun was well up, and after the fruit and custard had disappeared Raymond leant back with a yawn.

'Pity we can't smoke,' he said. 'I'm feeling damn tired. You keep a watch on the "perisher"[1] this afternoon, Seagrave.'

'All right. Turn in and trust me to let you know if we bump a "mouldy."[2] I won't forget.'

In the after compartment the mess tables were down and the men were getting outside their meal seated on stools, the deck, or anything that came to hand. The gyro buzzed on one side of them, and the rattle of the steering-gear formed an accompaniment, which, however, did not seem to upset their appetites. Young men mostly, with here and there a grizzled petty officer for leavening, they moved about with that deftness which men acquire who are accustomed to live in confined spaces.

By-and-by, Seagrave went up the control room

[1] Periscope. [2] Torpedo or Mine.

shaft and unscrewed one of the brass ports, disclosing a small circle of thick glass. Through this the water could be seen looking intensely blue, while on glancing up he could see the surface thirty feet above, which appeared like a blue ceiling or a large sheet stretched over the boat.

Occasionally the under side of a piece of driftwood could be seen floating on the surface and the fore-deck, and the gun stood out sharply defined.

The atmosphere was bad up here, as all the foul air drifted upwards, and Seagrave soon screwed back the post and returned to his book in the fore compartment.

Every ten minutes came the monotonous order, 'Eighteen feet,' the periscope was hoisted and lowered, and the boat descended to the thirty-foot level.

Nearly every one was asleep, the heavy atmosphere making them drowsy, and it was very quiet and peaceful, when the second coxswain, who was at the hydroplanes, called out sharply,—

'Getting 'eavy, sir! I can't 'ol 'er up!'

Now, no submarine can descend to an unlimited depth, because the external pressure becomes too great, and below two hundred feet or so they are liable to crush and flatten in like pancakes. Also if she begins to leak owing to excessive depth, water may get to the batteries, whereupon chlorine gas will form and suffocate all hands. Therefore a decent haste is necessary if at any time, owing

to an increase of water in the bilges, the boat becomes heavy and has what is known as 'negative buoyancy.'

Raymond and Seagrave hurried into the control room, the captain giving his orders as he came.

'Start the pump on the auxiliary. Speed up to 500 on the motors.'

The purr of the motors increased, and the adjusting pump added its clack to the subdued noises.

Raymond hoped that the extra speed by giving her more steerage-weigh, and with the hydroplanes 'hard-a-rise,' would bring her up without the tedious necessity of blowing main ballast.

She was going down fast, however. Forty, fifty, sixty, seventy feet the depth-gauge recorded. At seventy-five feet she stopped.

'Stand by the hatches,' cried Seagrave. 'Report any leak at once.'

She rose slowly and Raymond stopped the pump. The coxswain twirled his wheel, and she was bringing up at thirty feet when an avalanche of water came down the conning-tower hatch.

The captain sprang for the ladder through the mass of water and disappeared up the shaft. The flow decreased and stopped, and he reappeared drenched to the skin.

Everybody got very busy suddenly. Nobody seemed to wish to be unduly noticed, and all showed a strange eagerness for work of any sort. The coxswain winked at the helmsman, and that

worthy leant towards the compass with a fixed stare.

'These ruddy hatches!' bellowed Raymond. 'The damned thing came open, and I've only got one shirt in the boat.'

'Here, messenger,' he added, pulling it off, 'take this into the engine-room and get it dried. No water in the battery, is there, Seagrave?'

'No, sir,' replied the 'Sub' with a stony countenance. 'That's the best of these high coamings, and we've got the rubber deck-cloth screwed well down. The batteries are all right.'

'Well, that's a bit of luck, anyway. And now, after that lot, another little drink wouldn't do us any harm. But don't wake Boyd, as we haven't much whisky left.'

The pressure in the boat had slightly lifted the hatch on the catch slipping its socket. Otherwise, owing to the weight of thirty feet of water, it could never have admitted the slightest drop.

'All's well that ends well,' said Raymond, as he raised his glass, 'but that water coming in like that certainly shook me. I didn't think there was so much pressure in the boat.'

'It shook me far more to see you looking like a drowned rat when you came down. This is what is known ashore as "Seeing Life."'

'You keep a look-out with that "perisher," my boy, and don't worry about me. You've got a shirt to wear, and I haven't, unless it's dry before we rise.

Presently they relapsed into silence, and Raymond dropped off to sleep again, while the 'Sub' carried on with the watch.

At four o'clock tea put in an appearance, after which Boyd took his turn at the periscope watch, while the others sat reading.

The wind had been increasing since noon, and the sea was getting up. Looking through the periscope his view was often obscured by the waves, and occasionally they broke right over, shutting out the scene as if a light blue curtain had been flung over the eyes and torn away again.

Even at thirty feet the boat began to roll, and when suddenly a bump was heard forward and a rattle the whole length of the boat, Raymond jumped from his chair, brought her quickly up and glanced ahead.

However, there was nothing to be seen, and he lowered the periscope, the boat descending to the patrol level again.

'What was it?' asked Seagrave.

The other shook his head. 'Don't know. One of the mysteries of the deep. Perhaps a mine that didn't go off. Anyhow you can say so in your letters home. I heard that noise three times in an afternoon when I was in "85" last year. You never can say for certain that it's not the moorings of a mine, so it's always best to be on the look-out if you hear that sort of row. I don't like them knocking to be let in in that way. It's too forward of them altogether.'

'I saw that "U" boat we recovered the other day when I was on leave,' said Boyd. 'She struck a mine end on. Great Scott! she was a sight. The whole bow-cap was blown right off, and they found the bodies of the crew in her when they got her up. Poor beggars. They'd grouped up and put the hydroplanes hard-a-rise before they were snuffed out.'

'Yes,' remarked Raymond. 'I can't say that it gives me any particular pleasure to think of a crowd of Germans in a submarine striking a mine. It brings it too much home to one, as it were, and, after all, they're obeying orders in the same way as we are.'

'It must seem funny,' said Seagrave. 'One minute sitting here reading, and the next, the fore-end blown off and a wall of water flopping in on you. I don't expect you'd know much about it, though.'

'I say, you fellows,' cried Boyd, coming in from the control room. 'There's a hell of a sea getting up. We're in for a wet night. Sea-boots and oil-skins for mine.'

'My usual luck,' said Raymond, fishing in a drawer. 'I always get it rough on the way home. Who's the Jonah?'

'I don't know. Some beggar who hasn't paid for his washing, I suppose. But we're certainly going to get it in the neck.' The rolling of the boat at this depth and the gurgling of the water in the vent pipes was a sufficient warning of the

state of the weather, and they set to work lashing all portable gear in place and preparing for the expected wetting on coming to the surface.'

'We'd better have dinner before we rise, hadn't we?' asked Boyd, struggling into a pair of oilskin trousers. 'Everything will be all over the shop, and I've got some pretty good soup on hand to-night. Main drain loungers and water.'

'Yes. Six-thirty will do,' replied the captain, 'and we'll rise at seven. You might see about it, Seagrave.'

'The 'Sub' departed to the engine-room to confer with his chief minion, and Raymond turned to the navigator.

'We'll put her on the course for home now, I think. We're only about fifteen miles off Fritz's coast as it is, and we shan't make much against this.

'All right. It's just on half-past six now. I'll set the course and then shake dinner up.'

In the engine-room the E.R.A.'s were bustling round the engines, and in the middle of dinner the report came forward, 'Engines ready, sir.' The atmosphere was getting fuggy, and everything seemed sticky, though there was no difficulty in breathing yet.

'We're certainly in for it,' said Raymond. 'We shan't get home before daylight, and I shall let her go slowly most of the time if it's too bad. Now then, ten to seven; shake it up with that cheese, Boyd, and let's get busy.'

A messenger appeared holding a bundle in his hand, which he offered to the captain.

'What the devil's that thing?' demanded Raymond. 'Take it away. I don't want your dish swabs here.'

'It's your shirt, sir,' replied the youth, without a smile.

'That nasty-looking thing?' replied the skipper, seizing it and holding it at arm's length. Just look at the straits I am reduced to. However, it's better than this prickly lammy coat I've been wearing.'

'Seven o'clock, sir,' said Seagrave, looking at his watch.

'Right. Diving stations!' ordered Raymond, struggling into the garment as he hoisted the periscope. Blow 1, 2, and 3 main ballast. Pump three thousand out of the auxiliary.'

'Start the pump on the auxiliary. Open 1, 2, and 3 Kingstons,' shouted the 'Sub.'

Up she came, the depth-needle hurrying back to zero. She was in surface trim now, and, carefully opening the hatch, Raymond, Boyd, and the helmsman, clad in oilskins and sea-boots, clambered on deck, the latter carrying the Sperry repeater.

'One,' shouted the captain down the hatch, as a great spout of white water showed forward. Then later, 'two . . . three. Upper deck control. Open the vents!'

The tanks were out and the air was churning up the sea outside.

Hoskins shut off the blows, and at Seagrave's orders all vents and Kingstons were closed.

'Engines!' bellowed Raymond, 'two fifty revs.'

With a fizz and a bang they were off, the smell of the petrol on starting pervading the bridge in spite of the strong wind.

It was a dirty night. Even a fair-sized vessel would have felt it, and to '123' the sea was dangerously heavy.

The sun had just set, the sky was overcast, and rain was beginning to fall. The north-westerly wind was still increasing in force and raising a sea that caught them just before the beam.

Night fell, bringing pitch darkness and torrents of rain in its wake. The sea was quite steep now, but the wind was steady. Great rollers came out of the darkness, hit the submarine's starboard side, broke over her in a deluge of spray, and vanished again to leeward.

The superstructure was hardly ever out of water, and now and again a sea swept right over the conning-tower, drenching to the skin the unfortunate men who were hanging on for dear life.

About nine o'clock Raymond eased her down to two hundred revs.

'She's not doing much,' he said, turning to Boyd; 'not more than about four knots. Can't afford to smash things up. We'd better get right home, and in this sea we shan't be there before daylight. Tell Seagrave to call me at four o'clock. He's got a charge on of five hundred in series, and

they're getting the air up as well. He'll see to that in the middle watch, though.'

He went below, letting the conning-tower hatch fall behind him, but not quite closing it (for the greedy engines needed air to run on), and prepared to lie down on his bunk.

Down below a sorry spectacle met his eyes. The beam sea was causing the boat to roll very heavily, and it was impossible to stand upright without holding on to something. Not the roll of a liner this, nor yet of a destroyer, but more the motion of a quickly-moving pendulum. Right over to port she would roll and then, without an instant's pause, as far over the other way, bringing down a cloud of books and all sorts of gear that had not been properly lashed up.

Whenever a big sea washed clean over her, showers of spray would come down through the small opening in the conning-tower hatch, and once the chest of drawers took charge and slid over on a man who was attempting to sleep on deck.

Seagrave and Raymond were nearly rolled out of their bunks, and the racing of the screws caused an added vibration. Men in wet oilskins relieved from the wheel came below dripping, and everything began to get thoroughly damp and soggy.

At midnight Seagrave went up to the bridge. On first clambering out of the hatch it seemed as if he were entering a very inferno. Boyd, drenched to the skin, turned over the watch to him and

hurried below, leaving him alone with the helmsman.

It was still pitch dark and blowing very hard. The rain was pouring down, and she was shipping it green fore and aft, but by-and-by he became more accustomed to it and began to wait for the big ones and dodge them instinctively; however, it was rather a nerve-wracking night, and he hailed with great joy the first glimpse of dawn and with it a moderation of wind and sea.

When Raymond came up at four o'clock, the weather was decreasing; the wind was still fresh, but the sea had gone down, and the boat was running more easily.

Seagrave wasted no time in getting below. He inspected the batteries, took the densities, and was between the blankets in less than ten minutes.

As the light gained strength, Raymond could just make out the faint outline of home, and the sea moderated as they approached the shelter of the bay to the northward.

He increased speed, and by seven-thirty they were in smooth water and only ten miles off the harbour.

Boyd clambered up to the bridge to assist Raymond to take her in, while Seagrave buzzed round the motors and saw all in readiness for entering port.

Nearly all the crew who were not on watch were up on deck; crowded on the conning-tower, round the gun, anywhere where they could keep a safe

footing against the now gentle roll and get a breath of fresh air after the trials and stuffy atmosphere of the night below.

Up the hatch came the voice of the cheerful stoker impressing on the signalman that 'he didn't want to lose him, but he thought he ought to go,' as the latter struggled up with his arms full of flags, and, bending on a couple, hoisted them to the yard-arm of the telescopic mast.

'Entrance signal up, sir,' he reported.

'All right,' said Raymond. 'What's that on the starboard bow?'

The signalman clapped his glass to his eye and sucked his teeth.

'British submarine, sir, approaching the harbour from the northward. I think it's "159," sir. She seems to be keeping level.'

Raymond jerked the bell.

'Three fifty revs!' he shouted down the hatch. 'We'll show her what we can do now. We'll make Snatcher look old-fashioned.'

The boat jumped ahead, but although the two submarines were on courses converging to the harbour mouth, she showed no signs of gaining on the wily '159.'

Raymond frowned. Then he rang the bell again and said,—

'Ask the chief E.R.A. to speak to me, please.'

Presently Hoskins appeared, accompanied by his eternal dirty face, cheerful grin, and lump of oily waste.

'Sir?' he queried.

Raymond didn't speak. He merely pointed to the offending craft on the starboard beam.

A light of comprehension dawned on the artificer's face. His grin broadened and he fled below.

Twenty minutes later '123' shot through the harbour-gate a good quarter of a mile ahead of her adversary, and as she passed the piers the captain gave the order 'harbour stations.'

The coxswain took the helm. It was his prerogative, and entering or leaving port none but he was entrusted with the wheel.

The remainder of the crew who could be spared from below fell in and stood at ease on the superstructure, both forward and abaft the conning-tower, under the orders of Seagrave.

As they passed the first of the big ships lying at anchor, the 'Sub' gave a sharp order, and the men came to attention facing towards her, and as the quarter deck drew abeam, Raymond raised his hand in a salute which was answered from the battleship by the officer on the watch.

''Bout turn!' ordered Seagrave, as they passed the next ship, and once more salutes were exchanged.

By now '123' was well up the bay, and the *Parentis* was visible as the boat threaded her way through the crowded harbour.

'Finished harbour stations,' ordered Raymond. 'Stand by to go alongside.'

Then down the conning-tower hatch,—

'Motors, group down! Three hundred!'

'Both engine clutches out, sir,' came the reply. 'Three 'undred, sir.'

The exhaust wavered and died away; there was a pause, and then the faint churning aft indicated that the screws were being turned by the electric motors, which were taking three hundred amperes.

With perfect judgment Raymond manœuvred her astern of the *Parentis*, and '123' slid alongside with barely a foot's clearance.

As she slid by,—

'Stop both!' rapped the captain. 'Group up! Astern both!'

The water bore aft as the propellers checked her way. Heaving lines were thrown fore and aft, '123' thought about it, shuddered, and stopped dead alongside.

'Stop both. Finished with motors. Make fast fore and aft,' called Raymond. 'Is the "Sperry" stopped, Boyd?'

'Yes, sir. I stopped her when we got on the bearing,' replied the navigator.

'Right-oh. Come on the pair of you. Time for a gin and bitters.'

'Clear up below, coxswain,' cried Seagrave, as the gang plank went out; and five minutes later the three officers of H.M. Submarine '123' were in the *Parentis's* ward room clamouring at the top of their voices for gin, bitters, and baths.

THE MOTHERS

I

We knew them in their infancy,
We knew them as our sons;
We loved them for their own dear sakes,
We bade them man the guns.
We knew they'd do their honest best,
We prayed that they might live;
And proud were we the day we gave
The utmost we could give.

II

We saw them go, our cherished ones,
We bade them fond farewell;
And we, the mothers of our sons,
Were left alone . . . in hell.
O Lord, we humbly pray Thee,
Have mercy on the slain;
But most of all, have mercy on,
The women who remain!

EMPTY SADDLES

'CHICAGO high,' announced the Fleet Surgeon of the *Parentis*, throwing the dice on the ward room table.

'One hundred, two hundred, three hundred and sixty-four,' said the Staff Paymaster as he gathered them up. 'Not so dusty, P.M.O., but watch Little Willie.'

'Sixty, sixty-four, sixty-six, seventy-two,' cried the surgeon triumphantly. The worst cut of modern times. Waiter, Mr Ponsonby will provide cocktails.'

'That shakes your wine bill, Pay,' remarked the Engineer Commander. 'Six cocktails makes you sit up and take notice. *And* don't forget that you've got to shake with old "Snatcher" when "159" gets back. He's absolutely undefeated, a regular snatcher of drinks at other people's expense.'

'You're probably speaking from bitter experience, Chief,' asked Blake, one of the submarine captains.

'I am,' replied the Engineer, shaking his head. 'Last time I took him on I got six at "Chicago low," and he lurked me with a possible. I used to think I was a pretty fair hand at cutting, but

I admit that where " 159 " is concerned I've met my Waterloo.'

'By Jove, yes. She ought to be in by now, unless she's had bad weather, which isn't likely. You can usually trust " Snatcher " to sit on the bottom if it comes on to blow. But he ought to be back shortly. I always work it so as to get back in time for a bath before dinner when I'm on the patrol he's got now.'

'Look here, P.M.O.,' protested a voice from the other end of the ward room. 'These people are ordering more gin. In the interests of public health and the Service I appeal to you, as a medical man, to tell them not to, to put your foot down; in a word, to stop it. They're going to start the gramaphone and it's only half-past six, and I can't stand it.'

'It looks to me like an advanced case of alcoholic neuritis,' replied the surgeon gravely, 'for which the only remedy is a prolonged course of ragtime on the gramaphone at eight a.m. It had better work itself out, that is, unless they include me in their disgusting gin debauch, in which case I don't mind prescribing something a little less drastic.'

It was the hour before dinner, when every one congregates for a drink before going below to clean and change, and the *Parentis's* ward room was crowded. It was large as ward rooms go, and furnished in the usual Service style, with maroon leather chairs and sofas, a long table covered

with the green Service cloth, and cases of Encyclopædias and works on Naval history. The walls were adorned with photographs of the various submarines which had been attached to the ship at different times, and formed quite an interesting feature in themselves.

At present the *Parentis* was depot ship to a large number of boats, and as each boat had three officers, the Marine servants were usually kept pretty busy at cocktail time.

Youngish men mostly, the submarine captains would meet at this hour of the day and discuss 'shop' to an extent that maddened the more junior members of the mess. Little scraps of conversation they were, but not without meaning to the uninitiated, and based on the experience of men who sometimes carried their lives in their hands. Periscopes, stern-dives, and the latest class of boat were discussed, coloured with the charm of personal experiences and scraps of idle chaff.

'The 'Subs' of the boats were either junior Lieutenants or senior Sub-Lieutenants. Earnest, talkative youths, very much alive to the responsibilities of their positions, and the burdens attaching thereto, who ordered their drinks with the abandon of those who have done a hard day's work and 'dare do all that may become a man.'

The remainder of the mess was composed of the depot officers: paymaster, surgeon, engineer, and watchkeepers, and the navigators of the submarines. These latter were all Lieutenants of

the Royal Naval Reserve, whose ages ranged anywhere from twenty-three to forty; men from the great steamship lines of the Mercantile Marine, who had answered the country's call at the outbreak of the war.

There was a general buzz of conversation over the room as friends discussed the events of the day and compared notes, before undertaking the more serious business of dinner.

'I say, you fellows,' exclaimed Seagrave to a group of brother 'Subs,' '"159" went to sea without any gin. "Bunty" tried to pull the strings twice, but the mess-man wasn't having any.'

'I know,' chimed in another. 'I went down the boat before she shoved off to try and get a drink out of him, but when I got there the cupboard was bare.'

'By the way, aren't they back yet?'

'Don't think so. You'd hear 'em quick enough if they were. They do seem to be a bit late. Probably strafed a Hun.'

'If they'd done that they'd be back at the double. They hadn't anything to celebrate it with.'

'Can't help their troubles, and if we don't want to be late for dinner we'd better get moving,' and, snatching his cap from a pile on the table, the speaker linked arms with a couple of cronies and waltzed out of the room.

'My opinion,' said the Torpedo Lieutenant to a circle of boat captains gathered round the fire-

place, 'is that you fellows take life too seriously. Look at me. I work all day. I'm a fine figure of a man. . . . Now, then, no rude remarks, please. And I come in here in the evening as merry as a cricket.'

'That's all right,' replied one of his listeners. 'It all depends on one's definition of the word work. You ought to look it up; you'd find it instructive.'

'Your pardon, sir. My labours are long and strenuous. I went down three boats to-day and gave my valuable advice on Mark XX torpedoes. But alas! this is a thankless world. I received recompense in only two. The other boat had lost her corkscrew.'

'Say, Boyd,' cried a voice at the other end of the room, 'how did the gyro behave last trip?'

'A 1. I'm becoming a perfect knut at it. He only rang once. I've come to the conclusion that when you know the elements of its construction, it's as easy as falling off a log. Yes, a cocktail, please, waiter. I had some trouble at first though, but that was my own fault. In fact I composed a song entitled " When the Sperry bell is ringing."'

'Mine's jolly fine now, never makes a murmur,'

'When you're quite finished your harangue on work, a subject on which you are grossly ignorant, Torps, perhaps you will pay a little attention to me.' The voice was Raymond's.

'Now, tell me why. Why am I to listen to your fatuous and narrow-minded remarks on a topic

that is not only entirely distasteful to me at all times, but altogether beyond the pale at this hour of the evening.'

'My fatuous remark, as you are pleased to call it, was about to take the form of asking you to have a gin with me, but seeing that——'

'Kamerad, kamerad. I apologise—for once you talk as a Christian should. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend him your ears. He's going to do the decent. I can feel it coming on.'

'At one time, in my palmy days, when I was your age, said Raymond, raising his glass, 'I could go a whole pint of beer without swallowing. But now—— It's a bit 'ard. Cheer-oh, everybody.'

In the train of the drinks came the Marine servants bearing the table-cloths and silver, and a general move was made for the door.

'This,' said the Torpedo Lieutenant as he foraged for his cap, 'is what I joined the Navy for. To dine and meditate with friends. . . . Damn it, Pay, you've pinched my bonnet.'

. . . . . .

Private Boon, R.M.L.I., knocked at his master's door.

'Mr Blake, sir. 'Alf-past seven. Your bath's ready, sir.'

The sleeper awoke, yawned, and threw one pyjama-clad leg over the bunk board.

'All right. I'll be out in a minute,' he grunted.

The private withdrew and Blake turned over and looked at his watch.

'Um,' he groaned. 'Better hurry up, I suppose, or some one will pinch my bath.'

As he slipped on a dressing-gown, a photograph on the table caught his eye.

'Wonder if "159" has got back yet,' he mused, as he made his way down the corridor. 'Ought to be in by now,' and he disappeared into the bathroom, where sounds of splashing and 'Miserere' in a deep bass shortly issued.

On his return he found the private of Marines busy in his room.

'Is "159" back yet, Boon?' he asked.

'Not yet, sir. I've got Mr Shelldon's room ready for 'im. But they ain't back yet, sir.'

A vague uneasiness crept over Blake. What was 'Snatcher' doing that he was twelve hours overdue?

'Oh, rubbish,' he told himself as he began dressing, 'I expect he's been delayed some way or other. Engines broken down or something.'

'Yes, boiled eggs in ten minutes' time, Boon, not too hard, please.'

Breakfast in the *Parentis* was not what would be called a cheery meal. Conversation was not encouraged, and hilarity of any sort met with frowning disapproval. The sober-minded read newspapers, while their less literary brethren kept their mouths shut except for the necessity of admitting food.

When the more senior members of the mess had got to the first pipe stage, the 'Subs' departed

to muster their crews, and the navigators drifted off to odd jobs. The captains of boats congregated round the fireplace and discussed plans for the day, while the doctor censored letters and the Staff Paymaster busied himself with the wine books. Gradually the groups broke up and the Marines began tidying the room for the morning.

In the early hours—at six o'clock to be exact—the ship's company had been fallen in by the officer of the watch, and under the eagle eye of the First Lieutenant had scrubbed the decks and cleaned the brass till the *Parentis* shone like a new pin. Alongside her, four on one side and five on the other, were her charges, the submarines, at present in a state of ordered chaos due to work of an extensive and all embracing character.

At eight o'clock the crew, mustered in their boats by their respective 'Subs,' were told off for the labours of the day, and by five minutes past were all hard at it. The E.R.A.'s were busying themselves in their engine-rooms and the electrical ratings on various jobs that came within their sphere, while the remainder were cleaning all brass and steelwork and were kept at it by the vigilant 'Subs.'

Navigators were correcting charts and cleaning gyro compasses, and now and again the captains would dodge below to superintend, or two or three of them would hang round a periscope or a torpedo-tube arguing a knotty point or demonstrating the correctness of their theories.

It was a fine warm day, and the *Parentis* looked like a hen in a gilded coop with her chicks clustered about her. All round her lay the Fleet; picket boats danced across from ship to ship, the sound of a Marine band drifted over from a neighbouring battleship, and the buzz of work rose on the air.

The officer of the watch, resplendent with a sword-belt and telescope, walked the quarter-deck, keeping a general eye on everything that took place. The quartermaster, corporal of the watch, and messengers hung round the gangway, and even the distant bridge was a scene of activity, where a gray-haired yeoman of signals harried his signal staff round the gaudy flag lockers.

Forward an R.N.R. Lieutenant was drilling the boys' division at physical exercise, and down below the submarine attack 'teacher' was being kept busily employed.

A picket-boat approached the gangway. The midshipman who was steering held up four fingers and laid them on his coat-sleeve, and as she swung alongside the gangway party formed up. A tall, erect figure stepped out of the boat, the bos'n's mate shrilled on his pipe, the quarter-deck came to attention, and the officer of the watch saluted. A Post Captain had come aboard.

The boys' division fell out and gave place to a squad under torpedo instruction; the Marine detachment paraded, and then the bugle sounded 'Stand easy.'

Men came up out of the boats to snatch a smoke

during the ten minutes' respite; or laid aside their brass rags and departed to the mess decks. Ten minutes blessed relief before 'Carry on' sounded by the diminutive Marine bugler sent them back to their tasks.

Later, the Captain of the depot held his court for defaulters. Then 'cooks' was sounded, the rum was served out, and at eight bells, noon, came the welcome dinner call.

Up over the side came the crews, followed in a more dignified manner by the officers, who dived below to their rooms, to wash and don a clean monkey-jacket for lunch.

Blake came up out of his boat, fully expecting to see '159' in her accustomed berth, and it was with quite a shock that he realised that she had not yet returned. It was with a presentiment of something seriously amiss that he presently took his seat at the luncheon-table.

The same feeling seemed to express itself in the others' faces, but this might be only his imagination. No one spoke of '159,' in fact they all seemed to leave her severely alone. But there was a general feeling in the air that all was not well, and it seemed evident, though no word was actually spoken, that everybody fully realised the fact that she was now sixteen hours late, and a boat that is sixteen hours overdue in war-time . . . well, things *may* have happened.

Once he made a casual remark to his neighbour on the matter. His answer was merely a nod

between mouthfuls, so he dropped the subject and said no more about it.

But for all that, he was becoming convinced that something had taken place . . . out there. 'Snatcher' Shelldon and he had been friends since their *Britannia* days. His surroundings looked unfamiliar and a sickening anxiety came over him. 'How could the others go on eating when perhaps? . . .'

He pulled himself together and made a pretence at a meal. 'Mustn't give way to morbid imaginings,' he told himself.

The meal over he sat apart and tried to collect his thoughts and enumerate various minor mishaps that might have delayed the boat. No, he could think of none that would account for it under the circumstances.

At one-thirty work was resumed, and he plunged into a fever of exertion to take his thoughts off the subject. He made up his mind he wouldn't come on deck before four o'clock, when work ceased for the day, and then either the sight of '159' would dispel all doubts or else he had no more to hope for.

But at four o'clock, when the hands were piped to tea, there was still no news, and shortly after 'evening quarters' two destroyers slipped quietly out of the harbour. Those who noticed their departure thought nothing of it at the time, and only wondered why the Captain's temper seemed the worse for wear.

By dinner time it was evident that every one in the mess was awake to the fact that a boat was missing, and in fine weather, too. Nobody mentioned her; they all kept studiously off the subject, but the conversation was subdued and everybody's nerves seemed slightly on edge. Many of them had friends among the absent officers, and no one liked to voice the general opinion, although it would have been a relief if some one had.

It was not a cheery meal, and they were all glad when it was over.

Thus it was left to Private Boon to rush in where angels feared to tread.

'That's three of 'em less to lay for,' he said.

. . . . . .

Two days later the captain of the depot sat alone in his after-cabin.

He was bending over the writing-table, surrounded by envelopes, paper, and accessories, but his thoughts did not seem to flow. He sat staring in front of him with unseeing eyes and chewing the end of his pen.

At last he sighed and addressed himself to his task. Three letters he was writing, to anxious women who were waiting and hoping beyond hope, two wives and a lonely mother, to tell them that they might hope no longer. This kindly old gentleman was compiling the missives which were to bring anguish and sorrow to the hearts of those who waited.

They were more than junior officers to him.

One was the son of an old comrade and the others had served long under his command. To them he had been, no doubt, rather a terrifying person with four gold stripes on his sleeve, but to him, they were his boys; he had been through it all himself, he was training them, and he was proud of them. Above all came the Service, and he had trained them for the good of the Service. A kindly word now and again and a sharp reprimand when needed had been the secret of his successes, and beneath his gruff exterior he had a warm feeling towards them. Now he had lost them and his work was to do over again.

His hand was about to bring grief unspeakable to their dearest and . . .

He finished his letters; the few kindly, sympathetic words that were to be almost death-blows on the morrow, and as he raised his head from the table and glanced into the mirror he saw the face of a tired old man.

. . . . . .

Blake picked up the photograph and held it close to the electric light. As he studied the honest face it depicted, his memory flew back to the *Britannia* days when Shelldon and he had started their careers. They had been the same term and had gone through all their early trials and tribulations together. Later, 'Snatcher' had spent one or two holidays with him, and years afterwards the friendship had been cemented by his engagement to Blake's sister.

He remembered the wedding, and how as best man he had put in one of the hardest day's work in his life. He smiled as he recalled his friend's delight when first he had been promoted to captain of a boat, and he put down the photograph and sighed.

'It seemed so cold-blooded. To go out and just disappear. No trace, nothing. Blown to pieces on a mine probably. He could picture the scene. The men quietly reading and talking and then suddenly a blinding crash and nothing more. If some one could only have seen them. But the two destroyers that went in search had only found a patch of oil. Just went out and disappeared. And Molly . . .'

A knock sounded at the door.

'Come in,' he called, hastily stowing the photograph away.

Raymond entered with an air of studied indifference.

'Hope you're not busy, old man,' he said with forced gaiety.

'No, no. I'm not doing anything. Come in.'

'Good. I wanted to know if you would lend me your T.I. to-morrow. Mine's gone sick and I've got a job of work on hand I want finished.'

'Yes, of course, you can. Take him and bless you. I'll send a chit to my "Sub" about it.'

Raymond hovered with the door-knob in his hand, opened his mouth to speak, thought better of it, and left quietly.

Out in the flat, he faced his friend's cabin, and raising his fists in the air, called Heaven to witness.

'Oh, Bloody War!' he exclaimed.

. . . . . .

'As a general rule, mind you, I don't 'old with off'cers, but 'e was a gentleman.'

The speaker spat over the side to emphasise his point, and relapsed into silence.

The lower deck sat round in small knots and coteries and smoked for the most part without unnecessary speech. The pipes were going, the evening was dark and still, and the lower deck was in a contemplative mood.

'Yes,' continued the Seaman Gunner, ''im and 'is mates was gentlemen.'

'Pal o' mine, Mick 'Ardy, was in 'er,' quoth the S.T. 'Fust trip in a submarine, too. Out fer trainin'. 'Ard I calls it.'

'Strewth,' said a voice out of the darkness, 'we was on 'er patrol last trip. Bit o' luck we didn't come a kisser.'

'It was that,' put in the signalman. 'We're doo out to-morrow.'

Once more silence. Three bells struck and a bugle sounded from a distant battleship.

'I'd like to know wot 'appened,' said the voice out of the darkness. 'Struck a mine likely. When I come into submarines, my old woman she sez to me——'

'Stow it,' growled the Seaman Gunner. 'Only

the other day, 'e sez, "'Bout time," 'e sez, "you went up for Leading Seaman. I want to see you gettin' a 'ead. I'll 'elp you through," 'e sez.'

'Wot I think,' said the Stoker, 'is, strike me pink. If I don't pulverise the first ruddy 'Un I meets, Gawd strike me pink.'

'Pipe down,' shrilled the bos'n's mate.

. . . . . .

Private Boon was busy. He stood in his shirt-sleeves in the midst of a chaos of his own making.

Outside the cabin was a sea-chest of generous proportions, and in the bunk he had placed a tin uniform case, a helmet case, and divers bags and portmanteaux.

He was a careful packer, but his methods were unique. He liked to see things round him, and after the manner of an inquisitive terrier, he began to strip the drawers of their contents and strew garments high and low. The table, the chairs, and the bunk was soon piled high, and when the last drawer gaped void and empty he surveyed his handiwork with the eye of a connoisseur.

But he showed himself a past master of the art when he began packing the uniforms in the tin case. Every article was carefully shaken, brushed and folded, and reverently placed in its appointed spot. This portion of his labours completed, he dealt with the sea-chest, and by that time the collection round the cabin had materially decreased.

Having finished the clothes at last, he turned to the more personal objects, scrutinising each one before finally disposing of it.

'Ash tray, silver too,' he soliloquised. 'Give 'im by a girl likely. 'Air brushes, monogram an' all. Nice bit o' work. Books, letters, fountain pen. I think that's the lot.'

His eye caught a small silver frame standing on the table forlorn and forgotten.

''Ullo, photograph.' He held it to the light. 'Nice-looking young woman, *and* a kid. Might be 'is Missis. P'raps it is, poor gell!'

He locked the cases and looked round the cabin.

'Nothin' forgot. No. I think that's all this time.'

With much laboured breathing he wrote the owner's name and address, and, carefully tacking the card on the lid of the sea-chest, stood back to admire the result.

'Effects of the Late Lieutenant Shelldon, R.N.——'

Through the open port the sound of an order floated, and the churning of twin screws. It was '147' going to sea.

. . . . . .

A Sub-Lieutenant and a Midshipman stood on the quarter-deck of a neighbouring battleship.

Said the 'Sub,' aged twenty, to the 'Snotty,' aged nineteen, 'I bearded the Commander in his den to-day, and flopped in my application.'

'Did you? What did he say?' inquired the Midshipman.

'Look out, he's over there. Said it was all right and he'd see the Captain about it to-morrow.'

'You lucky beggar. I wish I could get in, but they won't take us "Snotties."'

'Perhaps you'll get in when you're my age,' returned the bearder of Commanders patronisingly.

'By gum, yes. I hope so. I've always wanted to be in a submarine, ever since the Marmora business.' He gazed across at the *Parentis*. 'Look, there's one of them going to sea. Can you see which she is?

The 'Sub' shaded his eyes.

'"147," I think. Billings is in her. He's my term, and he got in without much trouble. I ought to get it in two months or so with any luck.'

'That'll mean drinks all round then, that's one comfort,' said the Midshipman enviously.

'Oh, I shan't mind standing drinks once I've got it. Man, you're practically your own boss there. Think of it, no school or bally drills. You're not treated as a child like you are here.'

'I don't know about that. That picket-boat job I had yesterday wasn't much of a joke.'

A signalman came through the screen door and approached the Commander, who was conferring with the Boatswain on the other side of the quarter-deck.

'Signal, sir,' he reported.

The Commander looked round impatiently.

'Well, what is it? Read it out.'

'Flag, General, sir. From two to three p.m. Colours will be 'alf mast owing to the loss of Submarine " 159."'

'All right. Show it to the Officer of the Watch. Now, about that new manilla, Mr Bostock . . .'

The signalman saluted and carried on.

THE BOGIE-MAN

I

'Oh, mother dear, was that a whale?' the baby porpoise said.
'Now, hush, my Little Beautiful, it's time you were in bed.'
'Or, mother, could it be a shark that gave me such a fright,
Or was it just a phantasy that passes with the night?

II

'Now, hush, my Little Beautiful. If you don't go to sleep,
I'll have to call the Bogie-Man, the Bogie of the Deep.
Be good, or he will swallow you; his teeth are sharp and keen,
He's here, he's there, he's everywhere. That grisly Submarine!

'EXERCISE ATTACKS'

It has already been pointed out that breakfast in the *Parentis* was a meal of Spartan severity. Moreover, the breakfasters were divided into three distinct classes. During the remainder of the day the members of these different orders descended to the level of the common herd and were as other men. But when the fateful hour of eight a.m. came round again, they picked up the broken threads of their lives, and for one brief hour held chillily aloof from those of other and (according to the point of view) less distinguished bodies.

The most elevated of these orders consisted of those few habitually early risers, who, having shaved and bathed at the grisly hour of 7.15, loomed heavily into the ward room with severe countenances and majestic mien, each a procession in himself. In sepulchral tones they ordered eggs, and taking up a strategic position with their backs to the fire, produced books from their pockets and read in heavy silence, with one eye cocked doorwards whence breakfast would appear.

On the arrival of food they took their seats in awful majesty, nodded to one another across the table, and attacked their eggs without further preamble. The actions of the noble-minded of

this earth are often mysteries to its more humble inhabitants. But *Conscia mens recti* may do these things and prosper.

To arrest public attention, man must be eccentric, but even greatness has its penalties, and of these the discomfort attendant on eccentricity is by no means one of the least.

Consequently the second, and by far the most numerous, school of breakfasters, comprised the 'plebs' or rabble, who drifted in at any time between eight-twenty and a quarter to nine, having risen and dressed with decorum, and at the hour when a normal Christian should.

Its adherents held a brighter view of life; occasionally they spoke, and rumour whispered that once in the dim ages, far back in the twilight of history, a member of this low caste has even been known to laugh!

The third and last clan, which was very popular with certain members of the mess, rivalled in fame its more ascetic brethren who aspired to be 'healthy, wealthy, and wise.' Its devotees, having remained in bed until the last minute, fled in terror to the bathroom, visions of pyjamas and flying towels, and presently burst wild-eyed into the mess, still buttoning their monkey jackets about them. In panic-stricken tones they ordered food and (if the table had not already been cleared) fell upon the viands in the manner of drowning men to whom help had come when hope had been foregone.

For the remainder of the forenoon the ward

room would be filled with the bitter complaints of the less fortunate of these late-comers. Complaints to the effect that 'they never could get any breakfast in this wretched ship,' and of the futility and feebleness of the calls given them by their respective Marine servants.

A new member coming to the mess grasped the situation at his first meal, and felt it a point of unwritten law and honour to continue membership in whichever body chance had happened to place him. He resented those who altered their morning habits and broke through the magic circle, and showed his displeasure by word or look, according to the traditions of the body to which he belonged.

Thus it was that Raymond, who was a member of the 'plebs,' having risen unusually early, was met with severe and threatening looks as he took his seat at the table. The fluttering in the dovecotes was barely stilled when, horror, another intruder arrived on the scene of mastication. As if this were not sufficient outrage in itself, the breakers of the peace seemed in good humour with the world and actually dared to talk! With frigid looks the early risers hastily finished their meal and retired with ruffled dignity.

One only remained whose curiosity had got the better of his wounded feelings. For a while he listened to what the others were saying in the hopes of obtaining a clue to the mystery without having to resort to the self-abasement of asking

questions, but as nothing was spoken of that would help him in that direction he was forced to swallow his pride. Presently he looked up from the book he was pretending to read and grunted with disgust.

'Up early,' he began, nodding at Raymond.

'Yes,' replied that worthy brightly. 'Practice attacks.'

The curious one sat up and took professional notice.

'One of the world's workers this morning, eh? Who's giving you a run?'

'Jenkins, here. His T.B.'s alongside now, so I asked him to come aboard and have a drop of breakfast with me.'

'Now I come to think of it, I heard Jinks's falsetto when I was in my bath. He made rather a mess of coming alongside, I thought, and I suppose he was mentioning it to any one who cared to listen to him.'

'Made a mess of it, be blowed!' cried the irate Jenkins. 'You try a combination of tide, and a fool at the wheel at seven in the morning, and then you'll realise what I've had to put up with.'

'I have, my lad, I have. My heart went out to you when I heard the bump. There ought to be an addition made to the lists of "summary punishments," entitling outraged "Lieutenants-in-command" to seize all helm offenders and cast them instantly into chains.'

'Blame the Kaiser, he's the cause of the trouble,' returned the Torpedo Boat captain sadly. 'I'm

well stocked with "hostility only" people, who never smelt salt water before they sold their farms and came to sea. You wouldn't believe some of the weird stories I could tell you. Did you ever hear about my gray paint?'

'I heard some of the most extraordinary rumours. What actually happened?'

'Oh, it was chronic. Burton, my Number One, was nearly a raving lunatic over it, and hasn't been the same man since. It quite broke the poor chap down. He'd been trying to mix the right shade for days, and thought he really had hit on it at last. It was all mixed in a whopping great tub ready for slapping on in the morning, and the whole bally lot disappeared during the night.'

'Great Scott! What the devil happened to it?'

'Prepare for a shock and I'll break it to you gently. It had been dumped, jettisoned, thrown over the side, mark you, by an "'ostility only" bloke wot thort it was dirty water, sir, please!'

'My poor old Jinks. No wonder he wears a careworn look.'

'All very well for you to laugh, Austin, but it's these little things that are the bane of one's existence in the destroyer trade. Upsets of this sort and submarines are about on a par with one another.'

'We ought to be ready by now,' said Raymond, rising and going over to the scuttle. 'Seagrave has been up since dewy dawn getting ready. Yes,' he continued, looking over his shoulder, 'he seems to be having a high old time of it by himself, and

by the looks of things we're all ready when you are.'

'Right-oh. I shove off at eight-thirty, don't I?'

'I haven't had a "dummy run" for ages,' grumbled Austin. 'The owner thinks I'm so proficient I don't need any more, I expect.'

'Oh, no, my friend,' laughed Raymond. 'You're not his blue-eyed boy by a long chalk. It's common knowledge that you made such a fiasco of your last one that he doesn't like to trust you again.'

'Maybe, maybe,' replied Austin amiably. (He was one of the best submarine officers in the depot.) 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. . . . What's the stunt to-day, anyway?'

'Just the usual. Jinks goes out at eight-thirty and buzzes about in a ten mile area. I follow when I've digested my food, dive when he least expects it, and attack him in his little sardine tin by short sharp rushes. I shall then be crowned with laurel leaves, which, with my accustomed modesty, I shall refuse to wear.'

'That's open to question. Last time Jinks gave me a run I couldn't get anywhere near him. How many "fish" are you going to fire?'

'Probably four, I think. It depends whether it's worth while. You see, I've got that patent bow-cap, and as I have to flood all four tubes together, I might as well get rid of the "fish."'

'That always seems to me to be a rummy arrangement. Personally I can't see much advantage in it. Do you find it any good?'

'It's handy in one way. If you miss with your first shot, your other tubes are ready for another go.'

'My dear good chap, you must not be such a Hun. You'll have to curb these desires for hate. Why should you want to rain " fish " on unfortunate beggars in that way?'

'Time's up,' said the Torpedo Boat captain, pushing his chair back. 'I'll get off now. What's the betting I spot you?'

'Cocktails when we get back,' Raymond called after him.

'I'll take you,' said Jenkins, putting his head in through the ward room door. 'I've got a wonderful eye for spotting periscopes.'

'Mine is the " perisher " you will *not* spot,' replied Raymond with dignity. 'Not if you try ever so. Not if you try with both hands, you won't.'

'The youth bores me,' sighed Jenkins, and fled as the *Naval Annual* banged up against the bulkhead.

He made his way down the flat, where the Marine sentry stood at stolid attention, and glimpses could be had, through open doors, of those who wrestled manfully with collars, and the air was rent with shrill cries and splashings from the bathroom. Messengers and officers' servants were bustling about, and there was a general air of early morning energy. At the end of the flat, he stepped up the companion and emerged on the quarterdeck, where he gravely raised his hand to the salute.

'Hallo, Jinks!' cried a being, whose sword-belt and telescope proclaimed him the Officer of the Watch; 'I was surprised to find your packet alongside when I took over at eight o'clock. What's the game?'

'I'm giving Raymond a run, and as I'm short of torpedo-lifting gear, I got permission to come alongside and take some in before shoving out of the harbour.

'I see. What time are you shoving off though, because "147" will be back in half an hour's time and she'll want your berth alongside the trot[1]?'

'Don't you worry. I'm off now. If you'd taken careful stock of me you'd have seen the business-like look in my eye.'

'That'll be all right then. Good luck. When are you coming aboard to dine with us, by the way?'

'Any old time when I'm free will suit me.'

'Well, come to-night, then. Dinner's at seven-thirty. Cheer-oh.'

H.M. Torpedo Boat *Zero* lay alongside the outer submarine, and Jenkins had to clamber over the boats to reach his command. Four boats there were, with just a thin plank thrown from one to the other as a means of passage, and it required a little skilful manœuvring to get across in safety. As he made his way over he caught glimpses of their internals down the open hatches, heads

[1] Several submarines secured alongside each other to the depot ship.

bobbed round the conning-towers, and snatches of song rose from the depths. Some of the crew of the outer boat were exchanging insults with the *Zero's* men alongside, but at sight of Jenkins they resumed their work with unaccustomed zeal.

The *Zero* was old, very old, and quite unlovely, but according to her captain, 'she had her points.' What these points were no one had ever discovered, for all inquiries were met with the reply that 'if they couldn't see them for themselves, he (the captain) was certainly not going to the trouble of pointing them out for their (the inquirer's) instruction.' She was small and uncomfortable and resembled an overgrown motor-launch with a whale-back fo'c'sle. Also she was wet in a sea way, and her internal arrangements were not of the most convenient. Nevertheless she was a command, and in her captain's eye she had no blemish. Later, when he had four stripes on his sleeve, and commanded a battleship, he would look back on her and study her photographs with amusement and a little sorrow, but now, he was very serious about her and very touchy about criticisms. No man dared speak lightly of her since the awful day when 'Snatcher' Shelldon had referred to her as 'a lady of doubtful age.' The result had been terrific, and from that day nobody had openly questioned the *Zero* or her capabilities.

As he stepped aboard, Burton, the R.N.R. First Lieutenant, met him and saluted.

'All ready, sir,' he reported.

'Very good, we'll shove off at once,' said Jenkins. "123" will follow us in half an hour, so we haven't got too much time. Stand by to let the lines go.'

He picked his way along the deck, past the two torpedo tubes, and the twelve-pounder guns, and up the ladder to the bridge. Here was no 'big ship' routine, for the *Zero* only carried two officers and just sufficient hands for the efficiency of the ship, and the helmsman and a signal boy were in sole charge of the bridge. It was not an extensive structure, and consisted of a wheelhouse and chart-room amidships, fronted with glass and affording some protection against wind and rain, and two wings thrown out to the vessel's sides.

Just below the fore-part amidship was a twelve-pounder gun, and beyond the whole back stretched to the razor bow. She was not much to look at, but she could still do her twenty-two knots and a bit over if called upon, without unduly straining herself or her twin engines.

Jenkins gave an order and the lines were thrown off fore and aft. Then the engines began to move and the *Zero* slid quietly astern. Aboard the submarine alongside heads appeared from the hatches, and a parting insult was cast in an undertone at an able seaman who was coiling down a line.

Slowly she cleared the sterns of the *Parentis* and her satellites, swung round, came ahead, and steadied on her course out of the harbour.

The fine weather still held and it was a lovely

morning. The Fleet looked majestic and awe-inspiring, and as the Torpedo Boat slipped past a mammoth Dreadnought, an outsider comparing the two might have been struck with the versatility of the Navy's work. Big ships or little, all were marined by the same class of seamen, who never knew from one day to another in what class or size of ship they might be required to carry out their duties.

The *Zero* picked her way between the vessels, Jenkins training his glass on each as she went by. Here the ship's company were running round the decks to the strains of a lively tune played by the Marine Band, there detachments were parading and squads under gunnery instruction. The Church pendant flown by a third ship indicated that the crew were at prayers, and divisions were mustering to the strains of a bugle call on a fourth. Signals were being hoisted, semaphores were busily waving their arms, and picket boats and trawlers dotted the open spaces between the vessels. It was 'The Fleet,' and accustomed to it as he was, the sight sent a thrill through him as he took in the scene.

As they cleared the gate and headed for the open sea Burton came up to the bridge.

'Fine weather for us, sir,' he remarked, picking up a pair of binoculars. Light breeze and very nearly a flat calm.

'It is. Raymond will have to be pretty cunning if he's going to get his attacks in unseen to-day.

The best weather for him is when there is just a slight lop on the water. In a calm like this we ought to see the "feather" of his old "look-stick"[1] without much difficulty.'

'Personally, I haven't had much practice at picking up periscopes, and it never seems to me to be as easy as it sounds.'

'Does take a bit of practice certainly, but with a little—— Hallo, what's that over there?'

'"147" returning,' he continued, lowering his glasses. Not more than six or seven miles off either. That shows you how hard it is to see 'em even when they're on the surface. What's the time?'

'Ten to nine, sir,' said Burton, glancing at his watch.

'We'd better whack her up to twenty knots then, and we'll start a zig-zag at once to exercise the helmsman. Raymond will be out any minute now. We're going to manœuvre anywhere in this area,' he added, with his finger on the chart, 'so we ought to be able to see him dive.

The Torpedo Boat slid through the water with an easy motion. The weather was clear, and here outside the harbour the sea was nearly smooth, and the razor fore-foot cut a great sheaf of water away on either bow as her engines worked up to top speed. Her gun-screws were closed up and her look-outs posted. A large red flag was hoisted at the yard-arm and every eye was kept glued on

[1] Periscope.

the harbour mouth, watching for the first sight of '123' on her way out.

Every five minutes Jenkins altered the course, edging her gradually out to sea until the harbour was left about ten miles astern. Arrived there, the *Zero* ran up and down parallel to the land, waiting for her foe to appear.

Presently the signal boy lowered his glass sharply and reported, '" 123 " coming out, sir.'

Away over the entrance a small smudge showed up, which the glasses revealed as Raymond's submarine doing her best on her gas engines. Her bridge-screen was down and all appeared to be ready for diving.

'All right,' said Jenkins, after carefully inspecting her. 'Keep an eye on her and let me know when she dives.'

Up went the telescope again, while the *Zero* continued her hurried beat. Then down came the glass, and 'Diving, sir,' the boy announced.

Away over on the starboard hand '147,' who had seen the red flag and knew its meaning, hauled up to the Northward to approach the harbour by a roundabout route and leave the Channel clear for her submerged sister. Not a sign of Raymond's boat could now be seen, and the game of 'touch' began in earnest.

The *Zero* had to get back into harbour, while '123' would exert every effort to torpedo her. It was like looking for a poisoned needle in a bundle of hay, and one realised what it is like when hostile

submarines with real live torpedoes are in one's vicinity. Then, it occurred to Jenkins, there was always the chance of something going seriously wrong with Raymond's boat, and he might run her down unknowingly. Well, that was up to her captain, and he must look out for himself. Although he had given practice-attacks to many submarines, the Torpedo Boat captain could never overcome an uneasy feeling when his 'enemy' had dived. He couldn't see them, they were away under water, and if the attack were not made as soon as he expected it, doubts would come over him as to whether all were well below. Was anything the matter, and ought he to stop, buoy the spot, and return to harbour and report it? Then when he was getting really anxious the submarine would rise or fire at him, and he would have to call himself a fool for his doubts and fears. He was getting over it now, but he still felt the anxiety if, for any reason, an attack were unusually prolonged. Standing now in a wing of the bridge with his binoculars glued to his eyes, he scanned every inch of the water within a two miles' radius. On the other side Burton was similarly employed, and look-outs in all parts of the ship were doing their best with their naked eyes.

The helm was put over, and, always edging towards the distant harbour, the *Zero* dodged and turned and retraced her tracks to the skipper's orders. She pirouetted like a debutante, and it seemed as if she fully appreciated the fact that,

all the while, somewhere beneath her, '123' an enemy for the moment, was watching and waiting the opportunity to fire her torpedoes at her. The sun shone brightly and danced on the wavelets as they advanced to meet her. Occasionally a light spray kissed her in passing, and the harbour and 'home' drew nearer and more acceptable. Away ahead a gull circled and flew down to the wave tops, hovered an instant, wheeled up, and finally fluttered slowly down as if seeking something.

Jenkins brought his glass down with a bang.

'Hard-a-port!' he cried. 'There she is! Quarter of a mile off, four points on the port bow.'

The *Zero* swung round in her own length, but even as she turned two glittering objects showed up in the water, leaving white streaks behind them and approaching her at a prodigious speed.

'Steady!' shouted Jenkins. 'Watch the torpedoes! Stop her!'

One 'fish' passed well astern while the other barely grazed under her counter. Five hundred yards farther on they broke surface, and the red-painted collision heads bobbed up and down in silent mockery.

'Away gig!' piped the quarter-master, as Burton came tumbling down the ladder. Two seamen jumped into the boat while the others lowered her to the water, where on the tables being unhooked she towed alongside by her painter, which was made fast from the *Zero's* fo'c'sle. The man in

the stern-sheets grasped the tiller and sheered her out, for the Torpedo Boat had not lost way yet and was still going through the water at a good five knots. Then quietly he eased in again, and the remainder of the crew dropped into the boat followed by the T.I. and Burton.

'Ready!' cried the latter, as he took his seat. 'Let go, for'ard. Way together!'

As she sheered out, the Torpedo Boat slid swiftly past her. When all was clear, her engines churned astern and she gradually lost her weigh and came to a standstill.

All this time Jenkins could see no sign of the submarine, which had evidently retired to a discreet depth after firing the 'mouldies.' Nothing was to be seen of her as he looked all round in the proximity of his vessel. Then suddenly he realised with a shock that she was there, had risen just behind him within a biscuit's throw, bobbed up like a Jack-in-the-Box, in fact. True, she was deep in the water but her whole superstructure was above surface, and as she lay there apparently deserted she put him in mind of some monster of the deep thrown up by an underwater explosion. Presently the conning-tower hatch opened and Raymond and the helmsman appeared. A moment or two passed, an order was given, and she slid quietly alongside, within hailing distance.

'Saw you!' shouted Jenkins triumphantly. 'I spotted the periscope on my port bow and put the helm hard-a-port just in time!'

'Saw me, eh!' Raymond bellowed back. 'For how long?'

'Only about a half a minute. Just when you had the "look-stick" up the last time. When you fired, it must have been. You bore about sou'-west as near as I could get it. I was afraid it was too late and you were going to get your shot in.

'I rather thought I should get you that time. How did the "fish" run?'

'Very well. A good straight run, but they seemed to me to be a bit deep. What depth did you have them set at?'

'Sixteen feet. Best to be on the safe side. That makes sure of them going well underneath you if I get a good shot in, and leaves a margin in case they rise a bit. I don't want to damage 'em if I can help it.'

'No, of course not. Do you want another run?'

'Yes, please. I'd like to get rid of the other two fish now we're on the job. Same speed zig-zag will do me nicely.

'Right-oh. I'm picking up your torpedoes now. If you sheer off at once, by the time I get 'em aboard you'll be far enough away to dive. I'll get out to sea again to the limit of the area.'

'All right. Thanks very much. But I shall be some time, so don't shake things too much. I'm pumping out the tubes so as to go through the whole show again for the benefit of the crew. I

haven't had any attacks for some time and there are some new hands in the boat.

'Never mind!' bawled Jenkins, waving the megaphone in adieux. 'I'll steam out slowly and give you plenty of time. Cheer-oh.'

Meanwhile the gig had pulled quickly to the nearer of the two torpedoes. The war-heads, with their great charges of T.N.T., had been removed the night before and the harmless collision or peace-heads substituted. Other slight adjustments had also been made in order to make them sufficiently buoyant, to control their speed and the depth and distance they should run, and now they bobbed on the surface in a perpendicular position, spouting water and pointing their noses to the skies.

As they drew alongside the first of them the T.I. grabbed at the wire grummet fixed to the head, and passed the end of a line through it. The torpedo was then pulled gently forward by the boat's crew until the expert could reach and force back the starting lever, rendering harmless her knife-edge propellers. Then off they pulled for the other, the 'mouldy' touring astern and bobbing after them.

Presently they had them both fast, and rowed gently back to the *Zero*, Burton and the T.I. holding the towing lines well apart to prevent them banging against one another and injuring themselves.

Arrived alongside under the out-swung torpedo davit, the boat was made fast and a line passed

over the propellers of the inboard 'fish.' Its other end was thrown aboard, and the *Zero's* men clapped on to the nose and tail ropes and lifted her bodily out of the water. Then the T.I. passed a thin steel band round the body of the torpedo at its point of balance, screwed in a shackle, hooked on the davit runner, and all was ready.

'Hoist away!' cried Burton from the stern sheets.

The torpedo crept quietly up the *Zero's* side, the men guiding her as she rose. When she cleared the deck level, the davit was swung round and she was gently lowered on to the wooden chocks prepared to receive her. The second torpedo followed, and all but two of the boat's crew came aboard, the coxswain and the bow oar remaining to get her inboard. She was pulled under the davits, hooked on, and as her dripping keel rose out of the water, Jenkins put the telegraphs ahead and the *Zero* was under weigh again.

Before the gig was up the T.I. was fussing round the recovered torpedo like a hen round a long-lost chicken, putting on tail clamps, draining the engines, and generally seeing to their needs.

As Burton went up to the bridge, after seeing the boat in, '123,' who was now about a mile away, slowly disappeared from sight.

First of all she settled down bodily in the water until her superstructure was awash. Slowly her decks submerged, leaving only her gun and conning-tower visible. Then as she sank deeper, her

periscope's standard sticking out of the water was the only evidence of her existence. The standard vanished, and through binoculars the periscope alone could be seen, leaving a thin wake behind it. Then that, too, disappeared, and there was no longer anything to tell the watchers that '123' had ever existed.

Down in her internals the crew was at diving-stations ready for the next attack. In the fore-end, where Seagrave was in charge of the torpedo tubes, the electric light winked and shimmered on the round copper doors. The T.I. and two seamen were busy with valves and levers, and the sound of a pump rose above the hissing of escaping air. Raymond was in the control room, by the periscope, and Boyd stood by, ready to record every course and bearing on the chart and carry out any special orders the captain might give.

She had dived to thirty feet as a preliminary canter in order to get well clear of the Torpedo Boat, before showing her periscope, and now, at an order from Raymond, the two coxswains slowly brought her up. Very gingerly the captain raised the instrument, took a quick glance round, and lowered it again.

'Thirty feet,' he ordered. 'Course 20 deg., Boyd. *Zero* bearing 120 deg. We'll let her get well out to sea again and have another smack at her on her way back.'

'All ready for'ard, sir,' said Seagrave, coming aft. 'We haven't had a great deal of practice in

the fore-end lately, but that new man seems to understand his job. I've drained the tubes, so that we can go through the whole routine again.'

'Very good. I'll let you know in plenty of time. We've got to get old Jinks this journey, remember. He mustn't be allowed to crow twice. Up periscope,' he added to the able seaman who was controlling the movements of the 'look-stick' so that the captain might be free to make his observations.

'All right,' he continued, finishing his brief survey. 'Carry on for'ard. Jinks has turned back now. Keep her at eighteen feet, coxswain.'

Another rapid glance a few minutes later showed him what he was waiting for, and as the periscope came down he prepared for the attack.

'Alter course to 175 deg., bearing 160 deg.,' he called out. 'Speed up 500. Flood the tubes.'

'Flood the tubes,' repeated Boyd along the tunnel of the boat, and 'flood the tubes' came back from Seagrave in the fore-end.

Round the tube doors a buzz of preparation took place. Before opening the bow-cap and exposing the outboard doors at the farther end, through which the torpedoes would presently be launched by compressed air, the tubes had to be filled with water. It was necessary to flood them from the water already in the fore-trimming tank, because if outside water were allowed to enter the boat the extra weight would put her down by the head and seriously upset her trim, probably even rendering an attack impossible.

Then, when the tubes were flooded, the bow-cap could be swung, and on the order to fire compressed air would hurl the torpedoes from their cages, the trippers would engage and force back the starting levers as they slid out, and they would be away from the mark at forty knots.

'Open the drains and vents!' cried Seagrave. 'Air on the fore trim line!'

Away aft in the control room Hoskins worked at a spindle on the air manifold, and a rumbling and gurgling indicated that water was being blown from the tank up into the tubes.

Seagrave and the T.I. were watching the gauges as the level slowly rose. Up, up it came, and as the thin bubble line reached the top, a spurt of water shot out from the vents.

'Shut off drains and blows,' cried the 'Sub.' 'Close the vents!'

The tubes were now full, and with a few turns of a wheel he forced the great bow-cap for'ard off its seating. Then with his foot on a shining brass pedal, with a single heave of a lever, he swung the whole mass round till the indicator showed that the open doors were in line with the tubes. Something fell into place with a click, the cap was worked back on to its seating, and the torpedoes were free for their mission.

'Charge firing tanks' was the next order, and as the air sighed and soughed through the pipes, 'All ready for'ard, sir!' he shouted.

'Ay, ay,' answered Raymond, with his eye at the

periscope. 'Bearing of *Zero* 165 deg. What's her depth?'

'Eighteen feet, sir.'

'Right. Down periscope.'

Boyd was working furiously at his chart, laying off the bearings and courses and making notes of the orders given for future reference. All this would be gone through afterwards in ward room and cabin, and it was best to be well prepared.

Up went the periscope again. The men in the control room guessed they were nearing the moment of attack and steadied themselves in readiness.

'Bearing 170 deg. What's her depth?'

'Sixteen feet. sir.'

'Keep her down, man. Don't let her break surface. Down with her,' said Raymond sharply.

The coxswains worked frantically and took her down to twenty feet. Then up once more and the periscope raised a mere few inches.

'Bearing 175 deg. Full fields. Stand by!' shouted Raymond, and down came the periscope again.

The motors eased down as the fields were increased by the torpedo ratings working at the motor-boards in the after compartment. Boyd dropped his notebook and stood by the firing gear.

'Deflection's twenty, sir,' he said.

'Open "stand by" valves,' cried Seagrave. 'Open the cocks on the firing line.' A minute's quick glance round, then 'ready, sir.'

The periscope went up a few inches. Raymond

was bending down almost on his back now in his efforts to show above water as little of his 'look-stick' as possible.

'Port ten,' he ordered. 'Keep her at her depth. Steady the helm. Starboard five. Steady again. . . . Fire!'

Boyd wrenched down the firing levers, and the boat shuddered through all her frames as the torpedoes were hauled forward. There was a great soughing of air as the firing tanks recharged, the coxswains spun their wheels to counteract the loss of weight, and down came the periscope.

'Eighty feet,' said Raymond, rubbing his eyes.

. . . . . .

The *Zero* had turned her head out to sea for the second attack. Jenkins had carefully marked the spot where the submarine had dived and felt fairly confident of picking up the periscope a second time. Burton also was beginning to alter his opinion about the difficulty of spotting a periscope. Perhaps it was easier than he had thought it. True, he hadn't seen it last time, but then he was looking out on the other side of the ship and couldn't be expected to have picked it up.

He crossed over to where the captain was standing

'How far are we going out, sir?' he asked.

'About the same distance, but we'll keep her at this speed till we turn round for the run. Raymond wants to do some fancy work or other to train his crew.

'Very good, sir. I expect he was pretty sick at missing us last time. He thinks he's rather a knut at attacks, doesn't he?'

'Oh, he doesn't mind,' laughed the other. 'It won't worry him, he's one of the best. And don't run away with the idea that he won't get us, because his blood's up now, and it would be hard to find a better submarine officer when he really means business. How does the lighthouse bear?'

'About another three miles to go,' replied Burton, peering along the azimuth ring.

'We'll carry on like this for another quarter of an hour then before we turn round. Warn the look-outs when we start the run.'

The Torpedo Boat steamed on at about twelve knots to the limit of the area. Her red flag warned all intruders of the nature of her errand, and any passing craft gave a wide berth to the region in which she was working.

Presently Burton looked into the compass again and announced that she had reached the turning-point. The *Zero* swung round on the course for home, and Jenkins bent over the chart.

'Here we are,' he said, marking the spot with a pencil, 'and Raymond dived there. I expect he'll attack us about four miles this side of the harbour. Our course is 270 deg. Whack her up to full speed and start a zig-zag.'

The telegraph clanged, and the helmsman put his wheel over at an order from Burton. The *Zero* jumped ahead and began on her erratic run for

home. Scarcely a ripple moved the surface of the water now that the light wind had dropped, and the odds were strongly in favour of their spotting the periscope long before Raymond could get into a position favourable enough to fire his torpedoes.

With her slender bow slicing up a narrow trench of water the Torpedo Boat raced on, turning and zig-zagging to the slightest touch of the helm. Once Jenkins thought he saw the submarine and gave a sharp order, but it proved to be nothing, and he countermanded it immediately. Then Burton thought he saw her, and after that he saw periscopes everywhere where there were none to be seen. A haunted feeling came over him, and he thanked his stars it was not an enemy boat that was after them. It seemed rather hopeless trying to find her after all.

But Jenkins, the veteran, thought otherwise. He had done this job on many occasions, and rather fancied himself at bowling out his submarine friends, and as they approached the suspected area he lowered his glasses and took a final glance at the chart.

'Keep a good look-out now,' he shouted to the watching men. 'Starboard bow probably.'

It seemed impossible that a submarine could approach the little craft and remain undetected. A dozen men were on the alert scanning every inch of the surface in the vicinity of the vessel, and those on the bridge kept their glasses sweeping in all directions. Now that the moment had

arrived, an expectant hush fell on the watchers, and each strained his eyes for the first sight of the slightest 'feather' or other indication of the enemy's presence. Even the unnatural behaviour of a gull called for attention, for the wily birds can see and give warning of a periscope long before the human eye can detect it. It was like a game of hide-and-seek, and the look-outs experienced the feelings of a stranger stumbling along in the dark, knowing that somewhere round the corner his enemy is waiting to stick a knife in his back.

The expected danger-spot was reached, every eye on the alert. Over went the helm, they were through it; it was passed and the tension relaxed.

Still there was no sign from the depths, and Jenkins slowly lowered his glass again.

'He's missed us, I think,' he said. 'We must have given him the slip.

'A bit too quick for him,' remarked Burton complacently.

Save for themselves the ocean seemed untenanted, and there lay the harbour a bare two miles ahead.

'Don't crow till you're out of the wood, though,' went on the skipper. 'He may have us yet.'

Then suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, his eye caught a glint in the water.

'Hard-a-starboard!' he snapped. 'Over with it!'

Too late! A flash of white and creamy bubbles told where one torpedo had rushed across the bow. The other shot clean under the Torpedo

Boat, was lost for an instant, and reappeared on the other side like an arrow from a bow. Two cables away they broke surface, and the red peace-heads bobbed up and down as witnesses of the attack.

'Got us, by Jove!' roared Jenkins. 'A beautiful shot! Steady the helm! Stop her!'

Still there was no sign of '123,' and with her engines going astern the *Zero* gradually lost her weigh and came to a standstill.

The boat was called away and Burton despatched to retrieve the spent torpedoes, and presently a dark wedge-shaped object pushed up above the surface and revealed itself as the submarine's persicope standard. The bridge, the gun, and finally the superstructure appeared, and she was up from the eighty foot dive which she had undertaken to increase the realism of the attack. An enemy who had seen the torpedoes on their mission would have taken the warning and cast about for his assailant, if he had not been blown to a better world.

She lay on the surface about half a mile off, menacing and silent. The figures were seen moving on her bridge, and she slowly dropped alongside, while her telescopic mast went up in sections and the White Ensign was hoisted to the peak.

'Beautiful shot!' shouted Jenkins, as she came within hailing distance. 'A real ripper! One went just ahead and the other right underneath me. That depth you set them at was about right and

they ran straight. If I'd been a Hun you'd have blown me to smithereens.

'Did you see me?' howled Raymond.

'No fear. Never saw a vestige of periscope. In fact, I thought you'd missed me.'

'That's good. I nearly broke surface once, and I was afraid it would be no use carrying on. Will you bring the "fish" in and I'll take 'em from you when we get alongside the *Parentis*?'

'Yes, all right. I'm picking them up now. See you later.'

Raymond started the motors and '123' drew ahead. Presently Burton returned with the torpedoes, which were carefully hoisted, and as the boat was swung to the davit-heads the *Zero* got under weigh. Ahead in a cloud from her exhaust was the submarine, on her gas engines now, and putting her best screw forward for the harbour. Permission to enter was sought and granted from the Flagship in hoists of coloured bunting and the exercise was over.

As the *Zero* gathered speed the captain looked up from the chart table.

'This is where we come in, I think,' he said with a grin; 'shove her on to full.'

Down below the telegraph clanged and the small craft shook herself like an expectant terrier. Then she began to feel the added impetus and rapidly overhauled her slower rival. The Heads of the harbour entrance opened out as they approached, and the trawler at the gate hoisted the clearance

signal. Beyond, the masts and funnels of the Fleet could be seen, and away to the southward an Admiralty collier was punching along with her cargo of diamonds for the ever hungry bunkers.

As they buzzed past their recent enemy, Jenkins gave an order to the signal boy, and that ingenuous youth began waving the semaphore arms with evident enjoyment.

'Will report your return,' he spelt out.

A pause followed. Then a figure was seen to clamber to a position of vantage on the submarine's standard and there was a flash of red and yellow bunting.

'What does he say?' asked Raymond, when the message came to an end.

The boy saluted. '"123" to *Zero*, sir, "Your signal not understood. Will report sinking of *Zero* by torpedo on my arrival at base." Eleven twenty-five, code time, sir.'

'What did I tell you, Burton?' laughed the captain. 'It's no good trying to get to windward of Raymond. He's always undefeated to the end.'

'Precocity, I call it,' said the other, who was bitterly grieved at the downfall of Jenkins's attempt to score off the wily 'hate-boat.'

The signal boy turned his back sharply and busied himself with his flags, while he hid a smile behind a grimy hand. He was used to this sort of chaff among the gods, but experience had taught him that it was not well to display too keen a sense of humour on these occasions.

Three minutes later, with her engines at a reduced speed, the *Zero* took the gate and sped on up the harbour. As she passed the big ships the boy pounced on an answering pendant, ran it up to the yard-arm, and glued his eye to the telescope.

'*Parentis* to *Zero*,' he spelt out. 'Moorings alongside *Parentis* occupied. Anchor in No. 4 berth.'

'Down answer,' he added, and the pendant fluttered to the deck.

'All right, carry on for'ard, Burton,' said the captain. 'She'll have to come alongside us in the afternoon and take the torpedoes in. Starboard anchor. Forty-five on the windlass.'

Burton departed to superintend the mooring operations, and the Torpedo Boat picked up her berth and let go her anchor without unnecessary fuss.

Meanwhile '123' had followed her into the harbour at a more leisurely gait, observing a discreet decorum now that she was under the paternal eye of the big ships. As she approached the *Parentis* her gas engines were shut down, and she dropped alongside on her motors and made fast to the trot. Raymond sent for the T.I., and arrangements were made for the parting and overhauling of the torpedoes that had been fired, and also held communion with the coxswain with regard to shifting alongside the *Zero* for them, after lunch. Boyd shut down the Sperry compass, and by the time Seagrave had seen everything in

order the three officers decamped to clean themselves for the meal.

'A most profitable morning's work,' announced Raymond, as they entered the crowded ward room. 'My congratulations to you, Seagrave, on the way the "fish" ran, and to you, Boyd, for the masterly manner in which you recorded our doings. Who's having a gin?'

. . . . . .

After dinner that evening the captain of the depot came down to the ward room and was hailed with the respectful welcome of a great man and a comrade. Drinks were passed on him, and he was led to an arm-chair near the fire where the boat-captains were discussing their usual topics, 'shop' and motor-bicycles. The Torpedo Lieutenant was in good form and regaled his superiors with a lengthy account of his unrewarded struggles to benefit a misguided humanity, and of his abject failure. Austin and Blake brought a discussion on the merits of American Diesel engines to him for a casting decision, and the Staff Paymaster bemoaned the removal of a certain cherished underling to another sphere of utility.

By-and-by, in a lull in the general conversation, the Captain spoke of what was in his mind.

'How did the attacks go to-day, Raymond?' he asked. 'You haven't told me anything beyond the bare report.'

'Nothing to tell you, sir. They went pretty well. One came off and the other didn't.'

'That's all rubbish, sir,' put in Jenkins, who was one of the guests of the evening. 'I only just saw him the first time, and the second attack defeated me completely. I was absolutely Hunned and never saw a thing.'

The Captain's eyes twinkled.

'Not so bad, Raymond,' he said. 'Not so bad. A little more practice and you'll become one of the wonders of the deep.'

'I don't know about that, sir,' laughed Raymond. 'I ought to have got both attacks in, really, and I only just got him the last time by a fluke.'

The Captain smiled and changed the subject. At the other end of the ward room somebody was playing the piano and the strains of 'The Admiral's Broom' rose in a deep baritone. When the chorus was reached the party round the fire joined in :—

'I've a whip at the mast said he,
For a whip is the sign for me,
That the World may know, where ever I go,
I ride and rule the Sea. . . .'

The good old words filled the room and floated up through the skylight to the silent quarter-deck, where the officer of the watch paced up and down, and the anchored ships showed up as deeper blotches in the darkness. Overhead the wireless buzzed and crackled, and the lapping of the water

between the boats alongside sounded like mermaids' kisses.

A quartermaster on his way forward paused by the open skylight listening to the tinkle of the piano.

'Strewth,' he muttered. 'Orficers 'avin' a good time,' and relapsed into silence as a signalman pattered by to relieve his mate on the bridge.

As the song came to an end a boy operator knocked at the ward-room door and handed a message to the Captain, who read it and put it in his pocket. Another song was beginning, and the singers were clustering round the piano. Duty called him, and as the song reached the noisy stage, he left with a quiet 'good-night,' and returned to his lonely quarters.

He was no mean judge of character.

NEPTUNE AND BRITANNIA

I

NEPTUNE asked of Britannia,
'Whence do your Seamen come?
Are they born in the fields or forests,
Or born in the city slum?
Are they born in the lofty palace,
Or born in the marsh or fen?
In the name of the Golden Trident,
Where do you get your men?'

II

Britannia rose in her armour,
Her brazen buckler rang,
And the waves of the world were silent,
As her seamen's creed she sang.
'In the name of the Golden Trident,
Which both of us dare to wield,
In the name of the Isles of Britain,
In the name of the Brazen Shield;
In the name of the wives and mothers—
Brave beyond mortal ken,
You shall learn how in pride and honour,
Britannia rears her men.

III

'Back in the mists of fable,
A ship once put to sea,
And she sailed to the dim horizon,
For the wind was fair and free.

She sailed to the Mighty Pillars
Where the floods of the Great Sea ran;
Born of the fame that girt her name,
The seamen race began.

IV

'Born of that brave adventure,
The latent spark took fire;
And down to the sea there followed
The sons of the seaman sire.
It spread o'er the Isles of Britain,
And grew with the birth of guns;
Let them beware who challenge there
Britannia's sailor sons.'

V

Neptune laughed as he listened,
Laughed till the ocean rolled.
'Woe to the men of the sea,' he cried,
'And woe to the over-bold.
Though they may think to have conquered,
Still will I have my share;
Grant they be shrived.' With that he dived
Down to his ocean lair.

. . . . . .

The waves of the deep rolled onward,
Swelled in a mighty soar,
Tottered and broke in a thunder stroke
Upon Britannia's shore.

PERSONNEL

THE next day was Sunday, and as the fine weather still held, the Captain of the depot announced to the First Lieutenant his intention of inspecting the boats. Thence was much heart-burning and striving and a prodigious amount of work, the net result being that the nine boats shone inside and out like the proverbial new pins, and the crews, with the exception of those who were to stand the rounds, clad in 'Number Threes,' fell in on their superstructures with vacant 'attention' expressions on their usually classic features.

But before this happy result could be arrived at there was much to be done . . and said, for it must be admitted that there were those among the boat captains who held the opinion that inspections were an unnecessary nuisance, carried out with the sole intention of harassing the inspected.

The First Lieutenant of the *Parentis* had given out the cheery news after breakfast, and a rush had followed on the part of the 'Subs,' unusually tidy in their Sunday rigs, to see that their boats were in a fit condition to withstand the piercing gaze of the Captain's eagle eye. The boat captains learnt the news not without unmixed feelings, and

with shrill cries of horror and reproach the unfortunate Number One was hurled from the ward room. Bitter were the reproaches of one, Blake, whose control room had been painted but the day before, while Austin and several others had work going on and improvements under weigh which they didn't want disturbed. Raymond surveyed the matter with the stony calm of a fatalist, while the Torpedo Lieutenant alone maintained his unruffled serenity and dropped pearls of wisdom for the comfort and instruction of the discomforted captains.

'What you fellows really lack,' he proclaimed from the depths of an arm-chair and between puffs of an after-breakfast pipe, 'is the power of organisation. The present crisis is an excellent example. At nine a.m. the 'owner' announces his intention of inspecting the boats after divisions and prayers, that is at about ten-thirty. Now, mark the result. Nine 'Subs' fly at the rate of knots out of the ward room, run round in circles with their hands to their heads, dive down into the boats and begin harassing unfortunate and peace-loving matlows. As regards you people, you're all completely defeated. You sit here, do nothing, and growl like blazes, when as a matter of fact it doesn't affect you in the least. The 'Subs' do all the work and report when the boats are ready. You then go down and inspect them yourselves, find fault with everything, have the whole place turned upside down, and wait till the dust

has settled. At the last minute you have it all put back again as it was before, and stand by for the Captain. Now what you want is organisation. No matter what's going on you ought to be ready for an inspection at any moment of the day. Mark the ordered routine of my own blameless existence. I rise at eight-thirty each morning as fresh as a lark, and if I'm lucky manage to consume a little breakfast. From then till lunch or cocktail time I maintain a complete and unruffled calm, seated daily in the same arm-chair, unless the claims of the Goddess Work call me to her altars. From lunch until tea I meditate in my bunk, and from tea till dinner I give out hints on the home, and generally instructive and edifying remarks from my present seat of vantage. Bed follows dinner as the fruit follows the flower, and my ordered and well disciplined day is at an end. It will be hard for you, and I foresee many difficulties, but you really must make an effort to follow my example,' and the Torpedo Lieutenant lay back gasping and mopped his fevered brow with a bandana of barbaric colouring.

'The point is,' grumbled Austin, not taking any notice of him, 'that in war time one can't keep the boat up to the peace standard. It's not possible. There's far too much work to be done, for one thing, and considering the amount of sea time we put in I think we do pretty well in keeping the boats as clean as they are.'

'That's the crux of the whole question,' replied

Raymond; 'in war time the 'owner' doesn't expect to see the boats in the same state of spit and polish as he has been used to in happier times. What he looks for is general efficiency in boats, officers, and men. That's the reason he and I get on so splendidly. No, don't heave that book, Jimmy; I've got my number one monkey jacket on, and if I have to chastise you I shall get it creased. Hallo! there's the bugle for divisions. See you later.'

'I don't believe in inspections at all in war time,' said another of the party, as a general move was made for the door. 'Unfair, I call it. Brings the war home too much.'

Overhead the scurrying of heavily-shod feet and the sound of sharp orders told that the ships' company was mustering by divisions for the Captain's inspection, and the boat skippers cleared out to their boats to see that all was in readiness.

Down in '123' the last finishing touches were being applied when Raymond arrived. Everything that brass polish and elbow grease could cause to shine, shone with a satisfactory brilliance, and whatever couldn't shine was discreetly stowed away and hidden from the vulgar gaze. When all was in readiness, Raymond and the 'Sub' made a tour of inspection in search of possible defects or anything that might meet with the disapproval of authority.

'This hydroplane motor,' said the latter, putting his hand on a large black object that looked rather

like a small mine. 'It's been running hot lately. Have to look at it to-morrow. "Owner" won't know that, though.'

'Um, no. She doesn't look too bad. Tell Hoskins to stand the rounds in the engine-room, T.I. in the fore-end, and second coxswain in the control-room.'

'Very good, sir. Hallo! they're at prayers,' he added as the strains of a hymn accompanied by the Marine Band floated down the hatch. 'Not much longer now. I think she'll do, sir. Fall the hands in on the upper deck, coxswain.'

The last brass rag and lump of waste were stowed away and the men scrambled up on deck. '123' was a pleasure to the eye and a credit to the makers of liquid metal polish. All down the long tunnel of her inside, from the engines to the torpedo-tube doors, her steel and brass and copper winked and twinkled in the electric light, her white enamel was spotless, and her deckcloths were a glory to behold.

Raymond took a final look round. 'Good enough,' he said, as he went up the conning-tower followed by the 'Sub.' 'Now for the ordeal by fire.'

On deck the crew had fallen in in one long single line facing towards the parent ship. Ten men forward of the conning-tower and as many aft, all dressed in their best suits of 'Number Three,' and looking remarkably spick and span and on their metal. They were standing at ease now and sucking their teeth in anticipation, after the manner

of the A.B. who is in the rattle or otherwise undergoing some order or other. By the gang plank to the next boat, for '123' was the outside vessel, and three of her sisters lay between her and the *Parentis*, stood the coxswain with his boatswain's pipe in hand, and Raymond took his stand beside him in readiness to receive the Post-Captain on board.

Seagrave stood by in charge of the crew and Boyd was on the bridge, which was the only remaining unoccupied space on the upper deck. Between them and the *Parentis* the crews of the other three boats were drawn up in the same manner, and on the other side of the depot-ship were five more boats in a similar state of cleanliness and innocent expressions. They all flew their newest and largest ensigns, and looked very smart and business-like in their Sunday dresses.

The music on the *Parentis* quarter-deck drew to a close. Three hundred men came to attention and replaced their caps simultaneously, and the chaplain disappeared aft, his surplice waving in the breeze, as the Church pendant fluttered down to the bridge. Another order and the ship's company faced forward and moved off the quarter-deck, the band, which had struck up a lively march, wheeled in behind the rear division, and the ceremony was at an end.

A dramatic pause followed, and then the figure of Captain Charteris appeared at the port-gangway. The boatswain's mate of the *Parentis* and the

coxswain of the inside boat, which happened to be Blake's, twittered on their pipes as he descended, and then he was lost to view in the internals of the boat. He had come alone, unattended by First Lieutenants or other minions, which augered well for the results of the inspection.

Austin, whose boat was next inside Raymond's, turned round with a laugh.

'Hope the "old man" doesn't run up against Blake's white paint,' he said. 'Pretty small chance for us if he does.'

'Trust Blake to watch that,' came the answer. 'He won't want his precious paint disturbed even by the coat of a full-fledged Captain. Once more silence and expectancy, and then the Captain reappeared up the hatch followed by Blake, who looked moist and anxious but happy withal.

'Seems to be in a good temper,' whispered Raymond to Seagrave. 'Look out, here he comes.'

With much saluting and piping Captain Charteris stepped across to the next boat and the ceremony was repeated. When he once more rose to view, however, some ten minutes later, his face appeared clouded and he boarded Austin's boat with a briskness that evidenced that all had not been well with the vessel he had just inspected.

'Wonder what's up,' murmured Seagrave. 'He looks a bit sickish about something.'

'Man in a dirty rig, I expect, or else he asked too many questions,' replied Raymond. 'Our turn next.'

At last, after a seemingly interminable interval, the Captain once more rose to view, and joy! the wily Austin had smoothed his ruffled temper. The great man said a few final words, laughed, and turned towards '123.' Blake's coxswain, pipe to lips, made a scarcely perceptible sign, and then, as the Captain set foot on the gang-plank, he and the coxswain of '123' simultaneously burst into a duet of piping, shrilling, and twittering as each tried to out-do the other.

'Ship's company, 'shun!' shouted Seagrave, as the men sprang to attention; the officers saluted, and Raymond stepped forward to do the honours.

Still the piping continued, rising and falling in regular cadence till the performers were red in the face and near to bursting. Then again that almost invisible sign, this time from Raymond's coxswain, and the sound of the pipes ceased as if suddenly cut off and smothered with a blanket.

The Captain returned the salute and looked down the line of stolid faces. A student of physiognomy would have seen much food for reflection once he had penetrated the mask of stolid look-your-best that a man at attention always assumes.

In the first place there was Raymond, a tall upright figure, very much the Naval Officer, and just now very much the captain of the boat. Had he been asked why he had joined the Service he would hardly have been able to give a very clear reason. 'Father wanted me to, you know. Thought I ought to,' would probably have been his answer,

accompanied by much hesitation and a deal of stammering. As a matter of fact he came of a family which boasted members of the Service for many generations back, one of whom had been a Vice-Admiral. As an only son it had seemed nothing less than duty that he should follow in his father's footsteps and carry the name on in the Service. He was one of the older officers, with a *Britannia* training, who had entered the Submarine Service as a Lieutenant in the experimental days, and who, after six long years as a junior, had gained his well-earned command several years before the outbreak of war, and had gradually worked his way up to command one of the later classes of submarine, and was even now on turn for a bigger boat. In the ward room he was a witty and pleasant companion. As a submarine captain we are able to judge for ourselves.

Then there was Seagrave, looking at present rather nervous and wearing a strained expression on his youthful face. Perhaps he was thinking of the hydroplane-motor, or perhaps he was merely worried over the general result of the inspection. He had received his training under the more recent Osborne-Dartmouth scheme, and his presence in the Submarine Service was the outcome of the war and the new Navy methods. The large number of boats that had recently been built had necessitated an increase in the ranks of submarine officers, and as it had not been advisable to drain the general service of too many experienced watch-

keeping lieutenants, the Admiralty had hit on the plan of entering Sub-Lieutenants as seconds in command of boats. They received a course of submarine work, and, thanks to their previous training, which included engineering among other things, and their own keenness and intelligence, the scheme had worked very well. Many of them would be in command of boats at a much younger age than their present captains had gained a command, but the responsibilities and cares of a submarine life had amply fitted them for their positions.

Boyd, the R.N.R. Lieutenant, was another offspring of the war, both as regards his being in the Navy at all and as regards his presence in the Submarine Service. Prior to the war the Royal Naval Reserve had contained comparatively few officers, and commissions had been hard to obtain, but after the first few months of hostilities the Admiralty had realised that they had not sufficient trained seamen for their needs, and had reopened the Reserve with a call for more officers. The result far exceeded expectation, for the officers of the Merchant Service flocked to the colours in thousands, and after a course of training were sent afloat as watch-keepers in any class of ship from Super-Dreadnoughts to trawlers. The growth in size and capabilities of submarines, and their more arduous duties, had necessitated that they should have an additional officer soon after war started, and the result was that each of the bigger boats

was supplied with a Lieutenant of the Royal Naval Reserve. His duties were entirely those of a seaman, as he was the navigator, took a large slice of the watches, and looked after the confidential books and gyro compass. Boyd himself had served his first four years at sea in a sailing ship or 'wind jammer,' and had, after becoming an officer, transferred into steam and done a voyage or two in tramp. At the outbreak of war he had left one of the great mail companies of the Western Ocean, to which he intended to return when all was over. The Navy life did not appeal to him very strongly, and he was looking forward to a return to his old work.

The next in order was the coxswain, a first-class Petty Officer who had joined submarines as an able seaman about the same time as Raymond had entered that Service. Perhaps he had wanted to get married, and had been attracted by the increased pay, or it may have been that a friend in a submarine had told him stories of the life and privileges pertaining to it that had fired his imagination. Like most men of his age he had joined the Navy as a boy and been trained in a sailing brig, whence he had eventually emerged and blossomed out, until he received his anchor and was rated leading seaman after two years in submarines. Raymond had, owing to a vacancy, tried him as a second coxswain, with the result that in course of time he was promoted to the rank of Petty Officer and coxswain, and had followed his

captain from boat to boat for several years in succession.

The second coxswain was a middle-aged leading seaman on turn for Petty Officer who had been through much the same training as his senior, and hoped for promotion as soon as he received his 'crossed killicks.'[1]

Then there came the gunlayer, the cook, and six able seamen, all A.B.'s of much the same age, men about twenty-six who aspired to be coxswains or Torpedo Instructors in due course. They again were new Navy, and had received their early training in shore barracks and training cruisers. The Submarine Service is essentially a voluntary one, and it would be difficult to ascertain why they had ever joined. Probably if they were asked they would have replied 'private reasons,' and sucked their teeth noisily.

Then came the T.I., Torpedo Instructor or Torpedo Gunner's Mate, a Petty Officer and electrical expert, who, after going through the same early trials as the two coxswains, had specialised in electricity after being rated A.B. He had received his first upward step when he became an S.T. or Seaman Torpedo man, and shortly after he was promoted to Leading Seaman the specialist rating of Leading Torpedo Man had been granted him. With maturity and experience had come the rank of Petty Officer and Torpedo Instructor, and now

[1] Crossed anchor. The badge indicating the rating of Petty Officer.

he was one of those who knew more about the internals of those highly mechanical engines of death than the rest of the crew put together. He lived in a whirl of balance chamber doors and hydrostatic valves, and gibbered in his sleep of reducers and ignition delay gear.

The L.T.O., who was a new Navy man and the T.I.'s second-in-command, was in charge under Seagrave of all the electrical appliances and motors in the boat. He was an expert at finding 'earths' and short circuits, and was notable among his kind in that he was nimble-fingered and could 'make'[1] a switch without breaking it.

The engine-room staff was headed by Chief Engine Room Artificer Hoskins, a hoary-headed old sinner of the old school, who could coax a Diesel engine to run on air or coal-dust if necessary and was, moreover, in a permanent state of growl. Raymond swore by him, and had, like the coxswain, taken him from ship to ship in his upward career. He had joined the Navy as a fitter and turner at the age of twenty-two, having just completed his apprenticeship in one of the great shipbuilding yards on the Tyne, and had been entered as a Fourth Class Artificer. His keenness and wonderful ability with anything mechanical had urged him to join the Submarine Service, where he was practically in charge of his own engines. Give him an oil-can and a lump of waste, varied

[1] 'Making' a switch is switching on. 'Breaking' a switch is switching off.

occasionally by a foot-rule and Macmahon wrench, and he would be happy for hours.

The second, third, and fourth E.R.A.'s were all much younger men who had joined under the new scheme as Boy Artificers at the training college at Devonport, whence they had emerged, having received all their knowledge from the Service, and in due course been rated Artificers, 4th Class. They were now slowly working their way up, and had joined the Submarine Service since the war, when the necessity for capable men had inspired them with the wish for more authority than fell to their lots in the engine-rooms of a Battleship.

The Stoker Petty Officer was a bearded and efficient ruffian, and the oldest man in the boat. Unlike the seamen, the stokers do not join the Navy as boys, but at about the age of eighteen, and this particular old sinner had had rather a rough time of it in his early days. However, he had kept going, and as only men of good character are admitted to submarines, it speaks well of him that he had not fallen by the wayside. In a submarine he had seen freedom from dirt and eternal coal shovelling, raking, and slicing, as well as extra pay and other privileges, and the added dangers of the life did not seem to worry him in the least.

His right-hand man was the Leading Stoker, who had seen much the same side of life as his senior, to whose rating he was now aspiring. He was a man of good solid worth, a little fond of the bottle; and possessed of many relations whose

sudden deaths necessitated his immediate presence in the home circle. But he was a good man and knew his work and the men under him, and the engines never ran so smoothly as when he was superintending the oiling and other equally necessary operations.

Finally, there were the six First Class Stokers, young men not long in submarines who were very anxious to get on and very much afraid lest they should be returned to general service, which is the punishment dealt out to all those whose conduct in submarines does not justify their remaining in them. They had all been through the same early training, and most of them had joined submarines since the war. Like the rest of the crew they were good, steady workers, for the Submarine Service can always have its picked men, and those who are tried and found wanting are summarily ejected to return to the rigours of 'big-ship' routine.

Occasionally an additional hand was carried in the shape of a wireless or W.T. Operator, but, as Raymond dabbled in wireless among other things, he was not a permanent member of the ship's company, and spent most of his time in the depot.

Captain Charteris took one keen glance along the line of motionless figures, and turned to Raymond and smiled.

'All very smart, Raymond,' he said in an undertone.

'Yes, sir,' replied the other, and Seagrave tingled with delight as the two disappeared down the engine-room hatch.

Arrived below, the Post Captain made a quick and searching examination of the boat from end to end. His eagle-eye seemed to be all-embracing. A question to Raymond, an inquiry of the Chief E.R.A., and a request that the main-line pump should be started followed one another in the first two minutes It seemed that he made a very cursory visit to the engine-room, but had anything been seriously wrong Raymond felt sure that Captain Charteris would have spotted it, and thanked Heaven and the Chief E.R.A. that nothing was amiss. Then for'ard through the length of the boat, the Captain nodding his head as he listened to Raymond's explanations of some alterations he had recently made, and occasionally asking a question and always putting his finger on the weak spot as if by instinct.

Presently they reached the tube-doors, and Raymond heaved a sigh of relief. So far everything had been satisfactory. The spare torpedoes were examined, and a door was opened exposing the long dark tunnel of the tube with its "fish" lying snugly within, and then the Captain turned to the firing-gear.

'Where's the cross connection on the firing line?' he asked.

'Done away with it, sir. It was all right if both torpedoes were fired together, but the firing-tank

took 40 seconds to re-charge, and if only one "fish" were fired with the cross connection fitted it was impossible to fire a second unless we waited for that interval, because all the air was used on the first one and there was nothing left to fire the other with'

The Captain nodded. 'And now?' he queried.

'Each firing-tank fires the torpedo on its own side of the boat, sir.'

'Do you find it satisfactory?'

'Very, sir'

Captain Charteris turned away. 'That's all, I think, Raymond,' he said, and led the way up the fore-hatch.

'Ship's company, 'shun!' ordered Seagrave, as the two officers passed down the line on their way aft, the Captain quietly scanning the faces and pausing now and again to ask a question as to what boats a certain man had served in, when he had received his medal ribbon, or how long he had been in submarines.

At the gang-plank, where the coxswain was waiting with his pipe ready, he issued judgment. 'Not at all bad, Raymond,' he said quietly. 'I'm coming aboard some day to see dummy shots fired without the cross connection.'

'Very good, sir,' said Raymond saluting, and Captain Charteris was piped over the side.

As he crossed from boat to boat the trilling of the pipes was taken up by each coxswain in turn as the crews came to attention and the officers

saluted, the boatswain's mate at the *Parentis's* gangway bringing the performance to a triumphant conclusion.

The quartermaster, the corporal of the watch, messengers, and sideboys stiffened where they stood as he crossed the deck and went down the starboard gangway to inspect the remaining five submarines.

Three-quarters of an hour later 'pipe down,' sounded by the juvenile Marine bugler, informed all and sundry that the inspection was over. The boats' crews fell out, and such as were not wanted for immediate duty trooped aboard the depot and down to the crowded mess-decks, while the officers remained comparing notes and discussing the results of the ordeal.

'What made the "owner" so ratty, Johnson?' asked Raymond, on his way across to the *Parentis*.

The officer in question, who was captain of the boat lying between Austin's and Blake's, shook his head sadly, and then burst out laughing.

'It's all UP with Little Willy, I'm afraid, unless he gets over it, which I very much doubt. And everything was going so splendidly, too.' He sighed heavily.

'What was it, you blighter?' cried Austin. 'He came aboard my packet in a state of fury, and I had to do my dirty damndest to smooth things over.'

'It wasn't my fault, George. I couldn't foresee it or I should have taken jolly good care to prevent

it. One of my stokers, whom I'm going to hang to-morrow, by the way, is the proud possessor of a monkey. I took particular care that the brute should be sent inboard before the inspection, but you know what those ruddy things are, and somehow or other it must have sneaked aboard again. It was hanging from a beam under the torpedo-hatch, with part of an old ensign wrapped round its head, and when the old man passed underneath on his way for'ard, it dropped on his shoulders.'

'Well?'

'That's all.'

. . . . . .

Monday morning dawned dull and dismal. A steady downpour of thin drizzling rain that wet through and chilled to the marrow did not tend to brighten matters or relieve the gloom that had settled on the coxswain as he surveyed the weather with the eye of a fatalist. The hour of seven a.m. does not tend to hilarity.

'This ruddy weather,' he remarked to the unemotional landscape, 'near drives me to drink. Near drives me to drink, that's wot it does.'

A cluster of sleepy-eyed figures clambering up from the mess-decks caught his eye and gave him the opportunity he had been waiting for.

'Come along now. Step lively,' he growled. 'Six bells struck five minutes ago. Fall in 'ere and tow a line.'

The half-dozen seamen and stokers, clad in

overalls, put out their pipes and stumbled into some semblance of a line as the remainder of '123's' crew appeared from their various lairs and joined the unhappy company. The E.R.A.'s carried on down to the boat to commence the day's labours, carefully picking their way between the demons wielding brooms and the hose brandishers who were performing the early morning task of 'scrub decks.'

'Show a little life now,' snapped the coxswain to his shivering subordinates. 'Form two deep. 'Shun. Right dress. Eyes front. Stan'-at-ease.' Are ye all 'ere?' he continued, checking off the number on his fingers. 'No, we're one short.'

'Jevons ain't 'ere,' volunteered the second coxswain, inwardly cursing the able seamen who kept him shivering in the rain.

'I'm 'ere,' cried a dishevelled figure hastily taking its place at the end of the rear rank.

The coxswain surveyed him with a baleful glance.

'A little more from you, my lad, and you'll be spoke to. You turn out late once more an' I takes you before the first lieutenant. I've 'ad me eye on you for some time.'

The seaman swallowed heavily. It was unwise to argue with the coxswain in the still hours of the morning. Also his roving eye caught sight of Seagrave, who was coming forward clad in oilskins and seaboots and pulling on a long pair of engine-room gloves.

'T.'s crew, 'shun!' cried the coxswain. 'All present, sir.'

Seagrave gravely returned the salute and began telling off the men for their various tasks, an extra pressure of work having necessitated an early 'turn to.'

'Stokers carry on with the chief E.R.A.; T.I. and an S.T. on topping up and wiping down. The water lighter's alongside now and I'm coming down to test the water, so don't begin till I let you know. We'll charge afterwards. L.T.O. carry on with the volt-metre board. Remainder clean ship.'

The coxswain saluted.

'T.'s crew. Carry on down to the boat. Jevons, you work with the T.I. Dismiss.'

The weary band broke away and trooped down the ladder and across the boats to where '123' lay on the outside of the tier. The coxswain produced a key of large proportions, and, unlocking the padlock on the conning-tower hatch, disappeared below. Presently the other hatches were opened from inside the boat, over which canvas shelters were rigged to prevent the rain from ruining her internal complexion, and the day's work commenced.

Overnight a long black lighter, filled with carboys of distilled water, had been towed alongside and made fast to the submarine, and now the tarpaulin cover was hauled back and a long, flexible rubber tube passed up out of the fore-hatch and its end dropped into one of the carboys.

Presently Seagrave appeared armed with a stick of nitrate of silver with which he tested in turn the contents of each of the water-holders. Two of them were found wanting, for they clouded under the operation, and were condemned as unfit for use in the sensitive internals of a battery, and when he had satisfied himself with the others he gave the order to 'carry on.'

With much labour the T.I. and Jevons filled the tube with sterilised water and passed the free end across to the boat and down the conning-tower hatch, the S.T. firmly grasping its extremity for fear of wetting the sacred brasswork. The siphon thus formed was a labour-saver of a large order and did away with the necessity of passing the water below in buckets and perhaps rendering it dirty in the process. Down below a sound of rasping and hammering came from the engine-room where the E.R.A.s and stokers were effecting repairs, where there had been 'a bit of a mess up aft, sir,' and could be seen wielding spanners and lumps of waste in a masterly manner. The L.T.O. was gravely attending to the volt-metre board, whose vagaries had given trouble of late, and the second coxswain was oiling the bearings of the hydroplane and rudder shafts and generally making himself useful. The remaining seamen were cleaning brass as if their lives depended on it, a state of things that was liable to undergo a slight modification on Seagrave's departure.

''Ere, Sam,' called the T.I., 'give us a 'and with

this deck-cloth,' as that worthy paused on his round to wipe an oily brow.

Together they rolled back the canvas carpet, disclosing a solid rubber covering bolted to the deck with iron battens, which on being raised exposed a series of hatches beneath which was the for'ard battery. One of these was then lifted and the operation of 'topping up' began.

Every three weeks or so, owing to the constant charging and discharging and other reasons, the electrolyte in the cells, composed of sulphuric acid and water, became used up and its level sank in the cells, exposing the tops of the plates. These were no toy cells either. They stood over four feet high and were placed in the bottom of the boat, below the deck level, in two long lines strapped together with steel plates painted red and blue, indicating positive and negative. The process of topping up consisted of replenishing the water in the cells until the level covered the plates, and was usually accompanied by that of carefully wiping and cleaning the inter-cell connections, taking the densities, and generally seeing that all was in order. An unhappy seaman, clad in oilskin, was posted in the lighter to transfer his end of the rubber tube to a fresh carboy as the first was emptied and the work went merrily on. The T.I. was the mainspring of the business, while the S.T. worked under his orders, shifting the tube from cell to cell as necessary, and generally doing as he was told. He was there to learn and he knew it.

When two or three cells were finished, the hatch was replaced and another lifted, and so on down one line and up the other, by which time the battery was completed, several carboys had been emptied, and eight bells had struck aboard the *Parentis*. '123,' owing to a busy day, was carrying out a special routine, and the crew trooped inboard to breakfast.

The rain had ceased but the prospect was still anything but cheery, and even the funny man could not brighten the settled gloom that had overcome the crew when work was restarted an hour later. The T.I. and his satellites resumed their labours by tackling the after-battery, and casting much criticism on the health of the cells and nature of the battery in general. The gun-layer, assisted by the cook, overhauled his gun, and the remainder continued their early morning tasks with more or less signs of energy. It was not a cheerful morning.

By-and-by Seagrave came down, having polished off an excellent breakfast and feeling at peace with the world, to examine the work in hand and listen to the T.I.'s comments on his beloved batteries.

Another hour saw the topping up completed, and a waiting tug pounced on the water-lighter and bore it away in triumph to its distant lair.

Boyd appeared just as the job was finished and began to overhaul the gyro compass. While he cleaned contractors and filed transmitters he burst

into ragtime, which brought Seagrave aft with a pained and virtuous expression on his face.

'My God! Pilot,' he said, 'what a shine you're kicking up. If you'd been up since seven, like I have, you wouldn't feel so cheery. Who wouldn't be a navigator?'

'Work with a will and sing while you work,' said Boyd. 'Work never killed the cat and I'm going to put in quite half an hour at it to-day. Our hard-worked submarine officers at their daily toil.'

The Chief E.R.A., who was hovering in the offing, chose his opportunity and plunged in.

'Are you going to charge now, sir?' he asked Seagrave. 'We're all ready in the engine-room.'

'Yes, yes,' replied the 'Sub.' We'll have to do a gas-engine charge, though. "147" has got the berth at the charging pier. We'll start with 500 in the series until the densities rise to twelve twenty-five and then give her two-fifty in parallel. Starboard Engine!'

'Ay, ay, sir,' and Hoskins disappeared into his engine-room.

The L.T.O. made the grouper switch and then started the starboard motor, and with the engine-clutch in the Diesel was heaved over until she fired and the engine got away by herself. The process was much the same as cranking up a motor-car, and as the revolutions increased the needle on the ammeter, which had shown discharging at first, worked slowly back, past zero and on to

charging, and, after a deal of flickering, finally steadied at five hundred amperes.

The L.T.O. was to look after the charge under Seagrave's orders, and the T.I. and his minion decamped to attend to the internals of a torpedo that some one had been rude to.

Every hour Furness made the sounds of the pilot-cells with a squeeze bulb—an instrument rather like a fountain-pen filler—with which he sucked up a small portion of the electrolyte and was able to read the densities. Slowly they rose until by noon, with the temperatures at about 50 deg. fahrenheit, the batteries stood at twelve twenty-five and the charge was broken. The sound of the engines died away and the L.T.O. stopped the motor. Then over came the grouper-switch to put the batteries in parallel, the motor was re-started, and in less than a minute the charge was under weigh again. The whole operation was identical with that of starting the engines at sea, the only difference being that the tail clutches were out, so that the propeller was disconnected from the shaft; also when the engines are propelling the ship the motor-switches are broken when once the Diesel is under weigh.

About three in the afternoon, when the entries on the charging sheet began to look formidable, and the charge was nearing completion, Raymond came down to have a look-see, and satisfy himself that all was in order. He and Seagrave conferred for a few minutes on the 'care and maintenance'

of secondary batteries, and then the skipper turned to the voltmeter.

'Voltage 2.5. Yes, that's all right. Densities 1248 and 1250. Temperatures 80 deg. and 82 deg. Um, yes. I think we'll break the charge.'

'Break the charge, Hoskins,' said Seagrave, waving towards the engine-room.

'Ay, ay, sir,' came the answer.

The engine stopped and the L.T.O. snipped the switches over. In the engine-room the stokers were bending over the silent Diesel, and Hoskins began to square up the tools of his trade. For'ard the T.I. and the redoubtable Jevons were replacing their long-suffering torpedo in its tube, and the coxswain, with puckered brow and the stump of a pencil, was breathing heavily while he wrote up the log. The brass rags were being packed up and stowed away, the oil-cans replaced, and the hatches closed. One by one the men forraged for their caps and went up on deck. The T.I. began turning the lights out. Work was over for the day. The two officers were the last to go on deck, and then the coxswain locked up the boat and followed in the wake of his men. There were kippers for tea in the Petty Officer's mess, and he was late already. It had been a trying and depressing day, and he walked majestically abroad, feeling like the captain who has made port at last when land had been forgotten.

Raymond paused by the gun on his way to the gang-plank.

'Rotten little thing this,' he said, pulling down a lever and opening the breach. 'Why the devil they can't give us something decent, I'd like to know.'

'We ought to have a twelve-pounder on an anti-aircraft mounting,' responded the ambitious Seagrave. 'A measley six-pound pea-shooter like that isn't any earthly use. It's ages since we've fired the thing, and it'll probably jump the mounting if we do. I can't understand what they're thinking about, dumping that ruddy thing on us.

Raymond smiled. The gun, quite handy and useful in its own way, was Seagrave's sore point and afforded a never-failing bite.

'We shall have to write and tell 'em so, but I'm afraid they won't take any notice of us. Six-pounders you shall have, and six-pounders we get, and they stick to us.

'What I should really like would be a four-inch and a few eggs,[1] and mine-dropping gear. Then we could do something. It's sickening messing about like this, looking for Fritz, who never comes out, or runs as soon as he sees us. I'd like to see one of their Battle Cruisers come across our patrol one day. We'd show 'em.

Raymond smiled again.

And so to tea.

. . . . . .

The Officer of the Watch, one Meeks, Lieutenant R.N.R., slowly paced the *Parentis's* quarter-deck,

[1] Mines.

wrapped in the rig of the day, to wit, a heavy gloom. The rain had ceased, but the sky was lowering and overcast, and the wind had dropped some hours ago. The moon, struggling gamely through the clouds, was the only saving clause to the situation. An unpleasant day had given place to a damp and chilly night, and at 2.0 a.m. man is not at his brightest.

Turning over in his mind the events of the day, he recalled a long vista of disappointing circumstances. At the outbreak of war, when the Reserves had been called up, he had joined the colours flushed with the thrill of patriotism that many know so well. He had seen himself doing great things, at least doing well, and perhaps ultimately being turned over into the Active Service and fulfilling a long cherished wish. However, after concluding a gunnery course at Whale Island, and making a good show in the examination, he had been sent here as watch-keeper to a depot ship, a parent ship to submarines. At first he had liked the life, but the novelty of his surroundings soon wore off, and he had longed to be at sea again, where there was a chance of doing something. He realised that watch-keepers in harbour ships were necessary, but somehow had always imagined that it wouldn't fall to his lot to fill one of the billets. Two years of war had found him in the same ship, and to-day he had applied for a transfer into one of the submarines as navigator. The results had not been encouraging. The Captain had

told him quite kindly that he felt hardly justified in shifting him at present. He knew what that meant. He hadn't made a success of his work, and was thought unfit for a boat. It was a bit hard, he considered. He knew he didn't take much interest in his job, but found it difficult to do so when he saw so many others of his kind going to sea in boats and apparently doing well. If only he could get a chance he felt sure he would do well. But now. . . .

He sighed heavily, and leant over the rail.

A side boy approached with a mug of steaming cocoa, his bare feet making scarcely any sound on the wooden deck.

'Will you 'ave this now, sir?' he queried.

'Yes, please, put it on the table.'

He moved across the quarter-deck to the table where lay the log and signal pads, and gazed heavily at the dark blurs of the anchored Fleet. The Corporal and Quartermaster of the Watch were talking in undertones by the gangway. Then five bells struck, and the sound was echoed from the neighbouring ships and died away in the distance.

The ship swung to the turn of the tide, and he went up to the bridge and checked the position by shore-bearings, keeping a good eye on the other vessels to see that they would swing clear. Up here a sleepy-eyed signalman and two signal-boys were passing the time by restoring flags to the lockers, and the night seemed very still and quiet.

Then a visit forward to the anchor watch and back to the quarter-deck again, to continue the slow pacing up and down to keep the cold out. He glanced at his watch and yawned. Nearly three o'clock. Only another hour of it. Up and down the quarter-deck, up and down . . . with the knowledge that at any rate aboard each of the darkened and silent vessels around him a comrade in distress was performing the same penance. . . .

A pattering of bare feet from the direction of the bridge, and a signal-boy appeared, breathless.

'Red light showing from the Flagship, sir,' he reported.

Instantly the Lieutenant's manner changed. The regrets of yesterday had vanished. No need for quiet now.

'Quartermaster!' he shouted. 'Hands to aircraft stations! Stand by funk-holes!'

'Ay, ay, sir,' came the cheery answer, followed by the sound of a bugle and the shrill twittering of the pipes.

''Aaaaands to—aircraft—stations!' roared the boatswains' mates along the sleeping mess-decks. 'Re—mai—ai—ai—nder stand byyy yer—funk—'oles!

The great ship turned over in her sleep, rubbed her eyes, shook herself, and was awake. The sound of sharp orders and scurrying feet told that men were tumbling up from the mess-decks in all states, dress and undress. Up on the lower bridge

Meeks was calling the Captain, who came out wearing a bridge-coat and sea-boots over his pyjamas, while a messenger was doing the same service for the First Lieutenant.

The guns' crews manned the anti-aircraft guns; the fire-party fell in. Hoses were rigged and buckets and sand collected, while those who had no special duty to perform stood by their funk-holes in accordance with orders. The duty coxswain was shepherding the boats' crews into their boats, the officers appeared and took their stations, and with much swearing, shouting, and bad language the nine submarines pushed off from their parent ship, to scatter and seek separate billets where they would not provide such an easy mark to an aerial intruder. The last boat was away with her full compliment, and the *Parentis's* crew was at stations. Ten minutes ago the ship had been peacefully sleeping and the officer of the watch ruminating over a wasted career.

A messenger climbed to the bridge and approached the Captain.

'From the First Lieutenant, sir,' he said, saluting; 'all boats away, sir, and ship's company at aircraft stations.'

'Thank you,' replied the Captain absently, scanning the heavens with his night-glass.

A pause—silence and expectancy, but the silence of a multitude holding its breath or of five hundred matlows trying to keep from cheering.

'Lord,' said the gun-layer of the six-pounder

anti-aircraft, 'where the 'ell is she anyhow? Any of you blokes see 'er?'

'There she is, Bill,' cried the loader, pointing with a grimy forefinger. 'Between them clouds, right a'ead there.'

'That ain't haircraft,' sneered a voice, 'that's a ruddy lump o' smoke. That's wot that is.'

'Silence in the battery,' snapped a voice out of the darkness.

'I don't think it's going to be anything serious, remarked the Captain to the Gunnery Lieutenant.' 'They've probably been reported down the coast, but I doubt if they'll approach us in here.'

'Shouldn't think so, sir. Hardly worth while with so much high explosive knocking about.'

Away in the distance Raymond was handling '123' like a veteran. Nine boats all shoving off at the same time are apt to get in one another's way, and when semi-darkness is added matters are not mended. Out of the tangle he made his way, hurling an insult at a passing boat who was talking about her tail in peevish tones, and steering for the open water beyond.

'Will you mind my tail?' howled a raucous voice. 'Where the hell are you coming to. Put her astern. Oh, damn!' . . . and the voice broke off in incoherences as another dim shape appeared across the bow, warbling about her planes and calling curses on her telegraphs. 'Go ahead, damn you!' yelled a voice; 'are those telegraphs ringing or are they not. Will you answer or——' 'Never

mind, Willie.' This from a cheery tenor. 'Mother likes the pattern. Shut up, you noisy blighter!'

'123' chuckled to herself as she freed from the jamb, and five minutes later dropped her anchor between two mammoth Battleships. All round them whisperings and subdued voices rose, another submarine passed astern, and the rattle of her cable told that she too had found a billet. Only a quarter of an hour ago and we were all asleep. Raymond shivered and yawned miserably. 'Damn the war, anyway.'

'Doesn't seem to be anything,' quoth Captain Charteris to the 'Guns.' 'I don't think we shall be worried to-nght. Hallo!'

Boom! roared a gun from the shore battery. Overhead the land searchlights sprang into being, ten of them, from all parts of the horizon, centring on one spot, and flickering over the heavens in search of the invader.

'Warning gun. Hands to funk-holes,' said the First Lieutenant.

Again the bugle and the roaring of the boatswains' mates. ''Aaaands to—funk—'oles.'

Down below the men who had no particular duty at aircraft stations, which is very different to general quarters, dived down into their various burrows, albeit much against their will.

A burly figure loomed out of the darkness.

'Mess-decks cleared, sir. Hands in their funk-holes.

'All right,' said the First Lieutenant. 'Thank you.

The searchlights swept overhead, wavered a little, and steadied over the land.

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat. Boom! Bang! Phit from the land batteries down the coast. Still no sign of the intruder to be seen from the Fleet. A whirr and a rush of motors and a seaplane whizzed past, soaring up and over on the look-out for the enemy. Away to the south'ard others could be seen wheeling and crossing high up in the glare of the searchlights. Suddenly the roar of the shore batteries ceased. 'Phit-phit-phit-phit came faintly in the distance from the sea-planes, as the mitrailleuses were discharged at the invisible foe.

Then, through a break in the clouds, into the full glare of the searchlights, swung the majestic Zeppelin. Calmly and sedately she floated, apparently unmindful of the danger, though her crew were working like madmen to get her out of the perilous area. Away above her a tiny speck was visible, wheeling and circling like a gull in a gale of wind. A mighty flash and a roar showed where the German had dropped a bomb over the batteries, but still there was no order from the Flagship, and the Fleet watched and waited in silence. The shore guns had ceased firing now, and up above rode that great airship as if despising the puny craft who pitted themselves against her.

Then . . . a tiny flicker of flame was seen at one end of the Zeppelin, licking and hissing round the gas-bag as it spread from end to end.

''It, by God!' yelled a Petty Officer in a strident voice.

A sound of hoarse cheering broke from a ship at the end of the line, was caught up and carried down the harbour as ship after ship broke into one wild roar of jubilation. The airship was crashing down nose first, aflame from end to end. Like a streak of blinding light she lit up the harbour, the ships, and the upturned faces as she rushed to her destruction. Down over the land she fell, and the cheering swelled into a mighty roar as she disappeared over the shoulder of a hill. Only the sickly glare in the sky told where she was burning to death, she . . . and all she had contained.

As the yells of applause subsided, an answering cheer was wafted from the batteries ashore, and once more the Fleet burst into a thunder of appreciation. Then from the Flagship high up a red light, slowly winking and blinking in an urgent order, and the sound wavered, died away, and finally ceased altogether.

'Flag-General, return stores, sir,' said the First Lieutenant to Captain Charteris.

The Captain nodded. 'All right. Carry on, he said, and went back to his cabin as the vocalists broke out into a long-drawn chant of: 'Retur-ur-ur-n Stor-or-or-es.'

Another rush of feet as boxes and branch-pipes were replaced, buckets stowed away, and sand-boxes covered. The guns were secured and the

crews fell out, while the ammunition parties returned the shell and cartridges and closed the magazines.

The submarines had picked up the signal, too, and hove in their cables with prayers of gratitude that they might now continue their broken night's rest. One by one they came back out of the darkness and dropped alongside the *Parentis*. A shape would appear, dimly seen in the waning moonlight. Somewhere a raucous voice would hail, and back would come the answer, '123' or '146,' as the case might be.

'Answer's "146," sir,' a voice would say, and the hailing would continue until finally all boats had returned and made fast in their accustomed berths.

Overhead the purr of a high-power motor, followed by another and another, told that the seaplanes, their work completed, were returning to their distant aerodrome, and another burst of cheering greeted their appearance.

'By God,' said a bearded gun-layer, gazing after them wistfully. 'Lucky dogs, them blokes. See all the scrappin' like. And we didn't 'ave a ruddy shot. Not one, we didn't.'

'All boats returned and made fast alongside, sir,' reported the First Lieutenant, knocking at the Captain's door.

'Pipe down, please,' called Captain Charteris. 'And good-night, Martin.'

'Good-night, sir.'

Then the voices broke out again as the men fell out, and the boats' crews came up over the side. Down below they trooped in knots and bunches until only the officers remained. For'ard a gunner was encouraging a three-pounder whose breach-block had turned peevish; on the quarter-deck the boat captains were comparing notes of their manœuvres and laughing over the experiences of the night.

By-and-by they had all gone below and were sitting in cabins, on each other's bunks and tables, talking at the top of their voices and laughing over their misadventures.

The noise subsided and the lights went out in cabins and mess-decks. Silence settled down once more, and the ship was again in the possession of the watch-keepers.

The moon had gone in and it was quite dark by now, save for that yellow glare, gradually fading and dying down, where the Zeppelin had met her ghastly death.

The officer of the watch continued his pacing up and down, and once more fell into a reflective mood.

'Oh, well. Life wasn't so awful after all. Might be worse. Those poor beggars in the airship must have had a rotten two or three minutes. Perhaps if I try again I may get a boat after all. The show went off all right to-night. Skipper couldn't grumble, anyway. Think I'll wait a month and then have another shot.'

He glanced at his watch.

'Five minutes to four. That's one way of passing a middle watch at any rate. Can't reckon on it every night, though.'

He yawned wearily and turned up the collar of his coat.

Over the crest of the hill the glare of the dying Zeppelin wavered a little, faded, flickered, and went out.

THE DOCKYARD

A Chanty

I

A ship once came to Plymouth Hoe.
(*Chorus*) Heave away, my bullies.
A ship once came to Plymouth Hoe,
And they furled her sails in a harbour stow,
'Ere they sent them down and the yards also.
(*Chorus*) Heave away for Plymouth.

II

They lashed her gear and hove her keel.
(*Chorus*) Heave away, my bullies.
They lashed her gear and hove her keel,
And scraped and painted her as taut as steel.
(*Chorus*) Heave away for Plymouth.

III

They eased her up when she was done.
(*Chorus*) Heave away, my bullies.
They eased her up when she was done,
And they polished her white from truck to gun,
Till she shone like glass in the morning sun.
(*Chorus*) Heave away for Plymouth

IV

Their paint came from the Dockyard Store.
(*Chorus*) Heave away, my bullies.
Their paint came from the Dockyard Store,
And they got their whack and they got no more,
For that's the essence of the Navy Law,
Your due's a gallon and you won't get four,
A thing that they can't understand ashore.
(*Chorus*) Heave away from Plymouth.

V

And more ships came and did the same.
(*Chorus*) Heave away for Plymouth.
And more ships came and did the same,
And earned their money at the re-fit game,
'Survey and Demand' is its modern name,
To which the Navy owes a deal of fame,
For the Dock gives life to the ship that's lame,
And fire to the guns which appear so tame,
But which belch out Death with a blasting flame,
And the Huns may curse but THEY'RE to blame,
So
(*Chorus*) Heave away for Plymouth;
Heave away, Heave away
Heave away for Plymouth.

'SURVEY AND DEMAND'

'When the ship that is tired returneth
With the signs of the sea showing plain,
Men place her in Dock for a season,
And her speed she reneweth again.'

Laws of the Navy.

CARRUTHERS, the Senior Submarine Officer and Captain of '146' entered the Mess with the stealthy air of an assassin.

'Show me that varlet, Raymond,' he declaimed. 'Produce him that I may mete out to him the full measure of his punishments.'

'What's the row, James?' asked a voice from the depths of an arm-chair.

'Ha, knave, thou dost flout me. Twelve long years have I sought thee, and now . . . aha! The Captain desires speech with thee, even in his own cabin.'

'Good Heavens! Whatever's up? Surely to goodness he hasn't got to know about my bumping into Blake last night. I only scratched the paint, and a bally wonder, too, considering the mess up of boats there was.'

'I'll tell you what it is, my boy, at a price.'

'No. I'm darned if you do. I'll know all about

it soon enough,' replied Raymond, as he made for the door.

'Think twice, laddie, think twice,' called Carruthers after his retreating figure. 'A time will come when you will repent your harshness.'

As he knocked at the Captain's door, Raymond wondered what it was all about. He couldn't remember whether . . .

'Come in,' called a voice. 'Oh, that you, Raymond? Sit down. A telegram has just come from the Senior Naval Officer at Darlton. He says that the dry-dock will be vacant in a week's time for the space of a month, but if I don't make use of this opportunity he can't guarantee it again until September. It's earlier than I intended, but as I can't afford to lose this chance I shall send you down to get your re-fit over and done with, as you're next on turn. You'll leave here at three p.m. on Friday and arrive Saturday morning.'

'Re-fit!' Raymond showed his surprise in spite of himself. A vista of living in hotels swam before his eyes. A week's leave during the summer, a break in the monotony. Lots of work about a re-fit, of course, but . . .

The Captain was still speaking

'I'm sorry I can't give you longer notice, Raymond, but I mustn't let this opportunity slip. You've got your defect list made out up to date, of course.'

'Yes, sir. I'm all ready as far as that goes. How long do they expect to take over it.'

'Well, as it's your twelve-monthly re-fit, I expect about five or six weeks. It all depends on whether labour is to be had, of course. Nowadays one never knows That's settled, then. Your escort will be arranged for, and you'll leave at three p.m. on Friday unless I get any further orders.

'Very good, sir,' said Raymond, rising, 'and thank you, sir.

'Don't thank me, Raymond. I wouldn't let you go if I could help it. Far too valuable these hard times.

The captain of '123' closed the door quietly, and two minutes later was back in the ward room.

'Carruthers, you worm,' he said reproachfully, 'you knew it all the time. Now I've got to pay you your price in any case, you usurous Jew.'

'What is it?' chipped in Austin. 'Are you to be keelhauled at dawn?'

'No fear; re-fit.

'What!'

'Re-fit. R-E-F-I-T. Re-fit.'

Austin sank back in his chair and mopped a fevered brow.

'He talks of re-fits,' he babbled incoherently. 'Here are we working our fingers to the bone and running risks of hideous deaths daily, and the stripling talks of re-fits.

'Well, I suppose he's doing the decent anyway,' said the practical Johnson, getting up and ringing the bell.

'I imagine I'll have to,' laughed Raymond,

'hard as it is on the missus and the kids. See, how many is it? Five, six, eight cocktails, please, waiter.

Carruthers raised his glass with elaborate dignity.

'I drink more in pity than in friendship to the knave who refused his just recompense to the bearer of glad tidings. In other words, here's how.'

'Cheer-oh, my little ray of sunshine,' cried the Torpedo Lieutenant. 'What my most backward pupil in the noble art of work will do when he is torn from my tender care I tremble to contemplate, but be of good heart. Bertie will await your return to the fold and amply make up for the lost time, 'Naughty, now,' he added, ducking swiftly as a chit-block sizzed over his head. 'Remember me to all the Hieland lasses and gae canny wi' the whuskey.'

'You lucky bounder,' said Austin. 'Just imagine it. I did my re-fit in the depths of winter and had a positively loathsome leave. You'll just come in for the best time in the year.

'You might do a little commission for me on your way down, put in the Staff Paymaster. 'I've got a parcel I want taken home. Too big for the post, and I live in Darlton.'

'Me, too,' said the Fleet Surgeon plaintively. 'And it's only such a little one.'

'And get me some decent soft collars while you're down there,' cried the Engineer Commander. 'My wretched things are worn to shreds.'

'Here, steady on now, you chaps,' laughed Raymond. 'I'm not going till Friday. I'll make a list of all your wants and do my best.'

'Well, if you will go back to civilisation in this positively disgusting manner,' said Carruthers, 'you must expect the inevitable result. Hallo, here's Seagrave.

'Come in, my little man,' cooed the Torpedo Lieutenant gaily. 'And Boyd, too; this is a pleasure to be sure. Ring the bell nicely and ask the pretty gentlemen what they'll have.'

The new-comers blinked in astonishment.

'What is it, sir?' asked Seagrave. 'It's not my birthday nor Boyd's either, as far as I know.'

'No, no, my boy; but you're going down for a re-fit. Just think of it and all it means.'

'What! a re-fit. When?'

'Friday next,' said Raymond.

'Good Heavens! what luck,' cried Boyd. 'My brother home on leave, too. Good bally business.'

'Talking about leave, my friend,' persisted Torps, 'what are we all going to have?'

Seagrave rang the bell.

. . . . . .

Aft, on the port side of the *Parentis*, was a cabin, and in the cabin was a table. On the table was a large pile of books, sheets of foolscap, and mysterious forms labelled, S '134d,' S '0196,' etc. Close to the table was a chair, and on the chair sat an officer, with puckered brow and a fed-up expression on his face. The face was Raymond's.

Enter Seagrave with a harassed look and a further bundle of papers.

'Well, what is it now?' queried the seated one wearily. 'Oh, it's you again, is it? Go ahead.'

'Additions to the defect list. Only a few. And I've brought the list of alterations at the same time.

Oh, have you; that's cheery news. Great Scott! Is this what you call a few? The list's a fathom long as it is. Here, let's have a look. Hydroplane gear to be overhauled; steering gear overhauled and adjusted; new ventilator fans. Any one would imagine the boat was dropping to pieces. This is going to be " some " defect note, let me tell you. The alteration list isn't very huge, however. Bridge enlarged, stanchions fitted, hum. All tanks are down to be tested, of course, and air bottles as well. Engines stripped. Hum. Give me that pink sheet. And ahead we go on the defect note. The alteration list I'll let you copy out if you're good. Now, as to demand notes?'

'The coxswain's got all his made out, and Hoskins is doing his lot now. Then there'll be a good deal of stuff on survey and demand. Flags, shackles, looking-glass, clock, wire, and other things like that. Then Boyd wants some " Sperry " spares, and I think that's the lot.'

'And that's a bit o' luck,' the Lieut.-Commander said grimly, as Seagrave took himself off. 'Thank God for small mercies!'

As he himself put it, it was 'some' task. When

a submarine goes through her annual re-fit every item in the boat from the ballast tanks and engines to the knives and forks is taken out, if possible, overhauled, tested, and replaced. Long lists have to be prepared and signed or nothing can be done, and woe betide he who gets on the wrong side of the Naval Store Officer in the process.

Such things as awnings, flags, brooms, and other permanent stores that are desired to be renewed, must be entered on a mystic form printed in red and known as a 'survey' note, and are filled in also on a second form printed in funereal black, which is called a 'demand' note or hope-you-may-get-it chit. Should the state of the decayed articles be sufficiently decrepit to satisfy the N.S.O.[1] the demand note is produced in triumph, and new articles are issued and borne away as captives to the boat by hoary-headed and deceiving matlows.

Such requisites as paint, rope, yarn, etc., which are known as 'consumable stores,' need only be filled in on the 'demand' note. But here again the demander must be wary. A printed form is issued to him stating clearly exactly to how much of each commodity his class of vessel is entitled, and an avenging fate overtakes the luckless wight who demands, by accident or design, more than his prescribed allowance. Should he escape these pitfalls, another horror still rises to baulk him. Articles under sub-head 'A' must not be named on the same sheet as those under sub-heads 'B,'

[1] Naval Store Officer.

'C,' 'D,' 'E,' or 'F,' and every form must be countersigned by the commanding officer to the effect that he is not attempting to get more than his due from rapacious Dockyard. Also the 'reason for demand' must be given, either 'to complete' (Establishment) or 'in lieu' (of old worn out).

The coxswain needs paint, rope, oil, tar, flags, bunting, awnings, yarn, spikes, and a host of other things. The needs of the engine-room are enormous, the electrical staff clamours for insulating tape, lamp globes, fuses by dozens, and wire by the hundred feet. The torpedo accessories raise up their heads and gibber, and the batteries, the life and soul of the boat, shriek to be cleaned and washed and fed. But cold and incisive as the voice of doom, 'Articles under sub-head "A" must not be named on the same sheet as these under sub-head "B."' And, 'Establishment list for submarines "O" class.'

The defect note is finished at last and assumes huge proportions. Pink and blushing as it well may be, it begins with the lifting of the batteries and the overhauling of the cells, wanders through the stripping of the engines, the testing of the tanks, and the dry-docking of the boat, and comes to rest at last with the painting of the internal economy and the re-fitting of certain shelves (they were never there before) on which the captain wishes to place his boots presumably, on his return to sea.

The alteration list is a quick breath of hope

from a fervent heart yet sick with longing. But here again Admiralty steps in and allows or not, as the case may be, the placing of the wine locker above or under the chest of drawers, as the case may or may not be again. Won't she want painting by the time it's all finished.

The 'Demand' notes are made out in triplicate and signed to the bitter end. 'The 'Survey and Demand Notes' are made out in quadruplicate, but mercy of mercies, only one need be signed by the long-suffering captain of the boat. The stacks of paper rise, and rise, and blow away, and are picked up and blow away again. But at last they are finished, and thanks to them and the brains that conceived them, when the submarine gets to work, her re-fit will run like clockwork and no hitch will occur despite the multiplicity and diversity of the trades and workmen who will be employed upon her. Youth scoffs in its ignorance at the filling in of forms, but age and wisdom walk hand in hand and bow to the minds that ordained these things, having seen the results and gone away . . . marvelling. For the results are good, and good is good all the world over, and no man but a sniveller can expect any better praise. But Admiralty expects no praise at all, for she is very old and very very wise, and knowing, winks one eye and smiles.

So the maze of papers straightens itself out, gives a shake, nears completion, and lo, the preparations *are* completed. Three days gone, and

on the fourth '123' can hurry down to Darlton, with the assurance that whatever else happens *her* refit will go smoothly enough. Nothing can interfere with that, for her paper-work is complete and all in order, and things will move.

No rush, no hurry, but a steady marching to an appointed end. Small things, but the outcome of hundreds of years of experience and waiting, and the results have been, and are being, felt all the world over.

As Raymond signed the last chit and sealed the final envelope he heaved a sigh of relief. The last form was filled and despatched and all was ready for the morrow. The ward room made merry over the event and several guests were invited to dinner, among whom was Clinton, the captain of H.M. Destroyer *Master*, who was to escort '123' down to Darlton.

After dinner the Destroyer man wandered down to Raymond's cabin and the two sat over their charts discussing plans for the morrow.

'Here we are,' said Raymond, referring to his orders. 'We leave at 3.0 p.m. It'll be dark by then and we've got to anchor for the night. God knows why. Get under weigh again at four in the morning on Saturday, and arrive about four in the afternoon.'

'Yes, that looks all right. What speed are you going to do?'

'Ten knots steady.'

'Then I'll do about twenty-two zig-zag and keep

ahead of you. You'll have to steer a straight course, I suppose.'

'Yes, and if we see anything I shall dive at once. Don't you worry about me. You probably won't be able to see me, but I shall look out for myself and help you all I can if you have to put up a scrap.

'All right. You've got a copy of the secret signals for entering Darlton?'

'Yes, and they know we're coming at every signal station down the coast.'

'No anchor lights, by the way.'

'Rotten job this escorting business when it's a submarine. Every one suspects 'em, friend and foe alike. I expect there are patrols about there at night, and that's why we've got to anchor.'

'Expect so. Anyway it's not very far, only about 180 miles. How long are you stopping in Darlton?'

'I'm not. Got to return on Sunday. Rotten job escorting anyway. Had quite a lot of it lately. Hate it.'

'Well, that's all arranged for, and now—yes, I think so,' and together they returned to the ward-room and rejoined the revellers.

The Engineering Commander was making a speech.

'——most auspicious occasion,' he was saying as they opened the door. 'We are all heartily glad that our young friends are leaving us.' (Hear, hear.) 'In fact, I dare venture to say that there is not a

single dissentient voice.' (Cries of 'No, no.') 'But a time will come when they will be seen once more in our midst.' (Question.) 'Will be seen once more in our midst, to the sorrow of the Hun and delight of the Deputy Naval Store Officer down at Darlton.' ('Yes, yes.') 'Do not despair; it is not a British custom We must hope for the best. I trust you will all join me in speeding the departing nuisance and drink damnation to "123,"' and the orator subsided amidst thunders of applause.

The Torpedo Lieutenant rose, calm and dignified, and eyed the members of the ward room with a dissatisfied air.

'Mr President, gentleman, and officers of "123." (Roars of appreciation.) 'It is with heartfelt satisfaction that I rise on the occasion, or rather to the occasion, of my young pupil's departure. We all know Raymond; he has been long amongst us.' (Loud and prolonged groans.) 'We know him well; we know his shortcomings.' (We do, we do.') 'It is my painful duty to inform you that he is one my most backward pupils in the art of work.' ('He is, he is.') 'Nevertheless he is improving.' ('No, no.') 'Now, all my efforts are like to be set at naught.' ('Yes, yes.') 'But we must not give in.' ('Never.') We must back one another up. We must coalesce; we must unite; and on his return we must make a determined and extended effort to save him from himself.' ('We will, we will.') 'We must stand back to

back. We must keep on hitting. In the words of the immortal Captain Smith of *Titanic* fame, we must "Be British."'

Raymond rose to reply.

'Mr President, Gentlemen, I hope and trust that during my temporary absence you will conduct yourselves as little like officers and as much like gentlemen as you can, without causing yourselves any great personal inconvenience. Glad as I am to leave you, my heart bleeds when I try to imagine your dilemma when bereft of my restraining influence. You are a lot of rotters.' ('No, no.') 'You are a lot of rotters, to whom I wish bad weather and flat beer, and don't forget that if you increase with your motors in series, you increase on the one you haven't increased on before you increase on the one that you have. Think it out well and dream about it. I will endeavour to execute your commissions.' ('Hear, hear, hear.') 'Little as I wish to.' ('Oh, oh.') 'With the greatest pleasure in the world we part brass rags at 3.0 p.m. to-morrow.' (Cheers.)

Then the ward room broke loose, and an obstacle race was organised, much to the detriment of the furniture, and after Blake had given a juggling turn the visitors were called on for a side-show.

After much whispering and preparation, during which time the whisky was circulated, it materialised in the form of a charade in which a Jew,

organ-grinder, a beauteous damsel, and a gentleman with a green nose were the leading lights.

Then Hackensmidt and Madrali (Carruthers and Johnson) wrestled for the world's championship of 'caught-as-caught-couldn't' wrestling, the result of which was that a gasping Johnson lay on the flat of his back, knocking feebly on the deck, what time an empurpled Carruthers kneaded him in the chest. Visitors and hosts alike arose and fell on them.

The rugger scrum which ensued was a huge success, though the ball (somebody's Nautical Tables) suffered rather in the process. Then the piano got going, and as eleven o'clock struck came the chorus of :—

> 'A German officer crossed the Rhine,
> Skibye, Skiboo!'

hammered out by the lungs of the united ward room.

Then the party broke up and the visitors departed. Farewells and 'good lucks' were exchanged, and the ward room servants locked up the darkened quarters. '123' was off to-morrow, and her captain was rather popular.

. . . . . .

At three p.m. the following afternoon H.M.S. *Master* hoisted the signal 'M.K.,' requesting from the Flag permission to proceed in execution of previous orders. Hardly had the flags reached the yard-arm when an answering splash of colour

(red with a white cross) rewarded the efforts of the hawk-eyed signalman.

'Signal affirmed, sir,' he reported, and as the *Master's* anchor came up into the pipe the Church Pennant fluttered to the deck, and, turning on her heel with a white threshing of water, she came ahead and made for the harbour entrance.

Behind her was '123,' who had left the *Parentis's* side some ten minutes before. Her Diesels had just started, and the oily smoke of the exhaust was thinning away astern as she fell into line behind her escort. She was on passage now, and her routine was rather different from that of the regular patrol work. On the bridge were Raymond, Boyd, the coxswain, and the look-out. By-and-by when clear of the land the officers could take regular watches and drop into the order of ordinary surface ships.

Nevertheless, she was in diving trim, and only needed to flood main ballast to take her under in case of necessity. Down below she looked like a veritable warehouse. Most of the officers' luggage was going down in the escort, but bags and portmanteaux that were likely to be needed *en route*, or immediately on arrival, were stowed below, and the crew's bags and hammocks were piled up in the fore-end, a mighty heap of belongings which had had to be compensated for when trimming the boat for diving.

As they steamed out of the harbour, the submarine and her greatest enemy, there were many

envious glances cast at the boat that was going down for her re-fit. 'Lucky dogs,' quoth a watch-keeper in a battleship, as they cleared her counter.[1] 'Re-fit and leave. I haven't had any for years.'

Outside the harbour and clear of the defences Boyd put her on her southerly course, and the log was streamed. Not a log that tows astern like that of a surface ship, but a long cylindrical tube carrying vanes at its lower end, which is lowered through a hole in the bottom of the boat and packed to prevent leakage. The Destroyer shot ahead at her twenty knots (it was nothing to her, as she was one of the latest class, and capable of a good deal more) and began her zig-zag.

'123' had perforce to keep a straight course, while the *Master* steamed about a mile ahead of her and dashed across the bows in her efforts to reduce her twenty knots to ten.

She was doing a twelve points zig-zag now, six points to starboard of the course and then six points to port, while '123' ambled along behind at her steady ten straight. It was a good illustration of the hare and the tortoise, though if you had told Raymond so he would have brained you on the spot.

At four o'clock the captain went below, and he and Seagrave had tea behind the green curtains and discussed the coming prospects of re-fit. So far the weather was beautiful and the sea like a

[1] The overhang of the stern.

mill-pond, and after the meal Seagrave got a deck-chair up the fore-hatch and sat on the superstructure with a magazine. Raymond was dozing down below, in spite of the strains of a wheezy accordion that came from the region of the engine-room, and Boyd, the helmsman, and the look-out were in charge of the bridge. Most of the crew who were off were sleeping too. This was a passage, not a business patrol, and though they were prepared if anything should arise they were not looking for trouble this time. The Destroyer continued her erratic dashings across the bow, men came up for a smoke or to point out landmarks on the coast to one another, and dinner-time came and went. About half-past eight a distant smudge of smoke took shape and hardened in the form of an armed trawler who bore down upon them, fussily belligerent. *Master* stopped her gyrations and took steady station ahead, her yard-arms eloquent of her consort's right to exist. But the trawler was persistent, and closed them with her 6 pounder manned and every beam in her creaking with suspicion. She challenged, was answered, still held on, and then sullenly turned on her heel, a disappointed and disgusted trawler. Then *Master* drew ahead again, and as '123' went by a boy in the trawler waved his cap and shouted something. The sun set and twilight gave way to darkness. The point of land ahead gathered itself out of the mist, and a small light showed from the Destroyer's stern. Then she steadied ahead on a straight

course again until just before ten o'clock, when she put her helm a-starboard.

Raymond put his telegraph over and the 'Klaxons' hooted below.

'Stop both,' he said. 'Not bad; just about reached Hunter's Point by ten o'clock. Stand by the weight. Group down.'

'Both engine-clutches out, sir,' came the messenger's voice up the hatch.

'Ay, ay. Astern both.'

A rattle from ahead told that the Destroyer had picked up her moorings, and a moment later Raymond gave the order: 'Stop both. Let go.'

A whirring of wire followed as the weight was released, and then the messenger's voice rose again.

'Took bottom in 12 fathoms, sir.'

'All right. Veer out to 36 fathoms.'

'Thirty-six fathoms, sir. Brought up.'

Seagrave reappeared from the depths, and took on the anchor watch. He and the look-out were to remain on till midnight, when Boyd and another seaman would relieve them.

'Have you started a charge yet?' asked Raymond, as he prepared to go below.

'Yes, sir. 600 in parallel.'

'That'll do. Tell Boyd we're getting under weigh at four o'clock, and if you see anything, she's all ready for diving. Let me know at once, but if anything starts firing or stunting about

dive at once on the weight, and we'll cut the wire when we get down.'

'Very good, sir. Good-night,' and Seagrave was left to his own devices.

A dark night and a dead calm sea. Half a mile to the southward a black smudge showed where the Destroyer was anchored and the western horizon was filled with the low coast-line about three miles distant. Then the moon rose and a vigilant look-out was necessary in case any enemy raiders were on the prowl. Very still and silent, save for the lapping of the water round the pressure hull and the sound of the engines and the battery-fans that told that the charge was under weigh. Otherwise the boat was ready for diving. Her hatches were closed save for the conning-tower, and the compass-lid screwed down. The gyro repeater had been sent below and all unnecessary gear stowed away.

The two vessels swung to their anchors, and the moon climbed higher and higher, changing from red to orange and orange to silver as it cleared the mists of the horizon. Midnight came at last, and with it came Boyd who was to keep the middle watch.

'Here we are, pilot,' said Seagrave. 'Pleased to see you. The lead's over aft. The *Master's* half a mile or so off bearing about 185 deg., and we're ready for diving except for the charge. Skipper wants to be called to get under weigh at four o'clock. Let him know if you see anything,

and dive on the weight if necessary. Got the challenge and reply? Right then, that's the lot. Cheer-oh.'

And he disappeared below to hot cocoa and Morpheus.

The look-out was relieved, and the vigil continued. The little bridge was a weary place when '123' was not under weigh, and time passed very slowly. Boyd yawned miserably and climbed down on to the superstructure, as it was calm enough to walk there without running the risk of falling overboard.

But even here it wasn't all it might be. One hit one's head on the jumping wires and stumbled over the closed after-hatch, and after a while he returned to the bridge and the cold comfort of the little stool screwed into the deck. The look-out was on the other side, leaning up against the standard. He also was wishing the night would pass and they could get on down to Darlton. Three o'clock; not so very much longer. . . .

And then suddenly they were both on the alert, staring out to starboard where something was showing on the northern horizon.

'Call the Captain,' shouted Boyd down the hatch. 'Break the charge and shut off for diving. In tail-clutch and close battery ventilators. Diving stations.'

In a moment the crew were awake and Raymond on the bridge rubbing his eyes and peering out at the intruder. The Destroyer had seen her also,

and her cable was coming in hand over fist. The sound of the engines died away, and a voice came up the hatch reporting that they were 'shut off for diving and tail-clutch in, sir.'

'Flood 1,' replied Raymond. 'Stand by 2 and 3. Heave in the weight.'

'Open No. 1 Kingston and No. 1 main vent,' came Seagrave's voice. Then, '1 full, sir.'

'All right. Stand by to dive.'

'Don't think it's much after all, sir,' said Boyd. 'Looks rather like a tramp.'

It *was* a tramp. An Admiralty collier on her way south for a fresh cargo of black diamonds, and Raymond cursed his unlucky star that had brought him out in the middle of the night for nothing.

''Vast heaving the weight,' he cried. 'Blow 1. Fall out diving stations.'

The tramp waddled by without seeing them (they were a very small mark even in the moonlight), and never knew the excitement she had caused, but her ears must have burned nevertheless.

'I don't think we need start the charge again,' Raymond told the 'Sub' when he got below once more. 'We'll be getting under weigh in another hour.'

And so the remainder of the watch passed peacefully, and at four o'clock Raymond was up once more and the weight anchor was hove in.

The Destroyer was awake also, and her cable brought up the dripping anchor as '123' was

getting her engines ready. The compass was brought up and everything prepared, and then the *Master's* screw began to revolve and she swung round to her course.

Raymond leant down the hatch.

'Engines 300 revs.,' he shouted.

'Three 'undrest, sir,' floated up from below, and then away came the Diesels and a cloud of petrol-filled exhaust swept over the bridge. '123' gathered speed, and the vapour thinned away as Boyd steadied her on her course. Then *Master* drew ahead and began her zig-zag. A break of a few hours and they were off again on their way to Darlton, the present goal of the 'ship's company's' desires.

The dawn was struggling over the eastern sky and away to starboard the land was showing up through the shadows. With the sunrise came a cloud of trawlers, who hovered round until absolutely certain of the submarine's bona fides, and then fell away and pursued their lawful business of Hun hunting. Farther south a patrol of three Destroyers came up over the horizon, swept them with a searching glance, and hurried on over the earth's shoulder, following their patrol-track as a sentry does his beat. After breakfast they fell in with a supply-ship on her way to the Fleet, and later on passed a coastwise cargo-boat, who turned on heel and ran till convinced by the *Master* that '123' was not a 'U' boat.

And so the day wore on, and the funny man

cracked jokes and the signalman played a mandoline in the after-compartment, and towards three o'clock in the afternoon the smoke of Darlton was visible down the coast.

The *Master* slackened her speed and kept closer to her charge, her signal halliards bristling with replies to challenges and evidences of her innocent intentions, but the outer patrols who came out to meet them still treated them as unwelcome guests, until something the Destroyer said seemed to satisfy the senior ship, and the group of trawlers fell away and *Master* and her consort were allowed to pass on without further interruption.

The inside trawlers gave way to them, and the boom was lowered in answer to their request, and then the Destroyer at the gate woke up to the fact that strangers were entering, and sprang to life waving her semaphore and generally 'doing things.'

'*Master* to proceed to No. 4 and 5 buoys,' she ordered. '"123" to proceed to inner harbour and make fast to quay opposite No. 2 Store.'

The escort swung away to her moorings, and '123' held on to the inner harbour, where a crowd of dockyard labourers was gathered to see her pass. Raymond dropped her alongside and tied her up. Then he sent for Seagrave.

'I'm going to report my arrival to the S.N.O.,[1]' he told him. 'You'd better make arrangements for the crew's accommodation in the submarine

[1] Senior Naval Officer.

barracks. There's one in the dockyard somewhere. Boyd can get our luggage off the escort and take the lot up to the Royal Hotel. We'll have to live there while we're here. See everything squared up. I'll be back as soon as I can, but I don't suppose we'll dry dock till next week.'

A red-haired lad on the quay turned to a dock-side loafer as he pointed at the boat,—

'Is yon what you ca' a soobmarine?' he inquired.

'Ay, yon's it.'

. . . . . .

Sunday, the day of rest, was by no means restful for '123.' A deluge of visitors poured into the boat, starting with the Chief Constructor and Engineer Commander of the Dockyard, and ending with foremen fitters and boilermakers and electricians. All these gentlemen appeared with lengthy lists and copies of the defect notes, and most of them, most certainly the Commander and the Constructor, seemed to be under the fixed impression that the boat was captained by a demon in disguise who was doing his dirty damnedest to get more done to her than was her just allowance. Visits to the S.N.O. and Naval Store Officer took place early in the day, and by noon the battery boards had been lifted by a host of workmen, and the great cells were coming out, dangling on the ends of tackles, to be gently lowered on to trucks and wheeled away to the battery sheds. Later in the afternoon a small army attacked the engine-room and began stripping the engines, while Hoskins

and his merry men danced attendance and shed salt tears of sorrow.

The first few days were bound to be strenuous. The torpedoes, gun, and ammunition were all taken away and stowed in sheds and magazines, and another group of workmen got to work on the superstructure, lifting the condemned plates and generally making havoc and noise in the process.

Meanwhile, the crew were accommodated in the Naval Barracks, whence they were shepherded to work each morning by the coxswain, and the officers lived in hotels in the town. There was no thought of leave just yet, as there was too much work to do, and on Monday morning the boat was placed in dry dock.

As the water descended in the dock her underwater lines became visible, and one was struck with their resemblance to the shape of a fish. The tail, the fins, the head, all were there, and the holes in the bow-cap looked like the two great goggle eyes of an underwater monster.

The re-fit was now in full swing. Both batteries were out in the sheds, and Seagrave spent every spare minute he had in hovering over the cells and expostulating with the electrical experts who were to overhaul them. Meanwhile Raymond would be in the boat or visiting the powers that be, and Boyd was usually to be found in the vicinity of the office of that mighty man, the Naval Store Officer, for the greater part of the day. There

was not much for the crew to do. The engine-room staff were helping the workmen in their department, and the electrical experts were busy also, but the ordinary rank and file were employed mostly in chipping paint and rust and cleaning up messes made by the busier members of the staff.

At the end of the first week the engines were practically ashore, the after superstructure had also been lifted, and the exhaust pipes removed. Both batteries were out and all the air bottles had gone ashore to be tested. Stages had been rigged round the boat, and men were working on the bow-cap, which was to be lowered and overhauled, and also on the rudders and hydroplanes which were being stripped down, rebushed, and generally attended to.

The boat was in a state of ordered chaos by now, and it was almost impossible to move in her below. Men seemed to be everywhere, all round her and underneath her even, for the Kingston valves in the bottom of the boat were being seen to and tested among other things. She lay in the dry dock like a landed salmon, hammered at and struck by merciless and persisting workmen who seemed to delight in tearing things to pieces. The main motors were already receiving their due modicum of attention, much to the distraction of the T.I., who spent most of his day in the torpedo shed.

Finally, after about ten days of it, when the

ballast tanks had been cleaned out and painted (you had to crawl in through a tiny manhole to get to them), the time for testing arrived, and Seagrave was allowed to depart on his well-earned leave. The tanks were tested separately by a water pressure, water being pumped in and left at the required pressure for a stated interval. Then the tank was drained and opened up, and Raymond and Hoskins, who was a man in great demand just now, would crawl in clad in overalls and see that all was in order. The main ballast tank, the trimming tanks, auxiliary and buoyancy tanks, were all tested in this way, and even the fuel tanks had to go through the same ordeal, though of a much less severe character. By the time these tests were all satisfactorily finished, the re-fit was in its third week, and matters were at their height. The battery tanks had been cleaned out and were now being 'rosmanited,' or covered with a preparation that resists the action of the acid, if any should be spilt out of the cells. The bow-cap had been down and replaced, and the rudders and hydroplanes were once more in position by the time Seagrave returned from his ten days' leave and Boyd was able to go away for his spell. Raymond, poor wight, would be lucky if he could snatch a couple of days just at the end of the performance.

The air bottles underwent their ordeal and were replaced singly, a matter of much labour, and the engines began to return in pieces and take

shape and resemble their accustomed appearance. The bigger jobs were over, and the boat was painted inside and out, and left the dry dock after being a month out of the water. Then the battery began to come back, and the cells were strapped together and the boards laid down, and the internal appearance of the boat looked a little more ship-shape. But there was still a host of minor things to be done Motors and rheostats were ashore, and had to be replaced and wired, alterations were being made to the bridge, and the superstructure was not yet in place. Presently Boyd returned from leave, and Raymond made a dash to London only to be recalled three days later over a matter of an alteration to the H.P. air line. The stores began to drift aboard and the boat to look a little more like her old self, for they were speeding things up now owing to urgent telegrams of recall to the *Parentis*, and every one was working at fever heat.

The last stages were reached, however, when the painting party arrived to beautify '123's' internals with white enamel, what time the carpenters were putting up those shelves (on which one would imagine the captain wanted to place his boots) and shifting the wine locker from above to below the chest of drawers.

However, the messes were clearing up and the time of turmoil nearly at an end; most of the crew had had a few days' leave and the re-fit had been satisfactory.

At the end of five weeks the boat was finished

and nothing remained but to take in fuel, torpedoes, gun, and ammunition, and carry out the final engine and diving tests before returning to the welcoming bosom of the *Parentis*.

A copy of the programme to be carried out in the way of tests was submitted to, and approved by, the Senior Naval Officer, and the boat took in her fuel and war machines without further delay. On the morrow the engine trials were to take place, and the ship's company paused and drew breath before the final struggle.

At an early hour the following morning Seagrave left the hotel *en route* for the dockyard, and by eight o'clock '123' had been tied up to the quay-wall as if she were never intended to leave the all-embracing docks of Darlton. The Engineer Commander and Raymond put in an appearance by the time all was ready, and the worthy Hoskins and his staff were very much in evidence. A final inspection and polish up were made, and then the motors were started and the engine clutches forced home.

There was the usual fizz and bump as the exhausts coughed out the initial clouds of white smoke and the explosions became quicker and quicker. The port engine got well away, but after a manful effort the chugging of the starboard Diesel wavered and dragged and stopped altogether. '123' had surged forward when the screws began to revolve, and was tugging at her mooring ropes like a terrier on a lead, in spite of the fact that only half her power

was under weigh. But the ropes held her, and presently Hoskins's face appeared up the engine-room hatch shouting an explanation through the din made by the well-behaved port engine. After a couple of false starts, during which time the Engineer Commander and the E.R.A. gravely combated over her behaviour (blood brothers for the moment), the trouble was rectified, and the defaulter made good her character. Full speed was slowly worked up to, and the boat lay to the quay with her propellers turning at many revolutions a minute.

Presently the Commander took himself off, and even Raymond was satisfied when the worthy Hoskins, who held in great scorn all dockyard work, pronounced that 'though they 'aven't done wot they ought to 'ave, wot they 'ave done ain't bad.'

The test took the greater part of the day, and it was arranged that the diving trial should take place on the morrow. This would be the supreme test, when all the work of the re-fit would be put to the proof, and several of the dockyard officers and contractors' people were to come down in the boat to see it carried out. Raymond was rather pleased about it, although he hated passengers, for, as he put it himself: 'It brings it home to those beggars far more if they're in the boat when anything goes wrong than if we just come in and tell 'em about it afterwards.'

And so the next day the diving trials took place. The passengers were aboard ten minutes before

the scheduled time for leaving, and as the hour struck, '123' pushed off from the quay and steered out of the harbour, at the entrance to which she was met by a trawler flying a large red flag, who was to warn all outside traffic of the presence of a submarine.

As a large number of alterations and additions had been effected which were liable to alter her trim, the tanks were all empty, with the exception of the fuel tanks, and she was to do a standing trim in shallow water. That is, she was to remain stopped, flood her main ballast, and then very gingerly admit the necessary extra water to take her down.

Three miles outside the harbour she brought up in the appointed spot and came to a standstill, the passengers were hurried below, and the order given for 'diving stations.' Then Boyd and the coxswain climbed down the conning-tower hatch, followed by Raymond, who, after closing the lid, opened one of the scuttle guards and remained up in the tower. From here he could see through the thick glass the trim of the boat and the manner in which she was taking the water. Boyd was at the periscope, and Seagrave was wandering all over the boat, superintending and seeing that all was in readiness. The dockyard people, most of whom had not been down in a submarine before, 'stood round,' looking rather foolish. They were beginning to realise that their lives were in the hands of the Lieut.-Commander they had been

wont to beard in their own fastnesses, and a sense of proportion was slowly dawning within them. The crew were at their ordinary diving stations, and Seagrave reported 'All ready, sir.'

'Flood 1 and 4,' said Raymond, and over came the Kingston levers, and as the vents were opened the water could be heard gurgling into the tanks. 2 and 3 were flooded in the same manner, and the boat was in main ballast trim. Then the trimming tanks were partially filled, and as the buoyancy flooded the boat began to have a tender feeling as if she were on the tremble, and the water began lapping into the superstructure overhead as she settled down.

'How is she?' asked the captain.

'Two degrees by the stern, sir,' replied the coxswain.

'Another 500 in the fore, then,' and five hundred gallons more were admitted, when the coxswain reported 'Horizontal, sir.'

'Right. Eleven thousand in the auxiliary.'

The auxiliary vent was opened while a stoker, hauled back the Kingston, and Seagrave watched the gauge as the level crept up in the glass tube. Presently he gave an order, and the lever was snapped back into position.

'Eleven thousand, sir.'

'All right,' came Raymond's voice from the conning-tower. 'Is she showing anything on the depth-gauge?'

'Three feet, sir.'

'Give her another five hundred.'

Meanwhile Boyd at the periscope was keeping a careful look out for approaching craft. A collier in her way in came perilously close, but the watchful trawler headed her off and led her out of harm's way. As the tanks flooded his sky view became less and less; as the instrument was fully hoisted he could guess she was settling down before the gauge began to register.

Finally, Raymond came down from the control room to see that all was as it should be.

'She'll do now,' he explained to the passengers. 'She's got all the ballast she wants, and only needs a touch to take her down. We're like a bottle half-full of water—just on the bob, as it were.' Another look round and then: 'Start the motors,' he added 'Full fields. Take her down gently.'

The boat gave a slight shudder, and the sound of the water could be heard lapping past her as she gathered weigh. The coxswains spun their wheels, eyes on the gauge, and gradually she crept down to thirty feet.

'Hold her at that,' said Raymond, and then he and Seagrave and the dockyard experts made a tour of the boat, while Boyd lowered the periscope and kept an eye on the helmsman to see that he was on his course. The inspection proved satisfactory (it was a lengthy business), and the party returned to the control room, and Raymond ordered the motors to be stopped and the boat was brought up to 18 feet.

'All clear, Boyd?' he asked.

'All clear, sir. The trawler's just astern.'

'Right. Group up. Thirty feet.'

'Grouped up, sir,' from Furness, as the grouper-switch came over with a bang and the motors got away in earnest.

The boat was doing a good eight knots now, and could be felt vibrating through the water as the speed increased. All eyes were on the gauges, the coxswains watching their depths and the L.T.O.s their ammeters as Raymond increased to 800 ampères. Then once more the motors were stopped and the batteries placed in parallel or 'grouped down,' and then came the order,—

'Eighty feet.'

As the hydroplane and diving rudder wheels went over, the visitors' expressions became a little tense and anxious. One of them laughed and cracked a stale joke, another fidgeted with a bunch of keys, but nobody said anything.

That sense of proportion was developing.

The depth needle crept up to the requisite depth and steadied, and then another tour of inspection took place, for leaks this time, and was also pronounced satisfactory. The visitors breathed again, but thoughts of the fresh air and sunlight up above *would* obtrude themselves nevertheless It seemed so still and quiet, and the electric light glared and winked on the brass work while up above . . .

'A hundred feet.'

Somebody coughed nervously (it was *not* one

of the crew) and the boat continued her descent. At the hundred foot level she steadied and the final inspection was made, and to the great relief of certain members of the passengers, who were thinking about that pressure of 45 lb. to the square inch, the boat rose to thirty feet, the motors were stopped, and Raymond gave the order.—

'Blow 1, 2, and 3.'

The Kingstons were opened, and Hoskins on the air-manifold got the air in group working, the depth needle hurried back to zero, and Raymond clambered up the conning-tower and threw open the hatch.

'One,' he shouted, 'two, three,' as the tanks emptied, and then the burly coxswain pushed his way up and took the helm, followed by Boyd and the much-relieved dockyard potentates.

A bell r[illegible]g below and the engines were started up. The protecting trawler bore down on them, and they were off for the harbour at ten good knots an hour. No fuss, no noise, but the visitors were thinking and thinking hard. They had something to tell their wives about when they got home that evening, and appeared a little thoughtful for a day or two afterwards.

As they came in through the harbour gates a small crowd of workmen watched them go by. They didn't see many submarines in Darlton, and it was quite an event for them. Her mast was hoisted and her White Ensign stood out stiffly in the morning breeze as she stood across the

dock and tied up once more alongside the quay.

The passengers stepped ashore with a sigh of relief, and with profuse thanks for 'an interesting experience' and well wishes for the future, made off to mark the day with a red letter in their calendars. Raymond smiled as he watched them go. As for Seagrave, he was consulting with Hoskins over a stiff Kingston lever, and Boyd was closing down the gyro compass.

. . . . . .

The final stores were taken in in the afternoon, mostly tinned food and brass polish and the hundred and one small items that crop up at the last moment. The provisions presented quite a formidable array, for the modern submarine is able to carry a large amount for cases of necessity, which her electric cooking-range is able to cope with, and prepare in any manner of which the cook is capable. In addition to her preserved rations, she also carries sufficient fresh meat for her wants, if on a short patrol, or at any rate enough for two or three days if the outing is to be a lengthy one.

By evening the final touches had been added, and '123' lay to the quay a wiser and a better boat. She and her officers knew a great deal more about her than they had known before she was hauled to pieces, and smacked and riveted by the dockyard hordes.

The boat was locked up for the night, and the coxswain and his men trooped off to supper in the

barracks; Boyd and Seagrave returned to the hotel, and Raymond went off to the S.N.O.'s office to report his boat finished and ready to return to her base.

It was not till dinner, eaten in the dining-room of the hotel, a chamber that reminded one of past glories and ancient pomp and circumstance, that he put in an appearance. The room was fairly crowded when he arrived, as he was rather late, and he had to thread his way between the other guests' chairs to reach the table the three occupied on the window side of the room.

Anxious mamma glanced severely at him, slightly bored papa exchanged a nod and a good-evening, and demure Miss So-and-So smiled into her plate. A large portion of the remainder were military officers passing through the town or staying for a short while on duty. Those of his own seniority hailed him with aplomb; he had a knack of making himself liked everywhere.

'Well?' queried Seagrave, as his captain sat down.

'Curious news,' began Raymond, attacking the soup. 'From a Service point of view I'm fed up about it, but from a purely personal standpoint it's jolly good business. We can't go back to base for another three days, as they can't get an escort before then.'

'What awful rot; you'd think they'd have plenty of Destroyers knocking about doing nothing, or at the worst they might let us go up by ourselves.'

'And get sunk by our own patrols on the first night up. No thank you, George, not for mine this journey. You as a young and able officer ought to be jolly pleased to think you can have another whole three days among this bevy of beauty. You don't make the most of your chances.'

'This is such a dull hole, though,' put in Boyd; 'you can't get much in the way of amusements in the evening. What on earth can we do to shake things?'

'Now wait, I have an idea. I feel it maturing,' said Raymond, holding his hand to his brow. 'Don't speak for a moment, it's coming. Ah-h-h, I have it! We'll give a dance, a Submarine dance here in the hotel; the drawing-room will be just the place, and we'll invite all the old fogies who're staying here, and a few choice spirits of our own for leavening. It'll be all right, the manager and I are old pals, and I've done it before. I'll try and fix it for to-morrow night. It begins with men only, and we give them a practice attack with pillows for torpedoes and Boyd for the periscope. That comes off in my room, by the way. Then we adjourn to the drawing-room, and the damsels troop in, and we get the show going. Little Miss Bored Stiff, or whatever her name is, will be only too pleased to bang on the piano, I feel sure. What do you think of it?'

'Not so dusty. What about clothes, though?'

'Just monkey jackets and bow ties and white kid gloves. Oh, and you can't disgrace me by

appearing in those disreputable old pumps, so you'll have to trot out and buy new ones. What about you, Seagrave?'

'I was just thinking. I don't seem to remember having a decent suit to my name, but I'll do my best.'

After dinner the manager was approached and the subject gently broached to him. It took an effort, but after a little while he proved amenable, and agreed to provide decorations and refreshments in return for the addition of certain items on the officers' extra bills. Miss Bored Stiff, after a deal of gushing, agreed to do her share, and the invitations were sent out the next morning.

'The officers of H.M. Submarine "123" request the pleasure of the company of —— at a Submarine dance to-night in the drawing-room at 9.0. p.m.'

And so the invitations were accepted—all, that is, except two, and they were two very old people, and the preparations were duly made, and 8.30 p.m. saw a crowd of fifteen young gentlemen in Sam Browne belts collected in Raymond's room, drinking their liqueurs and smoking their cigars with the air of war-worn warriors. There was a certain amount of noise in the room as well, in fact it filled up most of the odd spaces where the aforesaid young gentlemen were not sitting, but matters were moving, and a 'submarine attack' was developing.

Boyd was dangling in mid-air from the end of a line thrown round a stout hat-peg and made

fast to the bed rail (he had to be the periscope after all), and an arrangement of chairs and what-nots represented the diving rudder wheels and other control-room etceteras. A little way off Seagrave stood by an arm-chair, to whose back was fixed an ingenious arrangement, whose principal ingredients were pillows and a length of rubber tubing. The spectators sat where they could, and prepared to learn the methods of attack as demonstrated by a submarine expert.

At an order from Raymond, a young gentleman with a single star upon his cuff went through the operation of starting the motors, mimicking the gestures of the L.T.O. working the switches at the motor-board. The captain then gazed fixedly between Boyd's dangling boots and gave the order, 'take her down.'

Everybody groaned, hissed, and hooted, while a youth in shirt sleeves splashed water in a basin to represent the wash of the sea over the conning-tower. Two others manipulated the diving wheel chairs, and the hands on the face of a broken clock were gravely moved on in imitation of the depth-gauge.

'A thousand feet,' said Raymond. 'Hold her at that, idiot. Oh, hell, she's leaking.' This as the basin worker upset half his water. 'Blow 40 and 50. Shake it up now. That's better. Oh, down, periscope,' and Boyd was lowered to the floor gasping.

'Right now, up to thirty feet. Work that depth-

gauge, ass. Up periscope. Heave him up, never mind if he kicks. Ha! Enemy bearing two points on the starboard bow. Steady that helm, idiot. Steady, I say. That's right. Eighteen feet. Flood the tubes.

'Flood the tubes,' cried Seagrave, getting busy with his arm-chair. 'Come on now. Bear a hand there. Tubes flooded, sir, and firing-tanks charged. Swing the bow-cap.' (Another youth shot through air.) 'That's the style. Now we're doing something. All ready, sir.'

'Steady the helm. Down periscope. Thirty feet,' continued Raymond. 'Easy now, eighteen feet again. Up periscope. Steady that helm now. Carefully does it. Ahhhh. Don't kick us, Boyd. Stand by.'

'Stand by, sir.'

'Easy now. Ready to take her down. Deflections 400. Look out there; look out again and we bump her. Now once more and . . . Fire!' and a pillow shot out of the catapult device like a feathery cannon ball and bowled over a rather dignified if youthful captain amid howls of delight.

'Eighty feet,' shouted Raymond; 'take her down, men, quick now. Oh, hell! we're rammed,' and the whole room rose and fell on itself in a kicking and struggling mass.

'Here, I say you fellows,' cried the irate army captain. 'This is a bit thick. I've got decent clothes on. You are a lot of . . . of Submarine Toughs.'

He was dragged to his feet and dried and brushed (there had been a good deal of water floating about, 'to make it more realistic,' as Seagrave put it), and his ruffled feelings were restored with whisky. Then the party disappeared to tidy itself for the dance, and ten minutes later the seekers after submarine knowledge trickled down to the drawing-room where the 'Submarine Toughs' were waiting to receive the ladies, looking very angelic and innocent in spite of the recent *mêlée*.

The ladies arrived, and the dance opened with a waltz banged out of the patient if wheezy old hotel piano by the gushing Miss Bored Stiff, and ten couples took the floor with great gusto, while the manager alternately held up his hands in horror and beamed benevolently on the revels. The waltz was followed by a set of lancers, and the game got really going. Supper was much in evidence, and Sam Browne belts and dark blue and gold dashed about with ices and claret cup, and picked up fans and wrote things on programmes and generally did the gallant.

And so, Miss Bored Stiff played, and the girls giggled, and the mothers beamed, and even a few of the fathers, terrifying people, were sufficiently melted to accept a drink, and the evening wore on and everybody enjoyed themselves. The young gentleman in khaki, with the thin gold stripe on his sleeve, danced with the girl in the red sash four times, and the Army Captain acted as steward till he lost his rosette, more by design than accident,

and hurled himself into the two-step like a three-year-old. Then the mothers gathered their bairns about them, and 'good-nights' were exchanged, and the fathers remained and gave expert opinions about the war, and listened with deference to the expert opinions of others who two years before they would have considered babes-in-arms, and every one went happily to bed.

But no one knew of the revels held in the Petty Officers' Mess that night to which the Sergeants of the local defence force and their 'good ladies' had been invited, or of how the coxswain and the T.I. danced attendance on the Master Gunner's daughter, or how Hoskins so far forgot his dignity as to perform a step dance much to the edification of the guests and the admiration of the entire engine-room staff.

These things are secret, and the veil is never lifted . . . in public, for the next day work had to be carried out in the Service manner, and every one was his usual staid and former self.

And that's another of the unwritten rules that pertain to the Laws of the Navy.

. . . . . .

And then the final spasm when two days later the escort Destroyer swung out of the harbour and '123' followed her, laden with kit and belongings and spare parts, and containers, and a host of minor matters purchased for less fortunate comrades in the *Parentis*. Out through the dock entrance and past the harbour heads, and Darlton

and that dockyard and the Royal Hotel were left behind, perhaps for good and ever. And the Destroyer zig-zagged and the Submarine puffed behind and was examined by trawlers and patrol-boats, and anchored for the night, and the following day arrived off the base once more and the familiar scenes of work and the old routine. As they stopped alongside the *Parentis* in the late afternoon they were met by the ward room *en masse* and hurried off to gin and bitters to celebrate their arrival. The parcels were distributed and blessings given and curses hurled over the contents, while Raymond and the skippers talked 'shop' over the alterations and work of the re-fit. But there was something missing, and it came out later after dinner when the juniors had cleared off and the seniors sat round in solemn conclave.

'Yes,' said Carruthers, staring into the empty grate. 'About two weeks ago it was. Much the same show as Shelldon's, I expect. Just went out and didn't come back. Hard luck, but he wasn't married. A lot of his men were, though. And old Blake was always so cheery, too.' . . .

The ward room nodded and lapsed into silence. Somebody coughed and picked up a magazine. Then six bells struck and the *Parentis* went to bed.

ACTION

I saw a Line of Battleship a-followed by a prize,
'Oose capture wur a matter easy done;
The Gunners 'eld their fire till they saw each other's eyes,
And raked her fore and aft with every gun.
Eh! it couldn't 'ave been every gun as did it?
I'm speaking of a 'undred year ago;
An' if we didn't rake 'er, 'ow in 'Eavens *did* we take 'er,
For we adn't got torpedoes down below?

I saw a Fleet of ironclads a-shelling of a town,
Which let us 'ave it lively from a fort,
Till a little British 'lay-me-true' ran in and did 'em brown,
While most of us lay off and watched the sport.
Eh! it couldn't 'ave been just one ship as did it?
I'm speaking now of forty year ago;
We'd iron on our uppers and steam and patent scuppers,
Though nowadays you might a'called it slow.

I 'ear there's been an action, for the Germans
come at last,
With submarines and aereyplanes an' all;
But when our Battle Squadron come they run so
ruddy fast
We 'adn't time to open up the ball.
And yet I can't make out the way they do
it,
I'm speaking now o' thirteen months ago,
They come out for to beat us, but when the
beggars meet us,
They scuttle back before they've struck a
blow.

But, Grandpa, don't forget, you 'aven't *seen* the
British Fleet,
Nor been aboard a Dreadnought in your life,
And a modern Battle Squadron is a nasty thing to
meet,
And a Cruiser 'as a fore-foot like a knife.
So, can't you even guess the way we did it?
It only 'appened 'bout a year ago,
The Battle Cruisers caught 'em, and the
Dread-ohs nearly taught 'em
When darkness fell and spoilt our little
show.

THE REAL THING

THE patrol had not been a very interesting one so far, and nothing out of the way had happened. Moreover, it was the first that '123' had made since her return to duty, and at the end of a day at sea the crew were already slipping back to the familiar routine. They had just finished lunch and had been diving since four in the morning, and nothing had occurred to break the monotony of the usual underwater stillness. There was no indication of what was going to happen, and the men off watch were stretched out in the battery compartments putting away a little over and above their ordinary allowance of sleep, while the control room was tenanted solely by the second coxswain at the planes, and the helmsman, who was biting his nails and staring into the gyro repeater. Faint gurgles came now and again from the vents, and occasionally the steering chain rattled, but otherwise there was scarcely any noise. Behind the green curtains Raymond and Seagrave were reading magazines, and Boyd was asleep in the little box-shaped upper bunk. The indicator of the Forbes' log gave a click and announced another mile completed, and the master compass

hummed its continuous tune to itself as it buzzed happily round.

It was Seagrave who saw them first. He had brought the boat up to eighteen feet and taken the customary wary look round the horizon, and the coxswain was surprised that he got no order to 'take her down again.'

Seagrave came in quietly from the control room and tapped his skipper on the shoulder.

'Will you have a look through the periscope, sir?' he asked.

Raymond looked up sharply.

'Yes, all right,' he answered, and stepped through into the control room where the coxswain watched him with curious eyes as he peered through the lens.

Presently he lowered the instrument.

'Keep her at eighteen feet,' was all he said as he rejoined Seagrave in the ward room.

'Do you think it's anything, sir?' the latter asked eagerly.

'Yes, I think it is. Call Boyd.'

Together they pored over the chart, and the situation was explained to the navigator, who did mysterious things with parallel rulers, and finally announced that they must be coming from 'there,' which was a well-known German base.

Raymond nodded, and went back to the periscope, where he remained silent for several moments. Away on his port bow the rim of the horizon was broken by three tiny smudges of smoke, one behind

the other, which were coming towards him over the glassy calm sea, and would eventually cross his bows. He took a careful bearing, and noted that the shapes of slender hulls were forming below the smoke blurs before he lowered the periscope again.

'Diving stations,' he ordered.

'Diving stations,' repeated Seagrave, tingling with anticipation, and 'diving stations' echoed the coxswain, springing to life from a heavy slumber in the after battery compartment.

There was no particular haste and no noise at all. Few of the crew, with the exception of the coxswain and one or two old campaigners who had been with Raymond up the Marmora, had ever made a serious attack before, but for all that there was no excitement: this was what they had been waiting and training for for years, and now it had come. Rather there was an atmosphere of pleasurable anticipation and quiet confidence that the captain would do the right thing. They knew their lives were in his hands. He was the only man who could see the enemy, and if he made a single mistake . . . but then he wouldn't make a mistake, and it was their job to carry out his orders and see that others did so. In two minutes the crew were at diving stations, the L.T.O.'s at the motor-boards, Seagrave and the T.I. at the tubes, the coxswains at the diving wheels, and the remainder at their various posts of Kingstons and vents. Forward a couple were whispering

together about some previous experience, another man grinned sheepishly, and then Raymond's voice broke the silence.

'Destroyers. Three of them. German all right. Flood the tubes.'

The order was passed forward by Boyd and echoed by Seagrave from the electric lit recesses of the fore-end. They were in earnest now, and this was the real thing.

'Up periscope,' came Raymond's voice again, and as the instrument slipped upwards he bent down and slowly straightened himself with his eye at the lens.

'Boyd,' he cried from the control room, 'they're steering nor'west and bearing 160 deg. Time 1.10 p.m.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' replied the navigator, notebook in hand.

With the air-manifold Hoskins was blowing water from the fore-trim into the tubes, and forward they were watching the gauges. A hiss and a spurt of water and the E.R.A. shut off the blow and mopped his brow with a piece of dirty waste.

'Down periscope. Steer south-west,' in the incisive tones of the captain.

'Firing tanks charged, sir,' came Seagrave's voice from forward. 'Tubes flooded.'

'Ay, ay,' called Raymond.

It was all so sudden. Ten minutes ago and they had all been sleeping peacefully or keeping

a monotonous and familiar watch. And now, in another ten minutes? Well, rats in a trap might have a better chance . . . if anything went wrong.

'Up periscope,' came the captain's voice again. 'Keep a steady course. Bearing 215 deg., Boyd. Stand by.'

'Stand by,' called Seagrave from forward. Then, as the valves and cocks were opened, 'All ready, sir.'

All eyes were glued on the gauges and meters.

'When I fire dive to sixty feet,' broke in Raymond. 'What's her depth? Keep her down, man. Steady. Oh, damn! he's seen me. Fire!'

As the boat shook to the release of the torpedo, the coxswains buzzed their wheels round, but owing to the sudden alteration in weight the boat wouldn't answer quickly.

'Saw the wake of the periscope in this flat calm,' went on Raymond, more to himself than the crew. 'Oughtn't to have attacked. Take her down, I tell you. They've altered course to ram, and they're firing at us. Oh, hell! Flood the auxiliary. Quick, now. Down periscope.'

As the auxiliary Kingston and vent came open the boat began to feel it, and dived quickly. At fifty feet a roaring noise overhead like a train passing through a tunnel announced that one of the Destroyers was passing over them, and at eighty feet an explosion, which shook the boat to her internals, announced that the enemy had

dropped a depth-charge above them, and that they had gone down none too quickly.

The lights went out. Somewhere the shock had parted a lead, and for two horrible moments they went in pitch darkness plunging down to the bottom of the sea.

'What water is there, Boyd?' came the captain's steady voice from the control room.

'Twenty-five fathoms, sir,' the navigator answered out of the darkness.

'All right. Hold her up, coxswain.'

'Ay, ay, sir. Can't see the depth-gauge.'

Then they struck. Struck the bottom at 150 feet, with a slight cant downwards at a speed of five knots.

Mercifully the L.T.O., groping through the darkness, got to the emergency switch, and the spare lights came on just in time.

'Stop the motors,' called Raymond. 'Is the bow-cap closed?'

'Closed it as soon as we fired, sir, and drained the tubes,' answered Seagrave.

'Good. I fired as the leading Destroyer turned to ram. Missed, of course, but she was firing at us, and she'd have rammed us if we hadn't got the mouldies off. She had to alter course for them, and as it was that depth-charge was pretty close.'

'Depth-gauge jammed, sir,' reported the coxswain. '68 lb. pressure on the periscope gauge.'

Raymond frowned. His quick dive to avoid

destruction, coupled with the sudden obscuring of the lights, had landed him in an awkward situation. The boat had struck bottom with her motors under weigh, and had stuck her nose in the mud with 150 feet of water above her. The external pressure was 68 lb. to the square inch, and three watchful Destroyers were up above.

For a moment he thought they might have the grapnels on him, and a wild picture of having to come up and surrender flashed across his mind. But the men were watching him, and he knew what he ought to do.

'Is the forward depth-gauge jammed?' he called.

'Yes, sir,' answered Boyd. 'Only goes to a hundred feet. It's hard up.'

'Right. Blow the buoyancy.'

The small tank was blown out, and in so doing it was put to almost its tested strain (it was guaranteed to 75 lb.) without any result. Then came the order :—

'Group up. Astern both.'

'Grouped up, sir,' from Furness, as he brought the switch over and started the motors. It was just like ordinary practice dives, and he watched his ammeters with as much detachment as if nothing out of the way had taken place.

But nothing happened and the motors were stopped. '123 was stuck hard and fast, and an uneasy feeling came over the captain. Seagrave was in the control room by now, and Boyd was making notes on the chart. Had they got the

grapnels on him after all? No, of course not, they couldn't have . . .

'Blow the auxiliary.'

The big tank was emptied, and the boat should have had about eight tons of buoyancy and risen like a cork. But still nothing happened, and the gauges remained jammed and the pressure was still 68 lb. to the square inch. Forward somebody coughed, and the T.I. could be heard getting two of the spare torpedoes ready to load into the empty tubes.

'Group up. Astern both,' came the order again.

For a moment there was still no result. Then suddenly she shook herself clear from the jamb, and rushed up to surface like an empty bottle. The depth-gauge in the control room was out of action, but the forward one was working again, and Boyd sang out the readings as the boat rose.

'Stop both,' cried Raymond. 'Ahead both. Hard a dive. Flood the auxiliary.'

'Gauge reading, sir,' called Boyd, '100 feet, and coming up fast.'

'Hold her, coxswain,' said Raymond.

'Ninety feet, sir. Eighty feet, seventy, sixty,' called Boyd. 'Still rising fast, sir.'

'Can't keep her down, sir,' jerked the coxswain over his shoulder.

'Damn!' remarked Raymond. 'She's too light still. Flood the buoyancy.'

But the tank in question had just been blown

at 68 lb. and had a big pressure in it. It filled but slowly, and Boyd's voice continued monotonously from the fore compartment,—

'Forty feet, sir. Thirty feet. Still coming up. Twenty feet, rising fast. Ten feet. Surface.'

The auxiliary was flooding and nothing more could be done. With the periscope about six inches, Raymond lay on the deck and peeped through the lens.

'All right, they're a mile astern. Seen us, of course, and are coming for us. Get her down quickly.'

Then the auxiliary took effect, and the boat went down quickly, but in hand Once more the Destroyers, all three of them this time, were heard passing over the top, and at a hundred feet a muffled explosion astern told where a depth-charge had exploded harmlessly. At 120 Raymond steadied her, and kept her at that level.

'And that's that,' he said, after the boat had got her trim and the coxswains could manage her easily. 'So much for that. I oughtn't to have attacked in a flat calm; they were bound to see me.'

'How far off were they when they spotted us?' asked Boyd.

'About a thousand yards. The leader opened fire and came for us. That was just before I fired. He'd have had us otherwise. I bet they're rushing all over the place now on the look out. Let's have a look at the chart.'

'I think I'll put the periscope up in an hour,'

he continued, 'and have another smack if there's a chance, but we'd better put her on the course for home all the same, 285 deg. it is. Then we can sit on the bottom when we get into 12 fathoms if necessary. How's the battery?'

'12.10 and 12.06, sir,' answered Seagrave.

'Hum, not bad. We've got enough amps.[1] for another attack, but it'll mean legging it afterwards for shallow water and sitting on the bottom till dark. Better wait for another hour, though; they'll be very much on the alert just now.'

Forward, Seagrave and the T.I. were making the necessary adjustments to two of the spare torpedoes, and a little later on launched them into the tubes. A few minor adjustments of trim had to be made by-and-by (they were on full fields and only doing about two knots), and presently Seagrave reported that they were 'all ready forward again.'

The depth-gauge in the control room had been put right and was showing a steady 120 feet, far down out of the way of depth-charges and other unpleasantnesses, and the time dragged slowly on.

'Shook me a bit when we came right up that time,' remarked Raymond. 'I made sure we were done in and was just waiting for the bump. When I got my eyes at the periscope they were about a mile astern, rushing round in circles. It wasn't very healthy up there for a bit.'

'I thought we should get it all right,' put in

[1] Ampères.

Seagrave, 'coming up to the surface like that. What was the matter?'

'I had to blow a good drop of water to get her out of the mud. Then she came up with a rush and the tank wouldn't fill quickly enough.'

'Those blessed lights going caused all the trouble. It'll be all right in a few minutes. The lead went where it comes through control-room bulkhead. Must have made the boat jump when that old bomb went off.'

'Crowded five minutes,' remarked Boyd. 'However, all over and no one dead yet.'

'It's all right for you,' said Raymond grimly. 'But I've just wasted two torpedoes and over £2000 of my country's money. If I don't get something to-day death will be a happy release, as I shall probably incur their lordship's "grave displeasure."'

'Better than losing the boat, anyway. Two old mouldies must have shaken the Boche a bit. How far off him did they go?'

'Straddled her. I thought I'd got her at first. Otherwise I'd have dived at once and she wouldn't have come so near us. The spread of the "fish" was what did it. Now I shall have to write a blessed explanation of it all, and you'll read of our miss in the next list of "torpedoes fired." Pleasant, isn't it?'

'Oh, I wouldn't worry about that. First time I've been under fire. Unexciting experience, too. But I don't want to stick in the mud and then bounce up to the surface like that every time.

Rather too tough for amusement. I wonder what they're doing now. We must have entirely spoilt their day. They must be in a state. I bet they're flying round looking for periscopes all over the ocean. Anyway, they're just as scared of us as we are of them.'

'I hope so. The battery's our trouble. We can't afford to run it too low or we'll have to sit on the bottom here, and that won't do the boat any good at this depth. I expect they guess we're striking out for home if they know anything about submarines, which they're bound to. We'll have a look at half-past two and try another attack if they're anywhere near, and then head it to the shallow water and sit tight till dark. If they'd been a bit quicker or we hadn't fired at them they'd have had us that time, and they're not likely to give up the hunt in a hurry. I know I shouldn't if I thought there was an enemy submarine knocking about.'

The time dragged slowly on. Every one felt rather elevated and excited although the attack had failed. At least they had fired live torpedoes at the enemy, and the Destroyers were still somewhere up above them watching for the first sight of a periscope. The signs of the conflict had already been removed, and save where the two empty spaces where the spare torpedoes, now in the tubes, had been stowed, nothing remained to show that anything unusual had happened. In a submarine it is either pay or play. Either you get of scot-free

or else you don't come back, and the names of yourself and your crew adorn the casualty lists, spread over several days, to divert suspicion and the putting of two and two together by an inquisitive public.

The crew were feeling pleased with themselves. At last they had really seen something and carried out a real attack. True, it had failed, but the weather had been against them, and submarines weren't reckoned as much of a match against Destroyers anyway, and at any rate they had all had a shot for it. This was the thing they had been waiting for for years, and now it *had* come they were surprised at its suddenness and how like peace time practice it was. Somehow they had imagined it would be different, and yet it wasn't, except that the target was doing its best to do them in, and was waiting on top for the first sign of the periscope.

Dimly they began to realise that much of the peace time routine which they had voted as unnecessary work was of use after all when the real thing came. The Stoker P.O. was telling the coxswain that it was the first time he had been in a submarine that had fired a live torpedo, and the second coxswain was relating his experiences when in a boat captained by an officer well known in submarine circles, who used to exercise his crews at diving stations in the dark, in preparation for just such a mishap as had overtaken them this afternoon.

Two o'clock came and went. The Forbes' log ticked slowly on as '123' crept away from the scene of the first attack. There was nothing to do, and it got rather dull and monotonous after the recent activities.

A thin pencil line on the chart showed where they were heading for home and shallow water, in case a possible second attack should run the battery down, and necessitate sitting on the bottom until they could rise under cover of friendly night-fall and slip away unnoticed in the dark. It was rather a case of the hunter hunted. Once seen and located, and the enemy Destroyers would be sure to press home the pursuit to the bitter end. It seemed strange to be sitting down here under the electric light, nibbling bits of chocolate and reading magazines, with the knowledge that in half an hour's time one hoped to be having another smack at the German a hundred odd feet above. . . . Still. . . .

'Diving stations,' ordered Raymond, looking at the clock.

The boat started and came to life, the men going quietly to their places tingling with the expectancy of what might come. Perhaps they might have better luck this time, or perhaps . . . not. Anyway . . .

'Thirty feet,' said Raymond. 'Bring her up slowly.'

The depth-needle crept back. Somehow there was a slight feeling of apprehension this time. The novelty of actual attack had worn off, and

having been through it once there was always the feeling of what was to come. People who read the accounts of vessels being sunk by submarines and talk glibly of piracy and other nonsense from the depths of their arm-chairs never realise the nerve required to carry out those attacks, or the feeling of being cooped up in a tiny shell out of reach of air and sunlight, with the knowledge that there is no quarter meted out to the undersea-forces. Neither do they realise that orders are orders, and that the German submarine captains are merely obeying their orders when they torpedo merchant ships at sight. Wrong it may be, and undoubtedly is, but the fault lies with the higher command and not with the individuals. Did they disobey orders they would lay themselves open to be shot as traitors. The so-called 'well-worn platitude of obeying orders' is no chimera, but an actual and very real fact, which urges men to commit actions which may be wholly against their finer feelings.

As the boat rose Raymond reduced to full fields, and presently she steadied at thirty feet. Then the periscope was raised, and after a final look round the captain spoke again,—

'Eighteen feet. Bring her up quickly, so that you can get down again at once if necessary.'

The two coxswains moved their wheels. Again that tense, strained feeling came over the boat. The men were all on the alert, waiting for the expected result.

As she came up Raymond kept his eye at the lens watching for the moment the periscope would break surface. The men stood by; there was always the horrible possibility of rising right under the keel of an enemy Destroyer.

At nineteen feet the captain lowered the periscope quickly, and the boat descended to the thirty foot level. Then came the expected order,—

'Flood the tubes.'

'They've spread out,' Raymond explained, as Seagrave departed forward in a state of bustle. 'Two of them are astern on either quarter, and the other's about a mile ahead. They're looking for us, but so far they haven't seen us. Steer 270 deg.'

'Steer 270 deg. Course, sir,' echoed the helmsman mechanically.

'Eighteen feet,' ordered Raymond, and up came the periscope, the captain following the lens up with his eye as the instrument rose.

'Right. Down periscope. Keep her at her depth. Stand by.

'Stand by, sir,' Seagrave called out. 'All ready, sir.

'When I fire dive to 60 feet,' continued Raymond. 'Up periscope.'

The moment had come once more, and the eyes of the boat were glued to gauges and meters. The log ticked on, and the repeater-compass clicked to itself as the seconds went by. Somewhere forward a man sneezed, and the sound broke the tension like the crack of a pistol.

'Keep her at her depth. Steady helm now. Sixty feet. Fire! . . .'

A few seconds tense waiting, while the boat dived down into the safer regions. Boyd was holding the stop-watch and counting the seconds mechanically

'Hard-a-port,' said Raymond. 'Steer' . . .

Booooooom. A muffled explosion right ahead drowned all other sounds and shook '123' till she rocked like a trawler in a sea way. Then the helm went over and she steadied on her new course.

'Thirty-five seconds, sir,' said Boyd, snapping to the watch

'Got him!' exulted Raymond, as his boat broke into one explosive grin. 'Keep her at 60 feet and steer N.W. for the present.'

Then Seagrave came aft, his duty done, and there being nothing else that could affect the safety of the boat, the crew fell out from diving stations and the officers opened the ceremonial and only bottle of champagne.

'Not so bad,' said Raymond, raising his glass. 'I got him as he was crossing the bow. Makes me feel a bit ill to think of the poor beggars killed or drowning while we're here all nice and comfortable, but the others will probably pick most of them up. Here's how.'

'By Jove, it's good business,' chimed in Boyd, 'and aren't the men pleased. Thank God, we've done something at last.'

'Are you going to have a look at her presently,' asked Seagrave.

'Oh, by-and-by. We'll carry on like this for half an hour. They'll be flapping about a bit up there yet. Do you realise how lucky we've been, and how many of our boats have never seen a thing yet. You ought to go down on your graceless knees and thank High Heaven for your good fortune.'

'I do, I do. Or rather I would if this weren't the only pair of trousers I've got in the boat. Shall I reload the tubes?

'Yes, you'd better, but we won't fire any more "fish" to-day, thank you. Four torpedoes for one Destroyer is rather too expensive. Well, put her on to 285 deg. again, and leg it for shallow water. Let's see, it's three o'clock now. How's the battery?'

'11.85 and 11.81, sir,' came the voice of the L.T.O., bending over the pilot-cell.

'None too good,' went on the skipper. 'We'll carry on on the series switch till five o'clock, we'll be in 12 fathoms then, and sit on the bottom till dark. Ten o'clock will do it, I think.'

'How about having a look at them?' inquired Seagrave.

'Yes, I think we might as well. I can't resist the temptation much longer. We'd better go to diving stations, though, before we rise.'

Once more the boat came up, and at twenty-one feet the periscope was slowly hoisted and Raymond took his quick look round.

'All right,' he announced to the expectant crew. 'She's sinking fast by the head—the others are standing by. Hit her right amidships and blown two of her funnels out. There's a lot of things floating in the water, though, and a boat is dodging about. She's almost gone. Want a look?'

Seagrave and Boyd in turn stepped to the periscope and gazed at the stricken Destroyer, now at her last gasp. Her comrades were dashing round her at high speed in a wide circle, and heads and debris of all sorts were bobbing on the surface.

'Beastly, isn't it?' said Raymond, taking another look. 'Makes you feel a bit sick to think we're responsible for it all. Ah! there she goes. She's under now. I'd like to get another, all the same, but rather too risky. Right. Down periscope 40 feet. Fall out diving stations.'

Then they went down once more to the greeny depths, and the normal routine was resumed. But it wasn't quite the same. From the other side of the curtains the whispering voices of the men and the subdued talk from aft had taken on a new tone. To all appearances they were back to ordinary diving routine, the coxswain and helmsmen in the control room and the rest scattered over the boat, but a subtle change had taken place. Before, they had been playing at it, but now, well, those heads bobbing on the water were mute evidence of the experience they had been through.

Perhaps in the heat of an action it may be different, and one may feel differently about it,

but in a submarine where no one but the captain sees the enemy there is always rather an aftermath to cold-bloodedness, a realisation of what the others have gone through. True, at the time, one realises that if the enemy is not put under, one's own boat and her crew will be, but after the first excitement has worn off and the torpedoes have been fired and found their mark, comes the feeling of not having given the men a sporting chance, the feeling one had at school after having 'dotted the other fellow' one on the nose or taken the starch out of some one who was always ridiculing us. One wanted to shake hands afterwards and be magnanimous (horrible word), and forget the whole thing. But there was no shaking hands here, and there were some who wouldn't shake hands again ever . . . up there . . . heads bobbing on the sea. Beastly . . .

The whisperings grew fainter, and the talk in the after compartment flagged and ceased. The men off watch were dropping off to sleep, and Seagrave and Boyd had clambered into their bunks. Forward the four empty racks showed the day's work done, and behind the tube doors the spare torpedoes were shipped and ready in case of necessity.

Raymond sat writing out his report, a short, concise narrative of the events, for the benefit of Captain Charteris and 'their Lordships,' those vague beings of Whitehall whose opinions rule the Naval world.

There was no periscope watch just yet, as it was

too dangerous to risk being seen for a while, and '123' jogged slowly homewards (she was due in to-morrow morning) at the forty feet level, at the sedate speed of slightly under two knots an hour.

At four o'clock tea appeared, and the boat came to life once more. Men could be heard passing aft on their way to the meal, and an opening of lockers and clattering of crockery announced the progress of the meal. In the ward room the officers took theirs off the chart-table and talked of mice and men.

'Seems a bit queer to sit here and eat bread and jam,' said Boyd, breaking a momentary silence, 'with all those beggars killed up there, and the rest of them either in a blue funk or dashing about to Gott strafe us. I wonder what they're up to. Are you going to have another look?'

'After tea,' said Raymond, 'and then we'll have to sit down at five o'clock. About twelve fathoms, isn't it?'

'Twelve and a half, I make it,' replied Boyd. 'Anyway, quite shallow enough, and only 140 miles from home. Shall we rise at ten o'clock?'

'Depends how dark it is. We'll have to put on a big charge on the way home, and start it as soon as we rise; it won't do the battery any good to be left as it is now for too long.'

When the meal was cleared away, the boat was brought to eighteen feet and the periscope hoisted once more.

'All serene-oh,' said Raymond. 'They're about four miles astern, I reckon. Can't see much but the smoke. Down periscope. Thirty feet. We'll start periscope watch again,' he added, turning to Seagrave. 'Keep a good look out at them.'

Boyd took over the watch, and the old order was re-established, the boat rising to eighteen feet for the 'look-see' every ten minutes, and then going down again to thirty feet.

Somehow the time dragged on, but it wasn't very interesting, and every one was looking forward to ten o'clock and fresh air after the day's turmoils.

Then five o'clock arrived, and the crew were once more ordered to diving stations, and Raymond took the periscope and had a final look round.

'Nothing in sight,' he announced. 'Seventy-five feet of water, coxswain, and sixteen feet below us. We ought to ground with about fifty-nine feet on the gauge. Take her down.'

She went down slowly. At thirty feet Raymond stopped the motors and let a little water into the auxiliary through the vent, as she lost weight.

'How's the bubble?' he asked.

'Midship, sir. She's horizontal,' answered the coxswain.

The depth-needle crept on. Fifty feet, fifty-five, sixty, sixty-two, and then a light jar was felt and a faint upward pressure on the soles of the feet like a passenger feels when a lift reaches the bottom of the shaft in a Tube station.

The boat was on the bottom.

'Six tons in the auxiliary,' ordered Raymond. The boat took on a slight list to port and then righted and lay still. The depth-meter was steady at fifty-two feet.

'Fall out diving stations,' said the captain. 'One hand keep watch in the control room and call me if the depth-meter shifts or we take on a list, coxswain.'

The crew dispersed and the officers returned to the ward room.

An even deader stillness than usual prevailed now that the boat was stationary and had gone to sleep on the bottom. The talk of the men in the after compartment drifted in and was the only sound that broke the underwater silence. In the control room sat the watch-keeper with his eyes on the gauges, sixty-two feet on the depth-gauge, and thirty pounds pressure to the square inch. The long-suffering battery was having a rest and the crew proceeded to follow its example.

Raymond and Boyd turned in and Seagrave picked up a book. Above, somewhere astern, were two pannicky Destroyers and other things as well; and somewhere else, at the bottom of the sea also, was the dead Destroyer who would destroy no more. . . . Ah, well. . . .

Dinner came at eight o'clock, rather a sumptuous affair in honour of the occasion, and full justice was done to the cook's culinary efforts to live up to the event. Finally the bottle was opened after a teetotal meal, and Boyd poured out the port.

'As somebody or other once wisely observed,' said Raymond, as he prepared to drink, 'a drop of whisky makes the whole world kin, but give me a touch of the good old fruity as a really finishing end to a perfect day. Whew! it's getting stuffy.'

'Always seems to after dinner,' replied Boyd. 'Must be the effort of eating after sixteen hours' diving, or else we eat so much that there isn't any room for fresh air.'

'Or much air, either,' said Seagrave, 'not after twenty or so other people have used it. This is the longest dive I've ever done, but as regards the amount of grub eaten, that's entirely a personal matter. Do you mean to insinuate . . .'

'That you ate a pound of cherries to-day? Of course I do. I admit I've been asleep most of the day, but whenever I've woken up and cocked an eye over the bunkboard I've seen you gobbling fruit like a schoolgirl at a bun struggle.'

'Well, I've had a system, and I haven't been able to work it this patrol, but the idea is to eat six cherries between looks through the "perisher," and suck the stones while I'm there.'

'Beastly habit,' said Raymond. 'We'll have to stop bringing out fruit if it's going to lead to these debauches.'

'And deprive me of my sole pleasure in life. That's a bit 'ard.'

'It's a bit 'ard on me that I can't get any cherries at all on account of your gormandising habits. That's what's a bit 'ard.'

'Are you going to wait till ten before rising?' asked Boyd, changing the subject skilfully.

'It's getting a bit fuggy, so I think we'll come up at nine-thirty. What time is it now?'

'Nine o'clock. I shan't be sorry to get up, for one. That'll be seventeen hours and a half, and quite long enough for my small needs. I'm not ambitious in that direction.'

'No, I think we'll make it half-past nine. You'd better warn them in the engine-room, Seagrave, that we'll want full speed as soon as possible after rising. One can't say that they're not still on the look-out for us, and we can't afford to hang about.'

Boyd busied himself with his charts and laid the course for home. 'A hundred and thirty-five miles to go,' he pronounced, 'at twelve knots gets us in at about nine to-morrow morning. Just a good time to come in, *and* a silk ensign and the skull and crossbones.'

'Hardly a good enough bag for all that,' said the captain; 'we might run to the silk ensign, I think, but we'll hang on to the other till we sink a Hun Dreadnought or a big Fritz or something of that sort. All ready, Seagrave? Right. Diving stations.'

Then they rose, rose swiftly off the bottom, and steadied at twenty feet, when Raymond hoisted the periscope.

'Seems quite dark,' he said. 'Always looks darker through the periscope than it really is, though. Good enough, blow 1, 2, and 3.'

When the hatch was opened it *was* considerably lighter than expected, and the engines were started off and worked up to full speed as soon as possible. Raymond wouldn't allow any one but himself, Boyd, and the helmsman on the bridge, and all unnecessary gear was left below. Even the bridge screen remained furled, and the captain kept a steady look-out aft for possible pursuers.

Luckily the sea was still calm, and they got well away by midnight, after which the crew were allowed on deck and things made comfortable for the night. It had been a queer feeling, though, rising from the bottom of the sea up into the dusk, the quick hustle and the scurry for home, and the keen look-out aft through the gloom for signs of an enemy who might have seen the boat push her way up out of her watery funk-hole.

However, she was safe now, and the night slipped by with the usual surface watches, and daylight found '123' off the coast and heading for the faint outline of home just visible on the horizon.

Then the sun rose higher and the land disappeared, to become visible again later on about twenty miles distant.

The silk ensign, sign of conquest and good luck, was hoisted, and '123' made her number and answered the challenge. The outside patrols became active and the mine-sweepers on their outward way dragged past them, their kites towing behind and bouncing over the water as they went. Somebody on a trawler evidently saw what

interested him, for a telescope went up and then came the signal. 'Hearty congratulations,' semaphored across in slow and painful sections by a shock-haired boy in a pair of baggy trousers.

'Thanks very much,' replied '123,' as she hurried on to the harbour and headed through the gate. Then up and through the Fleet, the silk ensign fluttering in the breeze, and the boat came to rest once more alongside the *Parentis* and outside the trot of submarines. Then she made fast, and the crew grinned at one another and broke away, carrying the debris of the trip down to the mess-decks.

''Ullo, cocky,' said a man who was hammering an iron plate, ''ad a good trip?'

'You bet we 'ave,' replied the one addressed, who was carrying a bucket full of potatoes and a loaf of bread. 'You bet we 'ad. Saw Fritz, too.'

'Reely. You 'it 'im?'

'Course we did, do you think——'

Somewhere up on the quarter-deck a voice said,—

'Hallo, Raymond's back. Gee-whiz. Look what he's flying. What is it, Raymond?'

'Only a wee one,' came the answer.

'You lucky beggar. Captain wants to see you, by the way.'

And there we will leave him, making his formal report in the Service way to Captain Charteris, while the story ran round the mess-decks, by

Lower Deck wireless, where it was received with nods of approval and caustic criticism by those who had been through it all before, and knew the details, and could fill in the gaps for themselves. The Depot blinked a bit over the issue of four new torpedoes, but albeit she was satisfied and sat down again and said nothing.

. . . . . .

That night after dinner the story was retold in the ward room, embellished, and with detail, the listeners taking an immense professional interest in the narrative, and agreeing and disagreeing with one another on what they would have done under the circumstances.

'When I saw my bloke last month,' said Austin, 'I left him severely alone. It was a flat calm, and I thought Destroyer-dodging wasn't good enough.'

'I don't know,' put in Johnson, 'I think I'd have had a shot if I'd been in your place. One can only miss after all.'

'The point is, though,' this from Carruthers, 'is it worth while risking the loss of one's boat for the sake of one Destroyer? Personally, I don't think it is.'

'I agree there,' replied Austin; 'a submarine, now, is a different thing. If I thought I had the vaguest chance of straffing a U-boat I'd go in for it whatever the cost. I think myself that it would be as much loss to Germany from a purely military point of view as it would be if I sank a Dreadnought.'

'That may be,' said Johnson, 'but I do think that whatever you see you ought to have a smack at, and I give Raymond full points for his stunt of yesterday. It's undoubtedly a nasty job messing about with Destroyers or anything at all, for that matter, on a calm day, but I think it's worth it if there's a reasonable chance of getting something.'

'I was in two minds about it myself,' broke in Raymond, 'but they were so bally tempting I couldn't resist it, and then when I'd missed I felt I couldn't come back without having another shot and getting something for my money.'

'Risky job, my boy, risky,' cried the Torpedo Lieutenant from the depth of his arm-chair. 'Mustn't be too bold and rash, you know.'

'Oh, shut up, Torps, and don't gass so much. The blessed "fish" ran straight, and that's all you need worry about. When I feel particularly suicidal I'll take you out with me and do the job in style. We'll all drown together and go down to posterity in the guise of saints then, a *dis*guise by the way of a most efficient order in your case.'

'Your pardon, Lord. I shall refuse to come.'

'Thank God for that.'

'Then I shall most certainly *insist* on coming next trip. I shall——'

'How far off were they when you first saw them?' broke in a voice from the other end of the ward room.

'Oh, about four miles. I saw the smoke at first and hustled off in their direction.'

'You must have had a pretty long fug afterwards, didn't you?'

'It was a bit mouldy sitting on the bottom, but we managed to turn up smiling.'

The talk drifted out and turned to other topics. '178' was due in to-morrow, and her patrol and herself and her officers were also discussed with much freedom. Later the ward room was closed, and the *Parentis* went to sleep, but still with one eye open, and watchful to guard the charges that lay alongside her.

Next day Carruthers and Johnson went out on patrol, and in the late afternoon a new boat arrived, fresh and hot from the dockyard, commanded by one Singleton, an officer well known to the boat captains of the *Parentis*.

Raymond and Austin had a day off, rather an unexpected favour in the case of the former, who had only just returned from re-fit, and decided to spend it in the country. They left early and caught a train after breakfast for the sleepy little town of Langton, some twenty miles distant. After the noise and bustle of a shipbuilding and mining centre, the pleasant peace of the English country came as a welcome change, and they lay back in their carriage and drank in great gulps of the fresh morning air as the local rattled sedately on. A fine summer day and the hedges alongside the railway, and the fields all gold, brown, and green,

with little cottages nestling among them, and level crossings with children who waved sitting on the gates, and horses grazing, and reaping machines, and white high loads. Hayricks and little villages, small woods and distant spires. Imagine all this under the heel of an invader! The woman in the blue print apron standing outside the cottage, the children playing with the farmer's old dog among the barley sheaves, imagine them with the Germans in possession . . . butchery, rape, and at the best robbery and ill-treatment, and yet Belgium . . .

It didn't bear thinking of. There was no possibility of invasion or wanton destruction. It hadn't happened for hundreds of years, but then . . . it must have been the same when the horsemen rode in and the old muzzle-loaders blared out, and men died and women shrieked and children clung to their mothers' skirts, wide eyed and amazed.

It might happen, it might come to pass, and the very security of England was the worst danger of all. A hundred thousand troops landed overnight and the result . . . fields laid waste, and killing and disasters, the soul of the English country changed to its very core. It might have happened two years ago, but not now. At a moment's call the sleeping country could spring to life, and armed men, as if born of dragons' teeth, would appear to repel the invader, armed not with shields and stabbing spear, but with machine-guns and the

deadly howitzer. England had found herself. Not for a hundred years had she so proved her soul to herself and to the world. The call came, and slowly but surely the old spirit, latent for a century, revived and had its being, openly once more and for all the world to see. . . .

The train drew up with a jolt, and Austin broke the silence with a casual remark.

'Pretty little station. See those wild roses growing by the lamp-post there. Reminds you of pre-war days, doesn't it?'

Outside, the good old-fashioned station fly rumbled them over the cobbles and into the High Street, where the women stared at the uniforms, and a small boy shouted something and ran after them. Then lunch at the one and only, called rather grandly the Imperial Hotel, albeit an old place, relic of the coaching days, though with a new master and up-to-date methods. Old prints on the walls of the 'Fox Hunt,' old furniture, and beer in pewter tankards reminded one of the ancient glories of the place, when the London mail would roll in with a tootling of horns and shouting of postboys, and be off again amid good-byes and handshakes, and 'Write soon when you get to London,' from mother, and a ten shilling tip from father, while little Alfred sucked his finger and stared.

The lunch consisted of the cold roast beef of England, and salad and cheese and fruits, and afterwards they wandered out into the sunshine,

and up the High Street, tenanted now by only a few loafers, outside the Red Lion, and a boy or two on bicycles by the local post office.

The market square offered but few attractions, and the friends wandered through the town, which ended as abruptly as the bow of a ship, and out into the country beyond.

After his recent experiences Raymond found the situation almost too deep for words, and they trudged on, smoking their pipes, for the most part in silence.

Presently they topped the summit of a little hill and looked back on the town, a smudge of gray and brown buildings against the blue sky, the church spire in the centre, and the smoke curling lazily up in the afternoon haze. Away to the eastward was a thin strip of blue, where lay the sea and ships and submarines and war.

They turned their backs to it. For one day at least they would forget it, and Germany and War and sudden death.

Later on came tea taken in the garden of a little cottage which modestly displayed the card 'Teas' in a window, where they were served by the good lady's daughter with home-made bread and cake and jam, and then lay back and smoked and thought of things and men and the country and England. Then they paid the bill, stroked the cat, gave the child some pennies, and wandered on at peace with the world, themselves, and everything.

They started back towards Langton, but the sound of bells drew them from the main road to where a little ivy-covered church nestled lonely and almost forgotten by the wayside. They took off their caps and went in. After the glare outside they blinked and groped in the dusk of the church until the light grew better and they saw where they had strayed.

'I say,' said Raymond, 'this is a Catholic Church; hadn't we better——'

'That's all right,' said Austin. 'We'll sit here a minute.'

They found a pew and looked round them. Up by the altar a priest was standing with his back towards them. Two boys in surplices were standing near. Then an organ burst out somewhere, and the few worshippers took up the refrain and sang the *Tantum Ergo*.

The two men knelt down.

Later a bell rang and the old priest bent down over the altar. He raised something in his hands. Infinite quiet, the sound of heart beats, and the lists of the parish killed in action stood out sharply on either side of the sanctuary. The priest was moving away with the boys before him.

The organ crashed out again, and Raymond caught the words :—

'*Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus : et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.*'

'The truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.'

They stepped out into the sunlight and blinked in the glare of the high road.

. . . . . .

Later, the return to the base and the motor ride to the harbour, and the steamboat off to the *Parentis*. A return to the world of men and ships, where the war was the essence of life and the main topic of conversation. The ward room was discussing the newly-arrived boat which was to take the place of Blake's.

Singleton was a man of merry moods, and kept them going with stories of his struggles with the contractors and the trials he had been through while his boat had been building.

'A hell of a lot of work,' he concluded, 'and didn't get any "command money" for seven weeks either.'

'*And* had a fine fat time of it ashore, I bet,' remarked the Staff Paymaster lightly.

'Not so bad, not so bad, but nothing to write home about. Not married, you know. Found things pretty dull in the evening.'

'Ah,' said the Engineer Commander, 'I married ten years ago, and haven't spent more than a fortnight at a time with my wife ever since. Some people have all the luck.'

'I agree with Mr Punch,' chimed in the Torpedo Lieutenant. 'As regards to marriage I could say three words—The first is "don't," the second is "don't," and the third is "don't." With my knowledge of the world my opinion is worth considering.'

'Had a good day?' asked the First Lieutenant of Austin, disregarding the Torpedo Lieutenant's remark.

'Very. Just wandered about in the country and smoked and thought and took in the view. Later on we got into a small church where they were having benediction or something. Made you feel all funny to hear it.'

'I can't imagine much shaking you,' said the Fleet Surgeon. 'You must have been in a very thoughtful mood.'

'I suppose I was. It was the quiet and the country and the rabbits and things. Little things, you know, but things that count sometimes.'

'——And when I got my periscope up,' said a voice from the other side of the ward room, 'I saw Fritz had manned his guns and was letting the tramp have it for all he was worth. Fairly potting him he was. So I kept well to leeward of father tramp, and then dodged suddenly round the bow and fired.'

'Did you get him?' asked Seagrave's voice.

'By good luck, yes. Right amidships. Then I went down, and came up for a look ten minutes later. There wasn't any submarine there, but the tramp saw my periscope and thought I was Fritz, and gave me hell for about thirty seconds until I got well down out of harm's way. I bet the skipper reported having sunk a U-boat.'

'You got your shift shortly afterwards, didn't you?'

'Two months or so,' replied Singleton. 'Since then I've been one of the idle poor and lived on the fat of the land, or such fat as I could acquire owing to the Food Controller. Glad to be back at work, though. It gets pretty mouldy sitting in a dockyard and hoping the war won't be over before you get to sea again.'

'When are you doing a patrol?'

'Day after to-morrow, I expect. Bit of a rush, isn't it? Have to move round in the meantime and see things in order, as I don't know much of her little ways yet, though she's seemed all right so far.'

Boyd was comparing notes with the new navigator and discussing the possible vagaries of magnetic compasses in submarines. Seagrave drifted off with the new 'Sub,' and later on a bugle sounded overhead and six bells struck. Somebody came to the door and reported eleven o'clock, and the ward room emptied itself.

Raymond wandered up on to the quarter-deck and leant over the rail and gazed at the anchored Fleet. Behind him the officer of the watch was padding up and down, and by the gangway the quartermaster and corporal of the watch were talking in low tones. The side boy looked at him curiously.

'Britain's sure shield' was keeping her silent watch. Beyond lay the big ships, and beyond them again a host of merchant vessels, supply ships, colliers, and hospitals. Outside, the

Destroyers would be keeping their never-ceasing patrol, and the trawlers and mine-sweepers would be bobbing to the north-east swell. The wind caught him chillily, and he shuddered and turned up his collar.

A voice sounded from for'ard, high up on the bridge, then one bell struck, and he turned and went below.

THE SEAGULLS

SEAGULLS, seagulls!
Birds of the air and sea!
Seagulls, seagulls!
Have you a word for me?
Have you a word of my boy out there,
Who left my heart and my cottage bare,
Who left his mother and did his share;
Tell me birds of the sea and air,
Have you a word for me?

Seagulls, seagulls!
Birds of the wind and wave!
Seagulls, seagulls!
Back from the sailor's grave.
Have you a word from my man who died,
Out in the track of the cruiser's stride,
Where death's the price of a nation's pride;
Tell me birds of the wind and tide,
How did my man behave?

Mourners, mourners!
Mothers of men and boys!
Mourners, mourners!
Death never quite destroys.
Rather think of the deeds they wrought,
Out in the dark where the squadrons fought;
Think of their deaths as the price that bought
Freedom and honour, and hail the thought,
Sorrows are future joys

'FOR THOSE IN PERIL ON THE SEA'

This is a story of the early days of submarines, and the whole affair happened a long while ago—some years before the War, in fact—beyond which milestone the memory of modern man now rarely attempts to wander. The first news I received on the subject was from the centre sheet of a morning paper, an extract from which ran as follows :—

'H.M. Submarine "02" was lost in the Channel whilst exercising on Tuesday, 16th inst. There are only two survivors, Lieut. Allison, R.N., the second in command, and Stoker 1st Class P. W. Howell. All hope has been abandoned for the remainder of the crew, as "02" has now been under water for more than 58 hours, and the divers report that it will be impossible to lift her for another two days. Lieut. Belton, R.N., the captain, was the son of Admiral Belton, K.C.B., R.N., etc.'

Now I knew Allison. I knew him well, and I scented the chance of gaining a little more information on the subject than could be gleaned from the morning paper, but I deemed it wise to wait

a little and not rush things too much. His photograph, a rather blotchy affair, appeared in more than one penny pictorial, and I felt sure of my man. However, I went wisely about my business, and put the matter away in an upper brain pigeonhole, to be produced at the right moment.

I waited a good long while, six weeks, to be exact, until I felt sure that Allison's survivor's leave would be a thing of the past, and then I sallied out and bought the current Navy List. I've said it all happened long before the War, when those who took an interest in the movements of naval officers could satisfy their thirst in the leaves of the Blue journal. Nowadays these things are altered, and the Navy List, which grows and increases monthly, is kept locked up with the other secret books in the confidential safe.

In its mystic pages I found what I wanted. John Hugh Allison (Lieut.) was 'for command of Submarine "90" (building).' I knew what that meant. He'd had his leave all right and been appointed to a new boat, as yet uncompleted, and was standing by to superintend the work of the dockyard, and to take her to sea as captain when she was finished.

I thought a while and concocted a piece of villainy. Then I sent the following telegram: 'Commanding Officer, H.M. Submarine "90." Congratulate you on your promotion. When may I come and marvel?'

He fell into the trap (did I say that the telegram

was reply paid?), and sent the cryptic answer: 'Many thanks. Come Monday, and be damned.'

The telegram was handed in at Portsmouth, so I knew at once at what yard the boat was being built, and Monday morning saw me hustling down from London full of my fell intentions.

I knew I shouldn't get into the yard even in peace time, so I hung round outside till a villain in a working rig appeared carrying a coil of wire. He bore on his cap-ribbon the legend 'H.M. Submarines,' and I marked him from afar. It appeared that the 'Captain' was living at the Royal Arms Hotel, and thither I hied me and demanded that he be produced.

He wasn't in. He was still down in the mystic dockyard and wouldn't be back till lunch, so I made myself comfortable in a corner of the smoking-room and awaited what the gods might give.

In due course the gift appeared, in a ragged uniform, and wearing a harassed expression. On seeing me he uttered a roar of appreciation (he was quite twenty-five), and caused drinks to be produced with the celerity of a conjuror.

Then we lunched and discussed many things, from cocoa to spots under the sun, but never once did I refer to the subject that was in my mind; but after the meal was over I asked him how he liked his new boat and what he thought of her.

'Oh, not so dusty for a first command; you wouldn't like to see over her, would you?' He eyed me tentatively.

'Rather a long way to the dockyard, isn't it?' I hazarded.

'Oh, be a sport,' he continued. 'I'd like you to see her, you know. You're the first civilian to come and see me here.'

'All right,' I agreed, 'I'll come, but don't be too long-winded over it.'

Then I smiled the smile of the evil-doer, and followed him in silence to the penny tram. Under his protecting wing I was borne into the yard, and presently came on '90,' where she was being whacked and riveted and hammered into shape.

It was like all other visits to dockyards, and secretly I was rather glad when it was over, but I had gained my host's confidence in me and felt well pleased with my afternoon's work.

We had tea at Southsea, and talked over old times and many other things, and then returned once more to the hotel and dinner. I refused all invitations to the Hippodrome afterwards, having my purpose in view, and when we reached the coffee and liqueur stage I felt that the psychological moment had arrived. I didn't rush things, however; I led up to it gently, and let him have it in small doses till he swallowed the bait.

Hard and uphill work, but it came off in the end.

He had been explaining some of the advantages his new command had over the older boats he had served in, and I felt the time was ripe.

'How does she compare,' I hinted, and ended with a lowered voice, 'with poor old "02"?'

He coloured a bit and hesitated, and I thought that all was lost, then,—

'Taking her all round,' he answered slowly, '"02" wasn't in the same street. She was a good old packet, though.' He sighed.

I passed the port again and waited.

'It might have happened to any type of boat, you know, really,' he continued. 'It was a sheer bit of bad luck.'

It was coming, and I nodded in silence.

'I've never been able to quite make out how it happened,' he went on. 'Whether poor old Belton made a mistake, or the Dutchman got scared and put his helm over.'

'The Dutchman?' I queried.

'Norwegian tramp bound out for the Atlantic. Off Portland we were. We'd been told off with a T.B. for practice attacks, and were in shallow water at the time, about ten fathoms. About ten o'clock in the morning it was, and lovely weather too. The T.B. was away on ahead of us, and just before we dived we noticed a steamer about six miles off coming towards us down Channel. I remember pointing her out to Belton. Then we went under, and I was busy for'ard with the "fish." Belton had taken careful bearings of the tramp, and I'm not sure whether he got so interested in his attack that he didn't pay enough attention to her, or whether the tramp suddenly saw the T.B.'s flag and banged the helm over. I think it was a bit of both.'

'We'd been diving about half an hour when the skipper ordered me to "flood the tubes," and about five minutes later I got the order "stand by." You know how those old boats were, the way the sluice door worked and so on?'

I nodded and sipped my drink.

'The T.I. and I brought her to the ready and reported, and then came the stillness that immediately precedes a shot; you know, everybody waiting for the order.

'"Stand by" Belton called again, and then to the coxswains, "when I fire, forty feet."

'It was just then that I thought I heard a sound, the rumbling noise of a train in a tunnel or the screw of a steamer close to. I imagined it was the T.B., and I remember thinking that Belton was taking her rather close to the target. The noise got louder and louder, and the men began to look at one another, and then I heard the skipper's voice from the control room.

'"Flood the auxiliary," he shouted, and I knew by his voice that something was wrong. "Take her down," he cried, "lively now."

'Then I heard an E.R.A. calling for a wheel-spanner, and I ran aft to find that the Kingston had jammed and they couldn't open it, and all the time the noise was getting louder and louder. We flooded the buoyancy and speeded up, and she was just going down (you know we always carried a light trim in those old boats) when the rumbling grew into a roar and there was a terrific

clang for'ard and a rush of water, and we knew that some one's propeller had cut clean through the skin. The lights went out and there was another bang and spout of water in the after compartment, and down we went.

'"Control room, men," yelled Belton. "Close the engine-room bulkhead."

'Somebody brought it to, and as the engine-room wasn't pierced we knew we had that much buoyancy at any rate, and with the water pouring in in sheets we hit the bottom and the men tumbled into the control room and banged the doors. There was a good four feet of water there by then, and we'd filled the bilge.

'Luckily some one had brought an emergency lamp with him, and we switched it on down there in the darkness. The depth-gauge was steady at 48 feet, and the crew was packed in that small air-lock. We could hear the water rising on both sides of us, and spurts of it came through the water-tight doors. Then by-and-by the sound ceased, and we knew that save for the engine-room and the control room the boat was full up to the hatches.'

'My God,' I grunted involuntarily, as Allison paused to drink.

'We mustered the crew,' he continued, 'and found that two were missing: a stoker named Howell who had been on watch doing some job or other in the engine-room, and had been shut in when the bulkhead door was closed, and the T.I., who had been with me at the tubes.

'The stoker, of course, would be all right so far, and as it happened he saved himself and is in hospital now recovering from shock. The T.I., we knew, was dead. He must have tripped over something in the darkness on his way aft, and the door had been closed before he could get to it. Poor devil, there was a gash about two feet long in the hull, and he must have watched the water rising till it jammed him up against the arch of the roof and drowned him as it rose.

'Poor old Belton looked anxious; he had the lives of all of us on his hands, and the men just stood round and said nothing.

'We blew what we could, but she hadn't got a central control like we have in the later boats, and of course nothing happened. The depth-gauge stuck at 48 feet, and the air was getting bad already. There were fourteen of us in the control room—a space about seven feet by nine.

'I was standing by one of the bulkhead doors, and was the first to suspect it. I didn't say anything till I was sure, and smelt and smelt again till there was no doubt about it. The water had got to the batteries, and chlorine gas was creeping through the doors.

'There was only one way out of it, and that was the old conning-tower dodge. We reckoned we had about half an hour to live, as the gas was only coming in slowly, and we might be able to save the lot if the air didn't give out first.

'You know the shaft of the conning-tower that

leads down into the control room has two hatches, one at the top, opening out on deck, and the other at the bottom where the shaft breaks out into the skin of the hull. The space between was just big enough for a man to stand, and forms an air-lock.

'I wanted Belton to go up first, but of course he wouldn't have it. He insisted that an officer must go first to test the working of it, and if all went well to explain technically when he reached the top what was the matter with us. As he was the captain I had to go.'

Allison broke off and shuddered at the remembrance, and it was some time before he continued.

'I pushed up the lower lid and climbed into the conning-tower, and as I held the flap I looked down on the little crowd of upturned faces. "Good luck, George," said Belton, he always called me George, "and good-bye."

'Then I closed the lid and stood there in the narrow space with only the upper hatch between me and 40 feet of water. I don't quite know how I felt, but I felt afraid, and I waited a minute before I opened the sea-inlet, and the water poured into the shaft. It was all dark, of course, and I had the feeling that now at least I had burnt my boats. The arrangement was that after I had gone up, and the upper lid had been closed again from the control room, they were to pump the shaft out and the next man up would open the lower lid and take my place, and they were to give me four minutes to do it.

'The water rose up to my thighs, and in that narrow space I could feel the air compressing terribly on my ears and mouth, and I climbed up till my head was touching the upper lid. Up came the water again, up to my chest, and I waited with one hand on the releasing gear of the lid.

'When it reached my chin I couldn't stand it any longer and let the hatch fly. I don't know what happened then, but the bubble of compressed air must have shot me clean up. I remember the feeling of pressure and dark water and bursting lungs, and then I was up in the glorious sunlight that I hadn't expected to see again.

'Somebody grabbed me by the collar (I was told afterwards it was the T.B.'s boat I was hauled into), and I just managed to tell them how it was with the poor devils below. Then I fainted and came to in hospital, and that's all about it.'

He drew a long breath.

'The others?' I hinted.

'Oh, the tramp stood by, and her name and so on was taken, but she wasn't held to blame, as nothing could be proved. Belton was the only man who could have spoken, but, as you know, they didn't get the boat up for days.'

'But why was it some of the others couldn't follow you up?'

'Something must have gone wrong below. Either they couldn't drain the conning-tower or else the gas got through to them. When they raised her they were all gassed, poor beggars, and I think

the doors must have leaked quicker than we'd thought, and I just got up in time.'

'You said something about a stoker being saved, didn't you?'

'That was Howell, who was shut up in the engine-room. It's an interesting story how he got out. He's in Haslar Hospital now, if you'd like to go and see him.'

I said I should like to very much.

'Then I'll give you this,' and Allison wrote something on the back of a card, 'otherwise he may suspect you and tell you nothing.'

'I'll go,' I said, taking the card. 'His story ought to be rather illuminating.'

'It will be, I expect. You mustn't mind his language, though. He's rather a hard nut.'

'Don't think I shall. I'm used to that sort of thing after ten years close acquaintanceship with the Navy.'

Allison laughed.

'And are you,' I suggested, 'really going to stop in submarines after an experience like that?'

'Why not?' he laughed again. 'Because I'm unlucky once it doesn't follow that I will be again.'

'And the stoker?'

'He's coming back with me as a leading hand. That is if he behaves himself,' and he glanced at the card in my hand.

'But when it was all over and you were in the hospital, how did you feel?'

'I felt a bit bad at first, and then I thought of the rest of them down there, and I felt as if I wanted a drink. The sister wouldn't let me have one, though, and we had a proper blarney,' and he broke off into some long story of the hospital.

I saw that it was no more use and that the golden hour was passed. It was no good pressing it, and I was thankful to have gleaned so much.

By-and-by he began to talk about his new boat again.

'In another month she ought to be ready for trials,' he said enthusiastically. 'Hope you'll come and see how she behaves.'

'I'd like to, but how about you? How will you feel the first time you go down again?'

My host grinned.

'Can't say, I'm sure, but if you come, and mind you've got to, I'll let you know at the time, that is if you remind me, and I'm not too busy with contractors' people and dockyard officials and so on, which I expect I shall be. Some of those dockyard people are blighters, you can't get half you want out of them.'

'I've noticed that,' I answered. 'Engineer-Commanders are hard drivers of bargains sometimes.'

'Hard drivers! Why I could tell you stories; but no, there isn't time. I've got a long day's work to-morrow, so I'll turn in early. See you before you leave?'

He rose to go.

'One moment,' I said, 'before bed, may I read what you've written on this card?'

'Good Heavens, yes,' he laughed. 'Good-night.'

On the card in my friend's neat handwriting were the words: 'Tell him how you wrenched off the manhole door or you won't come back in *my* boat.'

Such is the personal equation of the Naval Officer.

. . . . . .

'He's in Ward 6,' the sister told me. 'Yes, this is visitors' hour, you're not breaking the rules,' and we smiled at each other as she led the way up the cool stone staircase.

I found him sitting in an arm-chair, a young man wrapped in a blanket of some sort, but haggard, and, it may have been my imagination, rather gray for his age.

He eyed me suspiciously, and I handed him the magic card.

'That's Mr Hellison,' he said, grinning broadly; ''e always was one for a joke like.'

I sat down and asked him how he was.

'Not so ruddy,' he answered, 'but it give me a fair turn, it did.'

'And you're stopping in submarines?'

'All right, mate, I'll earn it; I'll carry out 'is orders, and don't you fret. I'm goin' back as a leadin' 'and, I am.'

I said nothing.

'It was a fair old show,' he went on presently,

'but I come through it all right by a bit o' luck.'

I congratulated him on his safety.

'I was on watch in the engine-room, doin' a job of cleanin', when it 'appened,' he continued, 'and the E.R.A 'ad just gone for'ard for suthing when the bump came. A proper old clang it was, and I 'eard the water simply passing in, in a way o' speakin'. Then the captain, 'e sung out for the 'ands to muster in the control room, but the lights went out just then, and afore I could get out of the engine-room some one banged the water-tight door to, and, as it 'appened, that's wot saved my life.'

I nodded my interest in his story.

'We was 'oled in the after compartment as well as for'ard, you see, and them bangin' that door cut me off from the control room but kept out the water that flooded in between the rest of the bunch and me in the engine-room. I 'eard it risin' after we 'it the bottom, and the boat took on a bit of a cant.

'Then I began to get in rather a sweat, as I knew that if I was goin' to be saved I got to save myself. I come over all funny like at first down there in the dark, and then I 'ad an idea and started right on to work it.

'First I got 'old of a shifting spanner and fell to work on the man'ole of the No. 4 main ballast tank. That's under the engine-room, you know, and when I'd got it off the water flopped in a bit owin' to the shape of the tank.

'After that I sat down and wondered whether

it was worth it or if I could wait a bit and see if they was goin' to lift the boat, but the waitin' got on my nerves, and I thought I might as well see it through. So I opened up the No. 4 Kingston, and in come the water through the man'ole door what I'd took off. It rose mighty fast, too, and after it got over the Kingston wheel I knew it was neck or nothin', as they say, 'cos I could never stop the water comin' in again if I wanted to. So I climbed up the ladder and 'ung on under the engine-room 'atch and watched the water risin'.

'Of course the air compressed somethin' cruel, and when I thought it was enough I shoved away the strong-back and tried to push the 'atch up. It only lifted an inch or so and come down again with a bang, lettin' in a torrent of water that knocked me off o' the ladder, and I was swimmin' about in the engine-room for a bit before I got 'old of it again. The water was within two foot o' the roof by then and bangin' me up against it, so I thought 'ere goes, and I give the 'atch a push. Lumme, I don't rightly know *wot* 'appened then, but I went up like a cork out of a bubbly bottle, and never knew no more till I woke up one day in this 'ere 'ospital. Mr Hellison, 'e come down and see me, and I'm goin' back with 'im, and that's all there is to it.'

The narrator drew a long breath, and paused to watch the effect of his story.

'Thanks,' I said simply. There seemed nothing else to say.

He grinned broadly. 'Wot do you think of it?' he queried. 'Sons of the sea and bloomin' sky-blue 'eroes, wot?'

'It must have been an awful experience,' I ventured.

'Don't you believe it, mate; "a life on the ocean wave," and honest Jack the sailor, that's wot you think,' and he chuckled at some obscure joke.

'I tell you, though, I was scared, mind yer. Not at the time: I was too busy savin' myself then, but afterwards, lyin' 'ere in bed; wot with me bein' weak and so on, I used to imagine I was down there in the dark again, and I used to dream about it and wake up in a sweat.'

'And yet you're stopping in submarines?'

'You betcher. Did you ever, when you was a little 'un, think you saw somethin' in the dark or feel that some one was be'ind you?'

I nodded.

'Well, *I* used to, and my mother she always told me, "Phil," she used to say, "whenever you feels like that, turn round and touch wot's scarin' you, and when you feels nothin' you'll know it's all right." It's just the same as that. I'll go back, and once I'm in a boat again I'll feel as right as a trivet, it's the bein' away and thinkin' that does the damage.'

'I think I see. You mean it's the shadow that hurts, not the substance.'

'You've got it, guvnor; that's wot it is. But 'ere's the sister comin', so I guess you'll 'ave to 'op it.'

'Your time's up,' said the sister, smiling. 'We can't allow him to talk too much, and he will keep on talking.'

'All right, sister, I'll be a good boy,' and the patient lay back with closed eyes and snored loudly.

'Good-bye,' I said, and thanks so much for what you've told me. Anything you'd like: cigarettes and so on?'

'No, thanks, guvnor, I'm all right,' said the sleeper, coming suddenly to life; 'but if you're seein' Mr Hellison, give 'im my respects and say I'm 'opin' to be with 'im before long.'

I promised that I would.

'Good-bye,' I said again, 'and best of luck and a quick recovery.'

The sister was waiting for me at the door, and beckoned impatiently.

As I left the ward I glanced once more towards the patient. He was apparently sound asleep and snoring his loudest, but as I turned away, one eye suddenly opened and closed again in the most unmistakable wink that was ever winked by man or sailor.

. . . . . .

It wasn't until some years afterwards that I heard the end of the story.

I only got wind of it by chance at a dinner party, after the women folk had left us and the port had been round for the second time. It was before the War, and not knowing that there were any Naval guests present I was talking to my neighbour

about the Navy, and telling him what I knew of the '02' fatality, when the gray-haired man opposite me broke in.

'I think I can finish your story for you,' he said.

'Finish the story!' I replied in surprise. 'Do you know any more details then?'

'I think I do,' he said quietly. 'You see, I was in the T.B. at the time of the accident. I was a captain then, and it was before I retired from the Service, and I went out to see what a periscope looked like, and to prove some of my own pet theories as to the uselessness of these new-fangled things called submarines.'

'Do tell me,' I pleaded. 'I'll be very quiet if you will.'

'It's not a pleasant tale, though. I don't know if——'

But the other guests, who had heard my account of the survivors' experiences, clamoured for the story, and the gray-haired man gave way.

'I went out in the T.B. as a sight-seer, and watched the submarine dive through my glasses with the interest of a child with a new toy. It was the first time I'd seen a boat go under, and I remember wondering what it felt like to be down below. At the same time I noticed a tramp steamer, a Norwegian she was, coming down Channel across our track, and I recollected mentioning it to the captain of the Torpedo Boat.

'We hoisted a red flag to indicate the danger

and continued on our course, keeping a good look-out for the periscope meanwhile, and all the time the tramp kept getting closer and didn't seem to worry about our warning signals. Then the periscope was spotted, and the next moment the tramp was between us and the submarine's track. At the last minute the Norwegian seemed to have suddenly realised that something was wrong, and thinking the danger was to do with us, altered her course away from us.

'Even so, something must have been amiss in the boat, or I think she would have gone clear, but the next moment we saw the wake of the periscope under the steamer's counter, and then it disappeared for good. The Norwegian stopped in answer to our frantic signals, and we went alongside and hailed the master. He said that his engineers reported that the propeller had struck something, so we took his name and port of registry and got the wireless going.

'Two T.B.s arrived in a short time with divers and other gear, and the tramp was taken into Portland for examination; but nothing was proved, and she was not held to blame. In those days the submarine signals weren't generally known as they are now.

'We'd marked and buoyed the spot where we last saw "02's" periscope, and the divers were just getting ready for a preliminary survey when a man shot out of the water and right up in the air. He fell back with a plop, and we had a boat

out and the body on board inside three minutes. It was Allison, the "Sub" of the boat, and he just managed to tell us how things were and what had happened before he fainted. Then the divers got to work, and we were waiting anxiously for news when another body appeared. It was one of the stokers, and he was in a bad condition with shock, and half drowned. We waited and waited, but nobody else came up, and it was not for days afterwards that the boat was raised, and they were all dead by then——'

The gray-haired man sighed and broke off.

'I knew Allison,' I said, breaking the silence that followed. 'It was he who told me practically all I know about "02."'

'Did you?' said the gray-haired man; 'and I knew Belton: I knew him very well.'

'I'm so sorry,' I said, 'I hope I haven't——'

'Not at all,' replied my informant. 'But I think I knew him better than most people, because, you see, he was my son.'

. . . . . .

I went home that night and I thought about it. Of Allison the cheery, and Howell the Cockney, and of that lonely old Admiral who'd seen his son die. I thought about it and I wondered. And the result was that I asked myself this question: 'Why do these men do this, and what keeps them doing it?' And then the answer came, and the answer is, that in spite of modern machinery, and modern scepticism, and modern commercialism,

and all the money grubbing and scoffing of the twentieth century, there is still, thank God, a touch of the loyalty and ideal of honour and patriotism that nerved our fathers of the middle ages. In the ordinary walks of life it is met with but rarely, or if it does exist, it is denied and held to scorn by those who would rather strike in war-time than do an extra hour's work, and hold self continually in the fore-ground and never cast a thought to State or Country.

And that loyalty and those ideals are always met with in the Navy and the Army, ay, and in the Merchant Service too—that Service who has found her worth and come into her own since this World War began.

And why should these ideals remain in our Services when they have so long left the ranks of civilian life? For the reason that the men of the Services are trained in the same old way and live up to the same ideals as their fathers of centuries ago; only a few of the details have been altered.

For on joining the colours, whether White Ensign or Red Ensign, or his regimental banner, the man whose father may be an agitator or a strike leader learns to forget himself and to work for his surroundings, for good work's sake, and for the opinion of his superiors.

Thank God that it is so, and that there were those among us who came forward in 1914 and in 1915 without having to be cajoled and eventually

forced to do what was our obvious and common duty.

May those who growl at the War and those who ask, as some have been asking, 'What is the Navy doing?' gather from these few pages a glimpse of the life of one small branch of the Service to which Britain owes her immunity. And if they are not silent afterwards, then will it be proof that the spirit of England is on the wane, and that her manhood is not what it was in the days of Trafalgar and of Waterloo.

May that day never come, and may Englishmen, ay, and Irishmen, too, when striving to do their duty look to the Navy and her sister Services for their guide-star and example.

AMEN.

Call it a judgment ye who will,
  Call it a scourge to punish Man;
Name it a curse that Man must kill,
  And suffer God's eternal ban.
Call it a scourge, a blasting breath,
Borne on the wings of pain and death.

So may it be and ye who think
  The Lord's avenging hand is nigh,
As ye draw near the Silent Brink,
  Pray to the Lord who reigns on high.
All ye who use and fear the sword,
Fall on thy knees and pray the Lord.

'God! Grant the anguish and the blood,
  The corpses and the countless biers,
The pain, the misery, the flood,
  Of broken hearts and mothers' tears
May wash away the damning stain,
And cleanse from us the brand of Cain.

'O God Almighty, Lord of All,
  Have mercy on Thy people's stress;
Hark to Thy people's pleading call,
  Who look to Thee to guide and bless.
Have mercy on us, we who live;
And for our dead . . . we pray, forgive.'

GLASGOW: WM. COLLINS SONS AND CO. LTD.

WITHIN THE RIM
By HENRY JAMES

(Author of 'The Ivory Tower,' 'The Sense of the Past,' etc., etc.)

The assumption by Henry James of British citizenship was a symbolic act, a unique demonstration to all the world of his devotion to the Allied cause. To that cause also he dedicated the last efforts of his genius. In these moving, poignant pages, the heroism of ravaged Belgium and France, the war effort of Britain, the rich outflow of American philanthropy are enshrined with all the master's old matchless beauty of thought and form.

THE SKELETON KEY
By BERNARD CAPES

(Author of 'Where England Sets Her Feet')

This story deals with a crime committed in the grounds of a country house, and the subsequent efforts of a clever young detective to discover the perpetrator. There is an amusing love interest and strong characterisation. The scene is laid in Paris and Hampshire.

MR. MISFORTUNATE
By MARJORIE BOWEN

(Author of 'The Burning Glass')

The story is of *Young Mr. Misfortunate* (as Charles Edward Stewart was styled by the Whigs of his time) after the disaster of the '45 Scottish Expedition to his meeting with Clementina Walkinshaw in 1753.

It opens in Scotland, but is mainly placed in Paris and its environs, in palace and slum, with one change to Venice.

The theme is the little known adventures that led to the downfall of a cause and a man—the most lovable and unfortunate of all the lovable and unfortunate Stewarts.

THE ADVENTURESS
By ARTHUR B. REEVE

An American from Maddox Munitions, Incorporated, the owners of a new war invention—the telautomaton, forms the centre round which this exciting mystery tale is built. In trying to answer the ever-present question 'Who killed Marshall Maddox?' the reader is tossed about a sea of conjecture by two strong main currents which continually cross and recross each other and keep him mystified till the end of the book. Scientific inventiveness—at times diabolical in its ruthless ingeniousness, plays no less strong a part than does Paquita, the adventuress. Was the death of Maddox retributive for his double life or was it due to the covetousness of some schemer. It required a detective of Craig Kennedy's acumen to discover.

UNDER THE PERISCOPE
By LIEUT. MARK BENNETT, R.N.R.

A realistic and detailed picture of life on a submarine during the war, including descriptions of the construction and management of the boat, and the effect of submarine conditions on the crew. All the incidents recorded are founded on fact, and most of them are personal experiences of the author.

Large Crown 8vo. 7s. 6d. *net.*

HIS DAUGHTER
By GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

This is the story of an American whose nature is refined in the fire of war. It begins in the easy-going days of travel abroad when young Dayton meets Elizabeth Brown and becomes informally engaged; and goes on to the artist life in Paris when he meets Elise, a joyous young Parisian girl of the lower class. Suddenly called home and prevented by accident from communicating with Elise, he marries Elizabeth with the determination to be true to her. Chance takes him to Paris, and there three things happened: he learns of another daughter, the child of Elise; Maria, Elizabeth's daughter, dies of typhoid; and the Germans strike. Both he and his loyal wife plunge into the war, and in the ordeals which there confront them the dross of his nature is destroyed.

THE MAN FROM AUSTRALIA
By KATHARINE TYNAN

The Man from Australia is the story of John Darling, who comes from the Antipodes to find his Irish cousins. How he finds them amid tragic circumstances: how he loves his cousin Aileen, over whom the clouds of tragedy hang darkest: how he loses and finds her, is the main theme of the story. The setting is in the Wild West of Ireland.

THE FLOWER OF THE CHAPDELAINES
By GEORGE W. CABLE

The scene is the 'Vieux Carré' of New Orleans, the last lingering place of the old Creole atmosphere. There Geoffry Chester, a young lawyer, is struck by the charm of a Creole beauty whom he daily meets on his way to the office. This is a case of love at first sight. On account of the exclusive character of the Creole coterie it seems destined to be limited to sight, but a bookseller consults him about an old manuscript of which Aline Chapdelaines is the owner. The fate of this manuscript in respect to publication and of Chester in regard to matrimony is the theme of a most original romance.

HERITAGE

By V. SACKVILLE-WEST

Miss V. Sackville-West is already well known as a writer of distinguished verse, but this is her first essay in fiction. Her subject is the influence of heredity, and shows the effect of a strain of Spanish blood on a stolid Sussex stock, as manifested in the persons of a young woman and her cousin, whom she subsequently marries. The story has most unusual literary and dramatic values; but while it is first of all remarkable for its literary style, its beautiful descriptions and power of creative imagination, it presents against this background a steadfast realism of action and psychology. The biological parallel of the 'waltzing mice' that in some sense follow the fortunes of the heroine is an original and charming invention. *Heritage* is certainly one of the most arresting first novels published in the last ten years.

THE CARAVAN MAN

By ERNEST GOODWIN

For the right sort of people, Life, in even these drab times, holds romance and beauty, fun and whimsical adventure. Bamfield, camping in his caravan on Ouseton Common, found himself involved in a whirlpool of surprising events. He had imagined himself quite a serious person, immovably a bachelor wedded to art. 'Oh! Indeed!' Fate seems to have chuckled to itself, and proceeded to deal with him in the proper manner. At the finish, Bamfield, giddy, breathless (perhaps in his secret soul a trifle alarmed), discovered that he was holding Rose Nieugent by the hand—and holding her tight!

Recent Publications

A WRITER'S RECOLLECTIONS

By Mrs HUMPHRY WARD

Demy 8vo.
12s. 6d. *net*

(*New Edition with Index*)

All the famous names are here . . . the people themselves . . . veritably alive.'—*Contemporary Review.*

THE WAR AND ELIZABETH

By Mrs HUMPHRY WARD (*Second Impression*)

'A brilliant study of contemporary life.'—*Truth.*

PETROGRAD (*Second Impression*)

(THE CITY OF TROUBLE), 1914—1918

By MERIEL BUCHANAN

(*Daughter of the British Ambassador*)

Mr Hugh Walpole, in his foreword, says:—'This book is the first attempt of any writer in any language to give to the world a sense of the *atmosphere* of Russia under the shock and terror of those world-shaking events.'

Large Crown 8vo. 7s. 6d. *net.*

FOE-FARRELL (*Second Impression*)

By "Q" (Sir ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH)

'A vivid story with plenty of incident.'—*The Times.*

KAREN By Mrs ALFRED SIDGWICK

(*Third Impression*)

'A candid picture of German social life.'—*The Globe.*

GOD'S COUNTERPOINT

By J. D. BERESFORD (*Third Impression*)

'The most considerable and most distinguished novel that has been published in England since the war.'—*The Daily Express.*

THE BURNING GLASS

By MARJORIE BOWEN (*Second Impression*)

A thrilling romance of Paris before the Revolution.

CITIES AND SEA COASTS AND ISLANDS

By ARTHUR SYMONS 7s. 6d. *net.*

Mr Symons gives in this book a very vivid impression of places he has lived in. The visible world exists very actively for him.

WREN'S WIFE (*Second Impression*)

By CYRIL RUSSELL

A charming comedy with a background of tragedy, deftly handled.

VERDUN DAYS IN PARIS

By MARJORIE GRANT

A charming record of Miss Grant's war-work in Paris during the siege of Verdun.

A NEW WAY OF HOUSEKEEPING

By CLEMENTINA BLACK 3s. 6d. *net.*

'Just the things every woman ought to know.'—*The Glasgow Citizen.*

THE WOMEN NOVELISTS

By R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

Readers of this brilliant book will turn with a fresh interest to their Jane Austen, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Fanny Burney, and the host of other notable women novelists. Mr Brimley Johnson writes not only acutely but also entertainingly of those great women who laid the foundations of the modern English novel, and boldly claims that they invented it.

BUZZ, BUZZ!

By CAPT. J. E. AGATE 7s. 6d. *net.*

This book on the theatre was prepared for the press and largely written while on active service. No more luminous and suggestive book on the theatre has appeared in recent years.

MUMMERY By GILBERT CANNAN

A Romance of the Theatre.

TONY HERON

By C. KENNETT BURROW

The story of a temperamental antagonism which leads to tragedy, but tragedy not without hope. Tony Heron himself, whom we follow from boyhood to maturity, is by no means the sport of circumstance; the circumstances are moulded by environment and blood, not arbitrary happenings. The setting is, for the most part, in pre-war England, and a countryside which will probably never be the same again.