A NORTH SEA DIARY 1914-1918

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A NORTH SEA DIARY

1914—1918

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INTRODUCTION

In placing on record some of my impressions of the Naval War, together with some accounts of such action as I happened to witness, I have been actuated by several desires and guided by one rule.

I have desired that some small record should exist of the part played by H.M.S. *Southampton* in the great war. This little ship can claim an honour denied to nearly every other ship in the Grand Fleet. Namely, that on all the four principal occasions when considerable German forces were encountered in the North Sea, her guns were in action. Those days were the 28th August, 1914, the 16th December, 1914, the 24th January, 1915, and the 16th May, 1916. As far as I know, no other ship, with the exception of H.M.S. *Birmingham*, can claim a share in this record, as, though the same squadrons, *e.g.* the battle-cruiser squadrons, were present on all dates, yet ships that were in action on one day were away refitting on another day. So much for H.M.S. *Southampton*.

My second reason for writing this book was that it seemed to me that a personal record of the North Sea war as applied to the Grand Fleet was desirable.

Much of our knowledge of the details of the great naval wars of the Napoleonic days has come from letters, diaries, and personal accounts published at the time in the Naval Chronicles, and the historian of the future will seek for similar sources of information. An impersonal and invaluable account of our doings has been written by the highest possible authority, Lord Jellicoe himself. Of the doings of the company officer on the western front, innumerable books have been written, and I should estimate that the Army could muster a platoon of able writers who have written of its

actions and life at the front. We in the sister service are astern of station in this matter, both in ability and in numbers, and no one realizes the shortcomings of this volume from a literary point of view better than its author ; but, and here I come to my guiding rule, this book is, to the best of my ability, a true account of the doings of one of His Majesty's two thousand naval lieutenants, and as such claims justification. It is from this point of view that I hope that it will interest all those who have had relatives and friends in the Fleet and particularly the light cruiser squadrons of the Grand Fleet. What we were doing in the *Southampton*, other naval officers were doing in the *Nottingham*, *Birmingham*, *Lowestoft*, *Dublin*, *Liverpool*, *Falmouth*, *Chatham*, *Sydney*, *Melbourne*, *Galatea*, *Phaeton*, etc., to mention a few of the cheery crowd of light cruisers with whom we flogged the North Sea from the South Dogger Light to the latitude of Iceland, and from the coast of Scotland to the coast of Norway.

Some remarks on the battle of Jutland, that many-times-fought contest, will be found in the book. I have endeavoured to distinguish carefully between what I saw and what I have heard from others. One of the most mysterious things about the action is the well-known fact that the estimated positions of the Battle Fleet and the Battle-cruiser Fleet differed by 12 miles. The disarrangement this must have caused in the plans of Lord Jellicoe and his staff can only be compared to the case of a man who tries to cross a road in front of a car which he estimates would hit him in ten seconds if he was not across in time, and he then finds himself about to be hit in five. He has got to alter his plans and alter them quickly. Lord Jellicoe, whose book appeared after this book was completed, states that there could be no doubt as to the accuracy of positions as plotted in the *Iron Duke*, as she had come straight from Scapa Flow, whereas the Battle-cruiser Fleet had

been in action for two hours and frequently altering course. At the same time, whilst admitting the force of the above explanation, it has always seemed to me that 12 miles' divergence of opinion was so large that other causes may have contributed to the difference. The Battle-cruiser Fleet had steered an easterly course from Rosyth, and up till 3.30 p.m. there was no reason why our positions should not have been correct. Yet at 5.30 they were 12 miles in error on the *Iron Duke*. I have often wondered whether, on our easterly course throughout the night, we were being affected by a ½- or ¼-knot southerly set which was not running farther to the north-east where the Battle Fleet was at sea. It is at all events curious that, as far as my knowledge goes, the navigators of the Battle-cruiser Fleet agreed roughly on their positions, and the navigators of the Battle Fleet agreed more or less collectively on their own. Perhaps one day a furious conflict of Pilots at the Navigation School will delight the lay minds in the Fleet who have wondered on this matter.

As regards the track chart of the general movements of H.M.S. *Southampton*, it has been necessary to omit all minor alterations of courses, and her movements for the first eighteen months only are shown, as further tracks would hopelessly overcrowd the chart. It will be noticed that a considerable number of tracks run off the chart to the northward. Continued to scale, some of these tracks would necessitate a prolongation of the chart to the Arctic Circle.

In this introduction I am getting what is known in the Submarine Service as "windy," so I will conclude with the hope that the people of this country will always remember that, though peace is very good, security is still better, and that the Royal Navy is as sound an insurance policy for the Empire as any on the market.

S. K.-H.

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CHAPTER I

THE FIRST LIFE

LOOKING back across four years and one hundred days of war, the events that preceded this great clash seem to belong to another age.

It seems to me as if I have had two lives already—the first up to 1914, the second from 1914 to 1918—and now I feel that a third life is beginning.

This curious sensation of having already lived two lives makes me feel rather old ; such years as I have lived seem to have been long ones.

It is like the old dodge of making seven days' leave seem like ten by staying in three different places, only the ruse is spread over years.

My first life is of little interest to anyone. I was first educated abroad, and in due course followed the family tradition by entering Osborne ; from whence, the college at Dartmouth, the training cruiser, a year in the *Neptune* with Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman, eighteen months on the Cape of Good Hope Station, and another year in the *Neptune*, in which ship Admiral Sir George Callaghan was then flying his flag, followed in due course.

A hectic ten days at the Navigation School, Portsmouth, in which period I wrestled, together with eighty others, with an endless succession of examination papers,

and I emerged a confirmed sub-lieutenant in His Majesty's Navy.

My most lasting recollection of these examinations was that the room was so cold that I wore a greatcoat, in the pockets of which garment I secreted ginger-beer bottles full of hot water, which I ostentatiously displayed at regular intervals as a silent protest against the lack of radiators.

Some hunting in Ireland, and I joined H.M.S. *Southampton* in February 1914.

She was lying at Portsmouth, and flew the broad pennant of a Commodore with whose family my own has been in close association in the Service for many years.

The *Southampton*, which in my eyes will always be the ship of ships in the Navy and in whose honour I write this book, was nearly brand-new, and then represented the latest idea in light cruisers, being in a different category from the *Arethusa* class, which were smaller, slightly faster, but with less armament.

The *Southampton* mounts eight 6-inch guns and two submerged tubes for 21-inch torpedoes. She has three inches of armour, and can maintain a speed of 25·5 knots for four hours, and she is good for 23 in a very considerable sea.

When I joined her at the beginning of 1914, my first life was drawing to a close, little though I realized that fact.

In my second life I was destined to play a small and humble part in the great drama, and it is because it seems to me that the records of the little parts, when fitted together, may prove of interest to the present generation and of some slight value to the future generations of historians, that I have decided to place on paper some of my experiences during the war.

I have always kept a diary, and some of my material comes from that; but some things could not with

propriety be placed on paper whilst the war lasted, and in such cases I have to trust to an indifferent memory. Should any gross errors meet the eye of any of my shipmates who may chance to borrow this book, I hope they will write to me.

We were working up for gunnery practices and playing golf at Oban in April when the news came that the First Light Cruiser Squadron, which consisted of the *Southampton*, *Birmingham*, and *Nottingham*, would proceed to Kiel Bay in June, accompanied by a squadron of four battleships under Sir George Warrender flying his flag in the *King George V*.

We went to Portland to prepare for the trip, and everyone hastily surveyed their uniforms, and in some cases reluctantly purchased full dress and ball dress, as an order was issued—

" That whilst in German waters, uniform would be worn ashore ; for purposes of sport, flannels would be permitted, and it was hoped officers would see that the latter were of an immaculate nature."

This last admonition caused great amusement in the Fleet.

In a dense fog we sailed for Kiel on the 21st June, and had a harmless and entertaining bumping match with a fishing smack off the Jutland coast.

That afternoon we rehearsed cheering ship for the Kaiser !

Rounding the Skaw, we made the passage of the Belt, and arrived at the northern limit of Kiel Bay at dusk on the 23rd.

I was on watch when we anchored. The navigator—now a colonel in the R.A.F.—turned to me and said :

" Do you believe in omens ? " and pointed to the southern sky.

I looked up and saw a very curiously shaped cloud, which must have been a mile long and was shaped exactly like a snake, head erect and about to strike.

I said, " It's exactly like a huge snake."

He replied : " Yes ; and the head is raised towards England."

At that moment the setting sun tinged the cloud a vivid red.

" Blood ! " said the pilot solemnly.

We were both silent for a moment, and then, feeling rather foolish, we began to talk about something else.

Next morning, German naval officers came on board to pilot us into Kiel.

In addition to the German navigators we had an A.D.C. appointed to the ship, to attend on the Commodore during our stay. His name was Kearhan, and he was a great big Prussian with the rigidity of a ramrod.

He could not understand our principle that, in the mess, officers do not behave as if they were on the quarter-deck, and that a commander can have a rough and tumble with two lieutenants without losing caste.

However, we educated him considerably in this respect during our visit to Kiel, and also inculcated into him a taste for cocktails.

We went to buoys in Kiel harbour, and it was reported that the Germans were very favourably impressed by the perfect manner in which the British ships tied up without assistance.

As to our appearance, needless to say, we were " ormelu." [1]

In our own case, the *Southampton's* quarter-deck was a dream of dark-blue enamel, the stanchions of our awning were encased in pipe-clayed canvas, the decks were snowy white, having been planed by hand by ten carpenters to remove all stains.

Our stay at Kiel was one ceaseless round of official visits, banquets, dances, and other amusements.

[1] " Ormelu " means " tiddly," which means *très chic* in a naval ward-room.

We had almost to live in our full dress, which costume was certainly not designed for modern life.

Our "chummy ships" were the *Rostock*, a light cruiser, and a battleship of the *Pommern* class.

We dined all the officers of the latter ship one night, and her commander made a speech in which he said: "We try and mould ourselves on the traditions of your Navy, and when I see in the papers that the possibility of war between our two nations must be considered, I read it with horror; to us such a war would be a civil war."

Kiel itself was full of German society, and many well-known figures in the yachting world were there to honour the Kiel regatta week.

Lord Brassey, in his wonderful old yacht, the *Sunbeam*, was anchored close to us.

It was a few days after our arrival the Kaiser came to Kiel in his yacht, the *Hohenzollern*.

He came through the Kiel Canal, and the bows of his yacht broke the silk ribbons across the entrance to the new locks, which were formally declared open. The completion of these locks and the widening of the bends in the canal permitted the largest dreadnoughts to pass into the North Sea from Kiel, instead of their being obliged to go round the Skaw at the northern end of Denmark.

When the *Hohenzollern* emerged into the harbour from the Kiel end of the canal, she proceeded through the lines of the two fleets at the highly improper speed, for a harbour, of about 16 knots.

As she passed each ship the assembled ships' companies of both nations mechanically cheered.

We were cheering a figure standing alone in admiral's uniform on a stage built up over the top of the upper bridge of the *Hohenzollern*.

This man in admiral's uniform, standing at the salute, was William Hohenzollern, German Emperor by

arrangement with his God, and one of the greatest poseurs of the age.

In the wake of the *Hohenzollern* thousands of his subjects in every type of craft, from racing-eights to large pleasure-steamers, endeavoured to keep up with the yacht.

One boat was swamped and I believe a few ultra-loyal Germans drowned before the *Hohenzollern* came to an anchor and was at once surrounded by police-boats to keep the populace at their distance.

The usual programme of a day at Kiel was as follows :

In the morning one watched the yacht-racing outside. I used to do this from Admiral von Müller's motor-boat ; von Müller had been Naval Chief of the Kaiser's Privy Cabinet for many years.

In the evening there were always a dinner and a ball ashore—both very formal functions, and at 1 a.m. those who did not wish to go to bed, of which I was invariably one, changed into the blessed comfort of a dinner-jacket and repaired to one of the two night clubs which were patronized by the German Navy. At these cafés chantants one could consume vast quantities of caviare and *bola*, a sort of champagne-cup.

I used to be a source of worry to the genial manager of " La Mascotte," as, being a teetotaller, I insisted on *sirops*.

At these cheerful places one danced with pretty ladies of Russian and Austrian nationality until about 6 a.m., when one returned to the ship in a dilapidated condition and prepared for the next official function.

I remember that one morning the flag-lieutenant and myself arrived alongside at 7.15 a.m., just as the Commodore came on deck for a stroll before breakfast. Explanations were futile, but we were cross-examined afterwards, and it was rumoured in the ward-room that the Commodore was contemplating an incognito visit to " La Mascotte " in order to satisfy himself of the

innocence of his junior officers' amusements. To our great regret we never met him there.

As soon as we arrived at any of these places we always had a great reception in honour of the British Navy. They would hardly have been so effusive had they been able to foresee the effect that self-same Navy was about to produce on their food supplies in the near future. Nor would the assistant paymaster and myself have sung an English song from the stage, in response to clamorous demands for a " turn."

However, it is lucky that we could not foresee the future, for it was very amusing at Kiel in those closing weeks of my first life.

I became fairly well acquainted with three German officers. One was a submarine officer, who I believe still survives. The second was the first-lieutenant of the *Rostock*, who used to seek my company with embarrassing ardour, for he was apparently the only officer teetotaller in the German Navy and felt that we ought to be kindred spirits. We were not, for he was a gloomy man with depressing views as to the imminence of the Second Coming. The third was a sub-lieutenant in the battleship *Kaiser*, who did not admire me particularly as far as I know, but he quite openly admired my English evening clothes, and expressed his intention of coming to England with the express purpose of purchasing a " smoking," by which he meant a dinner-jacket.

Some sports for the sailors were held one afternoon. The British ships were defeated at nearly everything. We discovered afterwards that preliminary contests to select teams had been held at Kiel, and these teams represented the picked athletes from thirty thousand men ! Our representatives were, of course, merely the best men in each ship.

One night the German submarine depot gave a dance, which they explained was a very special private dance,

in that we should all be in mess undress, and the Kaiser's severe displeasure was going to be risked as we were to dance rag-time, and, most marvellous of all, we were to be allowed to sit out in the rose-garden.

The dance was a success, the *gnädige Fräulein* enjoying the above novelties to the full.

Some of the German ladies, in French clothes, were very attractive but they were dreadful when attired in products from the Fatherland.

One of the former was a countess from Mayence, whom we were told was nicknamed " Countess Iceberg." She was a very handsome lady, and I understood at the time that the British Navy did not find her so extraordinarily frigid.

On the morning of the 28th June the *Meteor*, with the Kaiser on board, passed close to us on her way out to race. William was with a large party aft, and seemed in the best of spirits.

A few hours later a fatal pistol-shot was fired in Sarajevo, and the overture to the colossal drama of the world war began.

I was at an afternoon dance in one of the *Pommern* class when the news came through that the Archduke had been assassinated.

Dancing was stopped, and we prepared to return to our ships.

In the interval, whilst waiting for our boats, I asked a German lady what this assassination meant.

She told me that in her opinion it was a black day for Germany, as the Archduke, who had been promised by William the Second the recognition of his morganatic wife as Empress, represented German influence in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

She said : " All the work of fifteen years is gone."

We got back to our ships at 5 p.m., and shortly afterwards the despatch-boat *Sleipner* came into harbour and passed across our stern.

She had been out to fetch the Kaiser from his sailing-race.

William was seated alone right aft, and presented the most extraordinary contrast to his appearance in the morning—we all commented on it; his staff were grouped together watching him from a distance, but he sat silent and alone, staring straight in front of him, one hand supporting his chin. It will always be a matter of curiosity to me to know how much he knew, suspected, or had planned at that moment. That his thoughts were portentous I am absolutely convinced.

That evening he left for Berlin.

Our visit was shortened after this event, and the Germans invited the light cruisers to use the Kiel Canal —an offer which we accepted, as it saved us several hundred miles.

We passed through in the course of a day, and I noticed that we were photographed from above as we passed under each of the three or four suspension bridges which span the canal. Incidentally, Zeppelins were continually hovering over us at Kiel, for no obvious purpose except to take photographs.

The evening of the day on which we passed through the canal we cleared the mouth of the Elbe, and picking our way clear of the sandbanks which are so well described in the *Riddle of the Sands*, we passed Heligoland at sunset.

The island, seen from a distance of 10 miles, looked like a cloud resting on the water.

We exchanged salutes with the battleship *Westfalen*, which was carrying out exercises in waters which were soon to be the haunt of British submarines from Harwich.

We came to Portsmouth, and in July the peace-time Navy, which had not had a real war for over one hundred years, and in which men had entered as cadets and retired as admirals without having the opportunity of

seeing a shot fired in anger, sang its swan-song in one last review at Spithead in the presence of His Majesty the King.

For the last time for many weary months, the ships were crowded with ladies, dinner parties were held on board, and the Fleet was a blaze of light.

The weightiest matter discussed in the mess was what would happen if anyone was silly enough to tell us to go and bombard Belfast in the case of Ulster springing to arms.

The Fleet left Spithead and steamed past the royal yacht, carried out exercises for two days, which, as was subsequently noted, bore little resemblance to war, and then we were dispersed to various ports to give summer leave and to demobilize the reservists who had been called up.

We went, together with the Battle Fleet, to Portland.

On Sunday, the 26th July, a friend of mine named S——, then serving in the *Devonshire*, and myself walked out to the Springhead Hotel to have a lobster tea and to discuss our arrangements for the forthcoming leave.

Our plan was to collect some dollars and proceed in company to Ostend, there to support ourselves on the gaming-tables or in such other manner as seemed most promising.

As we were walking back to Weymouth, we saw that two battleships, the *Lord Nelson* and the *Agamemnon*, were coming into the bay.

This struck us as curious, as we knew that they had sailed that morning for Portsmouth to give leave.

On arriving at the landing-stage, we heard that they had been recalled, and on buying a local rag we discovered vague references to trouble in the Balkans.

It will be remembered by those who have reached the mature age of twenty-five that this was a very common state of affairs way back in the 1910s and 13s, and

S—— and myself decided that Ostend would yet see us.

Alas ! some undistinguished Uhlans were due to get there first.

Next day the plot thickened, demobilization was stopped, and a conference between the First Lord and some admirals was postponed.

The newspaper headline grew a little larger, and we were ordered to coal with all despatch. Four hundred tons of it were thrown down on to our upper deck by the automatic coal-shutes, and we were left to get it into the bunkers as best we could.

That evening at 7 p.m. we received orders to be prepared to sail at 7 a.m. the next morning.

Officers and men had to be recalled from shore, and notices ordering ships' companies to repair on board were thrown on the screen at the cinema houses.

There were some affecting scenes on Weymouth Pier, as the ladies ashore appeared to be convinced that we were sailing for Trafalgar II next morning.

This state of affairs communicated itself to the ship, and when it was piped round the mess-decks that " the last mail would leave the ship at 9 p.m." we all felt duly solemn, and only one hardy soul in the ward-room stated that he wrote only once a week, and Sunday was his day, and nothing would make him change it.

Our late gunnery lieutenant, B. M——, came on board at 8 p.m. He had been on sick leave, and had come down from London to collect some gear of his which he had left in the ship, thinking he would return to us ; to his disgust, he had been appointed to a ship which was mobilizing at Portsmouth.

He told us great stories of the activity at the Admiralty.

His great desire was to get a singularly fine arm-chair out of the ship, but he could not do so in the few hours at his disposal, and he was pushed ashore at 10 p.m.,

staggering under the weight of a collection of diaries, last wills and testaments, family documents, silver, and other personal valuables.

He departed to a chorus of :

" Don't forget, old B——, my box goes to the bank at Portsmouth."

" And give that tin case of mine to my missus."

" And don't forget to take that cup of mine to London."

" And . . . etc. etc."

In return for these kindnesses we retained his chair in the smoking-room for upwards of one year, notwithstanding his repeated applications for it.

At 7 a.m. on the 28th July we weighed and proceeded with the Fleet.

For the first hour we steamed in a westerly direction, then, when out of sight of land, we altered course 16 points and stood up channel for the Straits of Dover.

This ruse, if it was intended as such, must have been quite useless, as for some hours we steamed along in company with a large German liner, which doubtless reported us by wireless.

During the forenoon we received the " strained relations " signal. This entailed preparing the ship for war, fuzing the lyddite shell, and placing war-heads on the torpedoes.

I saw a very pathetic sight in the course of the forenoon, which was the spectacle of our commander and a lieutenant reluctantly going round the quarter-deck, armed with two knives with which they were solemnly stripping down the canvas pipe-clayed coverings which conspicuously concealed the crude iron of the berthing-rail stanchions.

I can remember at the same time the horror on P.O. Eve's face when the commander announced that in future the brass top of the after-capstan would not be polished.

It was remarked by the older officers that we had never gone as far as this in the previous war scares, such as the Agadir episode.

During the afternoon a large French battleship of *La République* class dashed past us at 20 knots, cleared for action and steaming for Brest.

At dusk we went to night defence stations, and shortly afterwards passed through the Straits of Dover. The searchlights of both Dover and the French defences were very busy sweeping up and down.

Once through the Straits we increased speed and steered N.N.E., the cruisers being spread ahead as lookouts.

From the purely military point of view, Germany never had a better chance of attacking us than on the night of the 28th–29th.

We had not got a great number of destroyers with us, and a surprise night attack conducted by the massed German flotillas might have been a serious thing from our point of view.

It probably did not take place for two reasons. Firstly, the Germans were quite certain they could keep us out of the war. And secondly, strange to say, the despised Englishman had got his Fleet *en route* to its war stations sooner than the super-efficient German.

Considerable speculation existed in the Fleet as to why we were going north by the east-coast route and thus exposing ourselves to the possibility of a surprise attack. Presumably the Admiralty were accurately informed as to the unreadiness of the German Fleet.

At noon on the 29th, when we were on the Dogger Bank, a German three-funnelled cruiser appeared over the eastern horizon.

The *Antrim* and Third Cruiser Squadron hustled off to investigate. The *Antrim* looked so warlike that the C.-in-C. sent her a warning signal not to do anything that might start a war !

The German turned east and disappeared at a high rate of speed.

Though most of the Fleet still thought that Admiral Sir George Callaghan was C.-in-C., in actual fact he was in London, and the second in command was in charge.

When we reached the latitude of Rosyth, the *Iron Duke* put in to that port to await the C.-in-C.

At 6 p.m. on 31st July the Fleet entered Scapa Flow in a typical drizzle. Coaling was started, and went on throughout the night.

The Home Fleet had become the Grand Fleet and had reached its war base.

On this evening the censorship came into force and the art of writing private letters suffered a severe blow.

CHAPTER II

SCAPA FLOW

SCAPA FLOW was to be the home of the Grand Fleet for most of the war, and it seems fitting to devote a few pages to the place before proceeding with the narrative.

Scapa Flow had long been designated as the war base of our Fleet in the event of war with Germany. The strategic reasons which influenced this decision were simple and sound.

In a great war the strength of our Empire depends on sea communications, and should they be cut we wither like a plant without roots.

Our enemies were well aware of this fact, and the German Battle Fleet was a potential menace to these communications.

Geographically, the odds were on our side, for the British Island is placed directly on the German flank, and all direct access to the west is thus rendered impossible.

There are left but two routes, of which the first, through the Straits of Dover, presented great difficulties to surface craft, as the passage through the Straits is narrow, and hostile ships then find themselves in a gradually broadening channel, flanked by Portsmouth, Portland, Plymouth, and Brest.

The second and only feasible passage to the seas of the world, which were criss-crossed by allied lines of communication, lay around the north coast of Scotland.

On the flank of this route, the British Fleet was concentrated at Scapa Flow.

Scapa Flow has, in addition to its geographical merit, several other advantages.

It is lonely and difficult of access owing to its isolation from the mainland.

It can easily accommodate the largest fleet, and still leave a margin of room for gunnery exercises : a 10,000 yards' range can be obtained inside the Flow. It has more than one entrance, and the depth of water and strong tides make it difficult for enemy submarines to operate in the vicinity, either with torpedoes or mines.

The isolation of Scapa and its rugged desolation presented little distraction to the officers and men who were in the Grand Fleet.

There was but one thing to live for, and that was perfection in war.

Under Sir John Jellicoe the Fleet ceaselessly strove to improve itself in every respect, and the Commander-in-Chief's energy and wonderful influence permeated every mess and mess-deck in every type of ship.

The confidence of the Fleet was given unreservedly to J. J., and we trusted him absolutely.

I question if there is an officer or man who served in the Grand Fleet for the first two years of the war who will not endorse this opinion.

There is a striking parallel between Viscount French of Ypres and Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa Flow : each paved the way for his successor.

Sir David Beatty had not been granted the supreme honour of a general fleet action, but in his hands the lessons of Jutland have been imparted to the Fleet, and he has seen the British Fleet under his command reach a pitch of super-efficiency amazing to those who can appreciate it from the technical point of view.

If the Germans were acquainted with our latest battle-practice results it is not surprising that they chose surrender in ignominy to destruction in certainty.

I have strayed somewhat from my subject, but Scapa

is so bound up with the Fleet, and the Fleet has been so intimately connected with its C.-in-C.'s, that to write of one is to think of all four.

Scapa had one slight disadvantage from the military point of view, and that was that the Fleet based on Scapa was not able to prevent tip-and-run raids by the German battle-cruisers on the east coast of England.

The Germans were well aware of this, and carried out their raids on Scarborough and Yarmouth, not so much to do material damage, but to try and get British public opinion to stampede the Admiralty into an alteration of their strategic plan, and possibly a policy of dispersion of the Fleet.

Their hopes were in vain. The Press and people of England thought imperially, and the strangle-hold directed from Scapa, which prevented the Germans even attempting to obtain command of the sea with surface craft, was maintained.

Scapa was undefended in any way at the outbreak of war, and like all ports on the east coast of Britain there were no submarine defences of any kind.

The first business of the Fleet was to block the entrances on the eastern side. Time was precious, and for this purpose a few ancient steamers were sunk.

Later on in the war, I have often looked with envy at these wrecks and calculated the profits they might have been making at a time when every ton of shipping earned its value each voyage it made.

The only other possible extemporized defences were batteries placed on the bluffs at either side of Hoxa Sound, which is the southern and main entrance.

These batteries were originally 12- and 18-pounder field-guns landed from the Fleet, manned by the Orkney Territorial gunners. In the course of time these minor weapons were replaced by heavier stuff under the R.M.A.

As soon as possible, steps were taken to protect the

place against submarines by the construction of a boom and net, at one end of which a gate operated by two trawlers permitted the incoming and outgoing of the Fleet. This boom eventually developed into three booms and various minefield defences.

The western entrance was also mined and netted. In addition to the above defences trawlers were constantly on patrol between the booms and in the entrance to Hoxa Sound.

Destroyers were perpetually cruising farther afield, the Duty Division of which craft used to lie at Longhope (another southern entrance) at five minutes' notice for steam.

Every now and then they would receive the signal which meant "Round the Orkneys," and off they dashed at 28 knots, went right round the group of islands, and six or seven hours later were back again in Longhope. This annoyed the U-boats.

The construction of these various defences was the labour of months, though by December 1914 Scapa was very fairly secure from submarine attack.

So much for Scapa from the warlike point of view.

From the human point of view it is a place which will loom large in the memories of many thousand officers and men.

Looking down from an aeroplane over the centre of Scapa, one saw a large sheet of land-locked water, roughly circular in shape, of a radius of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The mainland of Orkney stretches two arms to the southward in a broad angle something like a "V," where the top of the "V" is to the north.

The space between the ends of the arms is filled in by a circle of islands, such as Burra, South Ronaldshay, Swona, Flotta, and Hoy.

These islands overlap each other, and the spaces between them are the various entrances to Scapa. The general impression looking from above is that a giant

has put his finger through the middle of the Orkneys, and that the sea has trickled in and filled up the hole.

The land on the west and south-west side of the harbour is mountainous moor ; to the south and east and north it rises barely 300 feet from the sea, and is dotted with low, sturdily built farms.

Like everything else in those parts, the farms lie close to the ground in order to withstand the winter gales.

Of real trees there are none to speak of, and except for the grandeur of the cliffs and mountains on Hoy the scenery is dull and uninteresting.

The bird life on Hoy is wonderful, and there is plenty of shooting and fishing for those who are lucky enough to know the right people.

In the summer and early autumn, when the Fleet was at four or six hours' notice and twilight lasted all night, life could be very pleasant at Scapa, and the atmosphere being of that glorious limpid clarity which seems to speak of great open spaces in the far north, the most wonderful colour-effects were of frequent occurrence.

The average naval officer is not in the habit of devoting many hours to the study of natural colour-effects, and the sailor has no use for them at all. What the English race demand, whether in the far north, in the mud of Flanders, or the heat of Mesopotamia, is games.

The Fleet anchorage was in the south-western corner of the harbour and fairly close to Flotta Island.

This island, rising hog-backed from the sea, and largely heather, was more or less seized by the Navy.

Enterprising engineer commanders designed and constructed stone piers.

One battleship undertook the construction of a dug-out waiting-room close to the pier.

The *chef-d'œuvre* was the golf-course.

There were 18 holes, and each big ship undertook the design and construction of one hole.

Great ingenuity and care were taken over the business, and one battleship is reputed to have spent £70 in getting turf for their green from a famous Scottish golf-course.

To the best of my recollection, H.M.S. *Canada* or the *King George V* was responsible for a wonderful green, standing as smooth as a billiard-table amidst the encircling heather.

Every afternoon, weather and circumstances permitting, crowds of officers, from Sir John Jellicoe to the latest joined snotty, lined up in the queue at the first tee.

There was no mercy if one lost a ball.

The first hole was about 200 yards downhill.

The usual state of affairs on a busy afternoon was as follows. One couple hastily putting and almost running off the first green ; another lot approaching ; a third running downhill after their drive ; and a fourth impatiently swinging their clubs on the tee, and possibly driving over the heads of the third couple.

For the sailors, rectangular patches of heather, as level and free from bog as possible, were selected, goal-posts were put up, and the patches were labelled " football ground."

The sailor landed on the rocks with his football and played furiously.

Beyond these two games, the only other amusements were shooting, fishing, walking, and boating picnics on Saturdays and Sundays.

At certain intervals ships used to go and spend the week-end on what was called the North Shore, which was the northern end of the harbour, distinguished by a pier and a distillery.

From the pier a road led to Kirkwall, the capital of the Orkneys.

Personally, I should not select it for a cheery week-

end ; still, it is a town of sorts, and I'm quite sure the war did Kirkwall no great harm.

Scapa was really beastly in the winter, though some hardened souls professed to like it even then.

It could be dark at half-past three, and it could blow so hard for days on end, that the sea inside the harbour prevented any boats being lowered into the water.

I know of nothing more irritating than to see a trawler loaded up with mail-bags (and one lived for mails) crashing about in a heavy sea, whilst the trawler skipper bellowed through a megaphone that :

" I dout ma abeelity to come alongside ye, owin' ta the prevalin' condeetions."

I must admit that if it was physically possible they got the mails and their load of vomiting messmen and stewards on board the ships.

Every morning, except Sundays (the C.-in-C. was rigid on this point), the Flow was the scene of great activity. Battleships, cruisers, and destroyers followed each other at regular intervals carrying out gun and torpedo practices.

At night the Flow was lit by the gun flashes and searchlights of the ships carrying out night firing.

During the day the various bays around the harbour were each occupied by a ship carrying out 1-inch aiming or " Piff," at a target towed by a steamboat.

The object of life was " WAR," and the C.-in-C. saw that this point was never overlooked.

At regular intervals a complete battle-squadron went to sea, and carried out heavy firing in the western entrance of the Pentland Firth, the battle-practice target being towed by the *King Orry*, and the keen-eyed spies and marking party from the *Iron Duke* taking passage in the destroyer *Oak*.

Any account of Scapa in war-time would be incomplete without some reference to the *Gourko* and the *Borodino*. The *Borodino* was run by the Junior Army

and Navy Stores, and was either alongside some battleship or anchored conveniently in the middle of the Fleet.

When one felt opulent, a party was organized to go shopping, and returned laden with novels, games, and luxuries such as bottles of stuffed olives or salted almonds.

The *Gourko* was the theatre ship.

She could seat about 600 in her main hold, one end of which was an excellent stage, on which various ships gave performances of home-made revues and well-known plays.

In a big ship of the *Queen Elizabeth* class with a complement of 1,000 officers and men, it is wonderful what can be done by the theatrical party.

Costumes and scenery were frequently imported from London.

The destroyers, hospital ships, the host of colliers, oilers, ammunition ships, and other fleet auxiliaries lived up " Gutter Sound " at Longhope.

They used a different entrance from the Hoxa one, and were rather far away from the Fleet for social intercourse.

Later in the war, the Fleet submarines added to the company of small craft.

Contrary to the popular idea ashore, Scapa Flow is not a very cold place, and though personally I am a lover of cities and prefer Princes Street to Hoxa Sound, I do not agree with the officer who on being asked his opinion of Scapa said :

" It's gallons of water surrounded by miles and miles of —— all."

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING

On the 1st August we were able to take stock of our new surroundings, as to many it was their first visit to Scapa.

It was extremely difficult to find out what was going on in the world, as all official sources of supply had dried up under an intense blast of "super-secrecy."

Some of the two-day-old newspapers seemed to insinuate we should be at war by the next edition, and others of the *Daily News* description seemed unable to imagine England ever going to war at all.

In the Fleet the general attitude was a longing for more news and annoyance at being so cut off from the world.

The two local Orkney daily papers each consisted of one page about 6 inches by 8 inches—a meagre and unsatisfying allowance ; but we became quite affectionately disposed towards them in the course of months.

In the evening H.M.S. *Centurion* arrived, flying the flag of Sir John Jellicoe, the future C.-in-C.

At 4 a.m. on the 2nd August I left the ship in charge of a miscellaneous assortment of cutters, whalers, and skiffs, which were to be got out of the ship and hauled up on the beach, so as to reduce the amount of woodwork on board.

I noted with amusement that one of the boats was the first whaler, in which craft, according to the ship's order board, myself and fifteen others were supposed to seek safety in case of the necessity of abandoning ship ever arising.

As the boat could only be reasonably expected to take ten in anything but a flat calm, it did not really make much difference.

Though the hour was 5 a.m. by the time I had added our contribution to the hundreds of boats which were being pulled up on the beach, I repaired to the pier, where there was much to interest a casual observer.

The air was thick with rumours. I was told by " the oldest inhabitant " that a spy had been shot " the nicht," and further, that all the butchers from the Fleet had been landed at 6 p.m. on the previous night, that they had slaughtered continuously at the Kirkwall battue till 3 a.m., in order to get meat for the ships, and that at that hour the butchers were so exhausted that they had sunk down in slumber on the floor of the slaughter-house, oblivious to the blood of their victims.

The ancient Orcadian refused to attempt to estimate the number of animals done to death.

Passing on, I encountered a sub-lieutenant friend of mine, Lord B——. He was attired in a sporting check suit and a bowler hat.

I gently protested at the garb, but he silenced my criticism by explaining that he was on his way to join the *Lion*, and that he had come straight from Goodwood and hadn't the faintest idea where his uniform was, but he thanked his Maker that he hadn't missed the Fleet action ! He was as usual in tearing spirits, and I had to strongly resist the temptation to make several wagers with him.

My attention was next directed to a fat figure in a blue serge suit. It was sitting in a dejected attitude facing the sea ; there were hollows in the cheeks and unshaven hairs on the chin. The suit was crumpled and saturated with dew.

I found out the story attached to this individual.

It appeared that at 7 p.m. on the previous night this

man, who was an admiral's head steward, had landed upon his lawful occasions to purchase food. He had returned to the pier at 9 p.m. and found it desolate.

He may or may not have been aware that his admiral had issued a signal ordering that all boats were to be hoisted at 8 p.m. At all events, such was his own idea of his importance that he had never conceived it to be possible that he should be left ashore.

The inconceivable occurred ; and the steward, too proud to retire to the shelter of Kirkwall, had waited with ever diminishing hope throughout the night. At intervals he held forth to the pier master ; I understand he repeatedly announced his intention of handing in his resignation.

This little incident impressed me enormously, and was a striking contrast to the day on which an admiral, speaking to the commander concerning the case of a lieutenant who whilst on watch had run in the admiral's steward for making footmarks on the quarter-deck, said :

" Tell Mr. Smith, Commander, that there are 1,200 lieutenants in the Navy List, but in the course of forty years' experience I have only met one good steward."

I returned on board to breakfast, feeling that we must be very near war.

All that day was spent by the junior officers of the ship in a fruitless hunt for news.

The secretary, who was suspected of knowing something, assumed an air of sphinx-like mystery, which he successfully maintained for about two years, at the end of which period the war was really becoming part of one's life and the oracles began to speak—at times.

On 3rd August I was sent away to land a certain amount of woodwork.

In connexion with this question of landing furniture and other supposed luxuries of a combustible nature, opinions differed greatly in various ships.

Certain ships known as " blood and iron " ships stripped their ward-rooms and cabins, and I believe in one case ripped the corticine off the mess-deck, a procedure which is said to have caused My Lords of Whitehall to state that a repetition of this act would entail its replacement at someone's private expense.

In our case, we were the fortunate example of the value of studying history.

Our commander produced the confidential book containing the report of our naval attachés in the Russo-Japanese War, in which it was noted that the Japanese had stripped the ships at the outbreak of war, and when the war lasted on, they had found it absolutely essential to replace it all at considerable expense.

On the strength of this, we very wisely landed very little, a source of much congratulation later on, when other ships were laboriously collecting money to buy arm-chairs.

I do not think it is generally realized that in this war the Navy has had to change its ideas as to what modern war really is, to almost as great an extent as the Army has had to.

A case in point is that at 6 p.m. on 3rd August H.M.S. *Southampton* anchored at the entrance to Scapa Flow in order to protect the base from submarines—*faute de mieux.*

On the 4th of August we weighed, and in company with the Battle Fleet left the harbour and proceeded at 10 knots on an easterly course.

In some rough notes I made at the time I remarked :

" I hear that some form of ultimatum we have presented to Germany expires at midnight."

It seems curious on looking back to think that when I wrote those words all London knew the news, but we didn't. It was a case of

> " Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die "

—with a vengeance. It seems still more curious to think how certain 60 per cent. of the mess was, that if war did break out, we should find ourselves " doing and dying " in the first forty-eight hours.

On the night of the 4th August, whilst the crowds stood massed in front of Buckingham Palace, I was keeping the " first " watch.

The watch is from 8 p.m. to 12 midnight.

It was my misfortune to be saddled with the " morning watch " as well. This latter watch extends from 4 a.m. to 7.30 a.m.

When I came up on the bridge at 3.45 a.m., C——, the officer of the middle watch, said to me in a matter-of-fact tone :

" We had a signal at 1.27 a.m. ordering us to commence hostile acts against Germany."

" You mean war ! " I exclaimed.

" Yes, I suppose so," he answered, then with maddening indifference he began to tell me what course and speed we were on.

I hardly heard him, for I think that, due to being educated abroad and having spent some time in Germany, I realized a little more than he did what war between two Great Powers meant.

How far short of the reality were my wildest imaginings I was to learn in the course of the next few years.

This, then, was the end of my first life and the beginning of my second.

My first life had lasted twenty-one and a half years, and eight and a half of these had been spent in unconscious preparation for the second life of war.

On the morning of the 5th August, a message from the King was received by wireless. His Majesty has the happy knack of sending an official message worded in such a manner that it reads " unofficially," and I for one believe he writes his messages to the Navy himself.

Our first orders were to capture all the German trawlers we came across in the northern part of the North Sea, and to destroy the wireless apparatus in any neutral trawlers.

I jotted down on the 5th August :

" We know nothing as to the *casus belli*, or how matters are proceeding on the Continent. It is quite *impossible at present* to grasp the stupendous fact, that after a century of peace the British Navy has embarked on a great maritime war. It is useless to speculate on the outcome. God willing, I shall live to see our Empire emerge triumphant, though I feel that it may be a very ' waiting and watching ' war."

On the 5th, 6th, and 7th the light cruisers under the command of our Commodore were busy sinking German trawlers and warning British and neutral ships of the outbreak of war. None of them had heard the news, and one German trawler cheered us enthusiastically as we bore down upon them.

North of the Shetland Islands we came across a large fishing fleet. We asked them if there were any foreigners present. One man, with a voice like a foghorn, bellowed out that they came from Hull and were all Huller men, except one foreigner—a Scotsman from Aberdeen.

On our ward-room notice-board I noticed on the 7th August a P.P.C. from the ward-room officers of the German battleship *Schleswig-Holstein*. Across the card was written, " We all hope to see you again." The date was five weeks old.

We coaled at Scapa, and in twenty-four hours the First Light Cruiser Squadron, which in those days consisted of the *Southampton*, *Birmingham*, *Liverpool*, and *Falmouth*, was once more at sea.

H.M.S. *Nottingham* arrived in the Fleet that evening. One of her chief stokers, who was on long leave when she left Devonport in a hurry, missed his ship. He

reported to the barracks, but found that he was not included in a draft which was just going north, and he was told that he was being reserved for a Third Fleet ship. He at once broke barracks, and being determined to reach Scapa, he put on plain clothes and joined No. 1 hospital ship as a volunteer.

She sailed for Scapa, on arriving at which base he deserted from the hospital ship and hastened on board the *Nottingham*, where he expressed the hope that he "wouldn't get into trouble." I am glad to say he didn't.

On the evening of Sunday the 9th we were to the northward of Kinnaird Head. I had been keeping the first watch, and at about 3 a.m. I was awakened by the noise of the alarm bells ringing furiously.

To quote some notes :

"I pulled on some clothes and ran up on deck, to find it was early dawn, rainy and misty. Every second or so the mistiness ahead was illuminated by a yellow flash, and the crash of a gun followed.

"Suddenly the *Birmingham* loomed up straight ahead, or a shade on our starboard bow, distant about 2½ cables (500 yards).

"It was difficult at the moment to say whether the shells falling between us and the *Birmingham* were being fired by the *Birmingham*, or at her from a ship on the far side. I restrained our quarter-deck guns' crew from firing into the *Birmingham* ; she looked rather Teutonic in the early morning light.

"The mystery of the alarm was settled by the sudden appearance of part of the conning-tower of a German submarine, exactly between ourselves and the *Birmingham*.

"How the *Birmingham* actually turned and rammed her I could not see ; but she did, and when the *Birmingham* turned away, a large oily pool, bubbling furiously, with three black objects resembling air-

flasks floating in it, was all that remained of the U.-boat."

This was U.15, and the first of the 200 odd submarines the British Navy has disposed of during the war.

We had a signal to commence hostilities against Austria, but it was cancelled two hours later.

The day after this episode, the cruisers and destroyers carried out a curious operation, which I only mention as an example of what quaint things were done in the first months of the war, and how little either the Germans or ourselves realized the power of the submarines.

It had been reported that German submarines had been seen using Stavanger Fjord over in Norway. We were to go and investigate the matter.

A few months later in the war it would have seemed irresistibly comic to go looking for submarines in cruisers ; however, on the 10th August, 1914, we set out full of hope. To those who shook their heads, it was said :

" Have we not within twenty-four hours sunk U.15, O ye men of little faith ? "

To this there could be no reply.

Of course, luckily for us, there were not any U.-boats present.

This sweep was probably done for moral effect on shore and amongst the crews of the Fleet, as at its completion the Admiralty issued a communiqué stating that the Grand Fleet had swept the sea.

I remember that it was whilst returning from this sweep that we zig-zagged for the first time to avoid submarine attack.

Before the war ended it is no exaggeration to say that one felt something had gone wrong if one did not alter course about every ten minutes.

Concerning this sweep I noted :

" At the head of each division of the Battle Fleet a

King Edward VII class battleship was placed, in order to indicate the presence of mines. We were some three miles in front of these 'mine-tasters.' I think we are about the best ship to be in in the Navy, as we are bound to be well up in everything."

In the course of three years in H.M.S. *Southampton* I found no reason to modify that opinion.

After the big sweep we all went to Loch Ewe to coal, and here I remember noticing the battleships suddenly break out into camouflaged masts and funnels.

This camouflage in those days was intended to make it harder for the Germans to take ranges of our ships, which they did by a method known as the vertical angle; for this purpose some conspicuous vertical object is required on the ship of which it is desired to know the range.

After various experiments it was not considered that this camouflage was of much value, and the scheme was abandoned.

Later on in the war, camouflage of the whole hull was adopted for a different reason. The object of this camouflage was to make it difficult for a submarine to tell what course the ship was steering.

To digress for a moment, there is a letter from a camouflage officer to a merchant skipper who protested against the vivid splashes of green, blue, and red with which his ship was being decorated.

The camouflage officer wrote in reply:

"DEAR SIR,—The object of camouflage is not, as you suggest, to turn your ship into an imitation of a West African parrot, a rainbow in a naval pantomime, or a 'gay woman.' The object of camouflage is rather to give the impression that your head is where your stern really is."

For about a fortnight the light cruisers had a strenuous time sweeping about in various areas.

In the first two or three months of the war it was customary to rule off a rectangle 50 miles by 100 in the North Sea, and call it Area I, II, III, IV, as the case might be.

Light cruisers were then sent to cruise about the area. This was unproductive of results, and was soon abandoned when submarines got busy.

During the month of August, from immediately after the outbreak of war, our submarines had been in the Bight, or wet triangle as the Germans delighted to call it.

The British E-boats, based on Harwich, nosed about round Heligoland (one actually grounded there) and penetrated into the mouths of the German rivers.

Little escaped their curious periscopes, and they soon discovered that the Germans were working a night patrol off the Bight with destroyers and light cruisers. It was the habit of these gentry to retire into the Bight at dawn each day ; and it was decided to cut them out.

This task was entrusted to Sir David Beatty in the *Lion*, with the battle-cruisers ; our Commodore in the *Southampton*, with the light cruisers ; and Commodore Tyrwhitt in the newly commissioned *Arethusa*, leading the Harwich force of destroyers.

At 3 a.m. on the 28th August, the forces concerned rendezvoused near the Horn's Reef light-vessel, which is about 80 miles north of Heligoland.

At 4 a.m. the sweep started.

CHAPTER IV

THE HELIGOLAND BIGHT ACTION

THE plan of operations was simple and depended for its success on surprise.

Broadly speaking, the operation may be compared to the movements of a forefinger, the knuckle of which rested on the ⊕ I have drawn on the chart on page 50, and the nail of the finger being close to Heligoland. Pivoting approximately on ⊕, the finger scooped out in a clockwise direction the general area marked AA.

To continue the analogy of the finger, the finger-nail was Commodore Tyrwhitt's force, the first joint was the supporting light cruisers under Commodore Goodenough, and the second joint and knuckle were Admiral Beatty's supporting battle-cruisers; whilst the Battle Fleet in the background may be fairly compared to the wrist that held the hand.

The day dawned calm and foggy. This mist hung over the water all day, and on the whole was an advantage to us, as it added to the confusion and the uncertainty of the Germans, and protected us from the batteries of Heligoland, which were unable to fire a shot.

At the same time it made it difficult for our three squadrons to keep alignment with each other during the sweep, and in the course of the day we lost touch with two of our light cruisers for several hours.

At 8 a.m., when a few miles to the west-by-north of Heligoland, we altered course from south to south-west, and received a signal to say that destroyers were engaging destroyers, whilst at the same time we heard

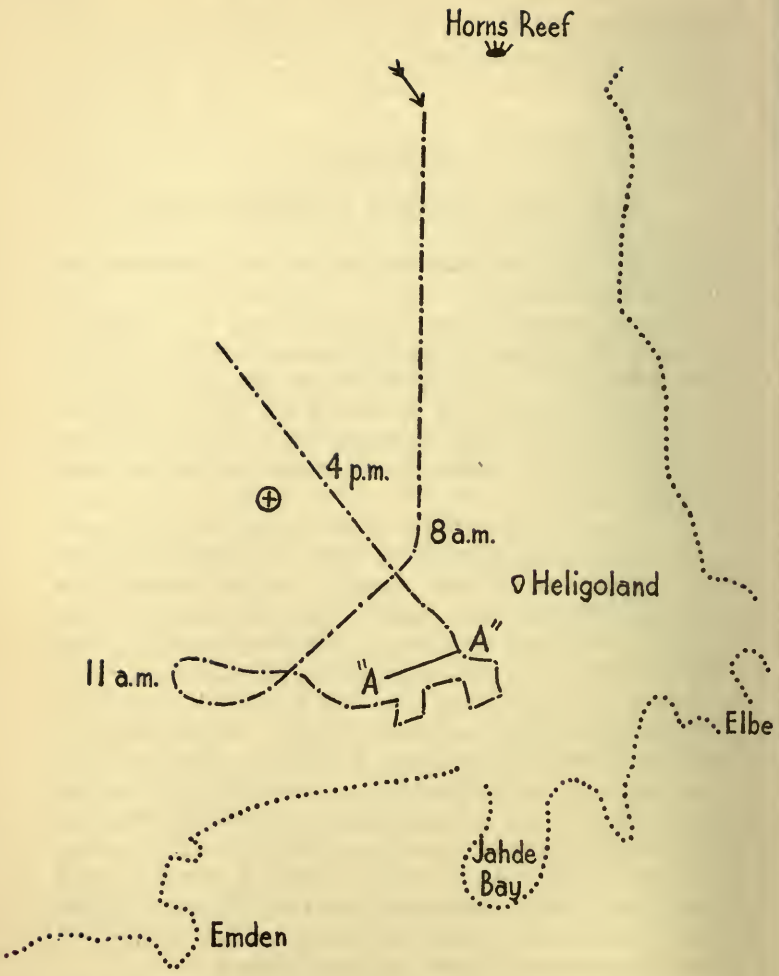

FIG. 1.—Approximate track of H.M.S. *Southampton*, neglecting various twists and zig-zags.
(Sketch is not accurate to scale.)

gun-fire to the south-east of us, where we knew Commodore Tyrwhitt to be.

We acted on the good old maxim of going where you hear a gun, and stood over towards the firing. It was impossible to see anything, but at the same time it was undeniably a most thrilling sensation to be moving through the mist at 24 knots towards the first sounds of gun-fire in battle that most of us had ever heard.

At 8.25 a.m. two black shapes, which revealed themselves to be German destroyers travelling at a very high rate of speed, appeared on our starboard bow.

They had evidently been patrolling seawards, and, hearing the firing in between themselves and the German coast, they were scooting into their homes as quickly as they could.

We got the forecastle and starboard-bow gun to bear on them and opened fire, but, as the mist prevented any ranging, we could only hope for a lucky hit.

Two white puffs or splashes were seen to proceed from the enemy, and it was not until some ten minutes later, when three witnesses saw the track of a torpedo across our stern, that we realized that the Germans had fired two torpedoes at us.

The hostile destroyers were going at least 32 knots and were moving between enormous bow waves, with their sterns tucked well down, and in about three minutes they had crossed our bows and disappeared in the mist.

Shortly after this episode we were unfortunately observed by H.M.S. *Lurcher*, the destroyer in which the Commodore of Submarines, the present Vice-Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, used in those early days to cruise about the Bight.

As usual, several of our ubiquitous submarines were in the Bight on this occasion.

I say " unfortunately " the *Lurcher* saw us, as she obtained only a fleeting glimpse of us, and at once reported by wireless two German light cruisers in a

position a few miles to the south-west of where we calculated we were. This sounded like business, so we abandoned our intention of trying to find the destroyer scrap and hastily shaped course to where we understood the two German cruisers had been seen.

Sad to say, we were chasing ourselves ; the discrepancy in our position and that calculated by the *Lurcher*, led us astray, and for about an hour we were on a wild-goose chase.

This matter of accurate position-finding is of prime importance in a naval action, and especially so where wireless signals are concerned, as in such cases one acts on a signal such as : " Hostile cruisers, lat. 54° N. long. 4° E."

Now the ship that saw these cruisers probably saw them perhaps 10 miles S. 50° E. of her own position. She may have been at sea two or three days, or, in the case of a submarine, perhaps ten days.

During this period she may never have seen a landmark or lightship of any sort. She has had to rely on her " sights " of the sun and stars. Should the weather have been thick, even " sights " may have been denied to her, in which case she has to rely on what is known as " dead reckoning."

This consists of plotting courses and speeds since she left harbour, and estimating an allowance for wind, tide, and erroneous speed.

It is thus obvious that in the case imagined above of a ship reporting hostile cruisers, she may herself be under a misapprehension as regards her true position—a state of affairs which vitiates by a corresponding amount all her " enemy reports."

If one is in sight of a ship reporting the enemy, the matter is simple ; she simply flashes by light, " Enemy such-and-such a distance, bearing so-and-so from me."

I have mentioned this matter at some length, as during the war several cases of the importance of posi-

tions and the results of errors came under my notice.

On this occasion we chased ourselves for about fifty minutes, when suddenly every one was electrified to see a periscope on the starboard bow, distant 500 yards.

The helm was put hard over, the ship heeled, and we prepared to ram her. The submarine made a steep dive, and some people on the forebridge stated that she went down at such an angle that her tail nearly came out of the water.

A few seconds later we thundered over the place where she had been, and they must have heard the roar of our propellers as we passed over them.

In about ten minutes' time the *Lurcher* suddenly appeared, and asked us why we were attacking her submarines.

Luckily the submarine we had tried to ram had recognized our red ensign, which was flying as a battle-flag, just as he intended to torpedo us. Explanations with the *Lurcher* ensued, and the mystery of the two German light cruisers was cleared up.

It was too late by this time to turn back to where the destroyer scrap had been going on, and at the moment no sounds of gun-fire came from the mist, so we decided to carry on with the sweep as arranged, on the assumption that the Harwich destroyers with the *Arethusa* and *Fearless* were somewhere inside us on a parallel course.

An uneventful hour passed, until at 11 a.m. we intercepted a signal from Commodore Tyrwhitt, to the effect that he was heavily engaged with German light cruisers and he wanted assistance.

We at once altered course 16 points, and started back as hard as we could towards where we imagined the *Arethusa* to be.

The sound of gun-fire was very heavy right ahead of us when we turned round, and at irregular intervals a flash of yellow flame came through the mist.

At 11.30 we seemed very close to the action, and the firing was so heavy that it seemed almost as if we were in the middle of the fight, except that no shells could be seen.

At 11.40 a number of destroyers, which turned out to be British, steamed out of the mist, evidently retiring from something, and a moment later we sighted the *Arethusa* on our port bow in action at close range with the German light cruiser *Mainz*.

Our squadron at that moment consisted of the *Southampton*, *Birmingham*, *Nottingham*, *Lowestoft*, *Liverpool*, and *Falmouth*, disposed in quarter line, and as soon as the *Mainz* saw us she ceased fire on the sorely tried *Arethusa* and very wisely fled like a stag.

At 10,000 yards the squadron opened fire, and the German replied with a straggling fire from her after 4·1-inch guns. Most of her shots fell short, but a few hummed over us.

It was very peculiar hearing the moaning sob, and realizing that a lump of steel full of explosives had just gone by. I examined myself carefully to see if I was frightened, and came to the conclusion that on the whole I was excited and rather anxious.

The *Mainz* was now under the fire of about fifteen 6-inch guns, and suddenly there were two yellow flashes amidships of a different nature from the red jabs of flame from her own guns, and I realized she had been hit twice.

A most extraordinary feeling of exultation filled the mind. One longed for more yellow flashes; one wanted to hurt her, to torture her; and one said to oneself, "Ha! there's another! Give her hell!" as if by speaking one could make the guns hit her.

Though she was being hit, she was not being hit enough, as at the range of 10,000 yards in that mist it was nearly impossible to see the splashes of the shells and thus control the fire. Also she still had the legs of us.

To our dismay, the mist came down, and for five minutes we drove on without sight of her.

Down below, in complete ignorance of what had been happening, the stokers forced the boilers until our turbines would take no more, and, the safety valves lifting, the steam roared up the exhaust pipes at the side of the funnels with a deafening roar.

Suddenly—everything happens suddenly in a naval action with ships moving at 30 miles an hour—we came on top of the *Mainz* only 7,000 yards away, and the range decreasing every moment.

Something had happened to her whilst she was in the mist, for she was lying nearly stopped.

It is now almost certain that she was torpedoed forward by a destroyer, though it will never be known which destroyer flashing past her in the mist launched the blow which permitted us to overtake her.

When the destroyers found themselves being harried by light cruisers, the traditional foe of the destroyers, they had lashed out viciously with their torpedoes and fired some thirty.

An eye-witness told me that the sea was furrowed with their tracks : I think he was being cynical. At all events, one got home on the *Mainz*, and we closed down on her, hitting with every salvo.

She was a mass of yellow flame and smoke as the lyddite detonated along her length.

Her two after-funnels melted away and collapsed. Red glows, indicating internal fires, showed through gaping wounds in her sides.

At irregular intervals one of her after-guns fired a solitary shot, which passed miles overhead.

In ten minutes she was silenced and lay a smoking, battered wreck, her foremost anchor flush with the water. Ant-like figures could be seen jumping into the water as we approached.

The sun dispersed the mist, and we steamed slowly

to within 300 yards of her, flying as we did so the signal " Do you surrender ? " in International Code. As we stopped, the mainmast slowly leant forward, and, like a great tree, quite gradually lay down along the deck.

As it reached the deck a man got out of the main control top and walked aft—it was Tirpitz junior.

I have a photograph of him standing, a solitary figure, on the extreme end of his ship.

Her bridge was knocked to pieces and there was no one to read our signal, which signal seems incongruous in 1918, but the last precedent was years old in 1914.

Nevertheless, as we watched, a flag fluttered down from the foretopmast head ; it had been lowered by the boatswain.

The feeling of exultation was succeeded by one of pity as I looked at this thing that had been a ship.

Through glasses I could see that her deck was a shambles—a headless corpse, stripped to the waist, hung over the forecastle side. This was indeed war, and the first realization of war is like one's first love, a landmark in life.

The hundred or so survivors in the water were wearing lifebelts and raising their hands, shouting for help. We were debating what could be done when we were roused from the contemplation of our handiwork by the sudden outbreak of firing to the northward.

The *Liverpool* was detailed to rescue survivors and sink the *Mainz*, whilst the *Southampton* with the rest of the light cruisers started to get under way towards the new action.

We had hardly begun to move through the water, ere I saw a magnificent sight ; it was the battle-cruisers. They had been coming up at full speed from the south-west towards all the firing, they had also of course received the *Arethusa's* call for help.

It was undoubtedly a bold and dashing decision to

bring these great ships into the Bight, and, as often happens in war, this decision was successful.

The battle-cruisers arrived too late to do anything to the *Mainz*, but they were determined to get up in time to participate in the firing to the north which had just started.

It is difficult to describe the impression produced by these monsters as, following in each other's wake, they emerged one by one from the mist, and flashed past like express trains.

Not a man could be seen on their decks ; volumes of smoke poured from their funnels ; their turret guns, trained expectantly on the port bow, seemed eager for battle.

We were just able to work up sufficient speed to get astern of the *Indomitable*, when we sighted the unfortunate Germans, which were two small cruisers, the *Köhn* and the *Ariadne*. They had run into a detached group of our destroyers, hence the firing. A succession of salvos rolled out from the *Lion* and her squadron.

One German disappeared in a cloud of steam and smoke ; the other drifted away in the mist, burning furiously and sinking.

I was watching this spectacle on our port bow, when I heard a " crump ! crump ! crump ! " and turning round saw a salvo of splashes stand up in the water, a few hundred yards from our starboard side. I could not make out where these shells had come from, until I noticed a four-funnelled cruiser on the horizon about 14,000 yards away, where there happened to be a clear patch, for I could see the German coast and some chimneys behind her. As I watched her a ripple of flame ran down her side, and I knew another flight of shells were on their way. They arrived with a " whump " exactly right for range, but between the *Birmingham* and ourselves, about 50 yards astern of us.

We were quite surprised by this unexpected attack, but the *Birmingham* at once retaliated with a salvo of 6-inch, an example we were not long in following, though it seemed ages before our guns went off.

We exchanged several salvos with her, and she straddled us once without hitting, whilst we saw one of our shells detonate on board her. We discovered months afterwards that this shell had landed on her quarter-deck and killed about sixty men, as the Germans had a habit in those days of taking spare guns' crews to sea with them, and these gentry were being mustered when our shell arrived. She turned and went into port, and we followed the battle cruisers.

It was now 4 p.m., and as we were within 15 miles of the German Fleet their arrival on the scene of action was expected any moment.

I believe, as a matter of fact, that the sound of the firing could be heard on the ships in Wilhelmshaven, where they were making desperate efforts to raise steam in the big ships and come out and drive us off.

At 4.15 p.m. we left the Bight and steered at high speed for Scapa. I started the day at midnight on the 27th–28th and ended it at 4 a.m. on the 29th.

I have forgotten to mention that we saw a number of floating mines in the Bight, which were avoided by quick use of the helm.

We arrived at Scapa Flow at 8 p.m. on the 29th, well pleased with ourselves. The *Arethusa* and *Fearless* and our damaged destroyers had got in, and the casualties in officers and men were slight. On the other side, we had sunk three German light cruisers and two destroyers.

Looking back, there are several interesting features connected with this action.

When the *Mainz* was sunk, we found that she had rafts on her decks, and that her guns' crews had been wearing lifebelts. This struck us at the time as very

bad for the morale ; we soon altered our opinion when the submarine menace started in earnest.

We were also made acquainted for the first time with the remarkably long ranges of the German 4·1-inch guns, due to their large angles of elevation.

This cuts both ways, as at long ranges the German shells were falling almost vertically, and it was quite easy for their shells to fall just " over " without hitting the ship.

The Germans fought well. They always have fought well whenever I have seen them fight at sea, and they were beaten on this day because they were overwhelmed by a greatly superior force ; and the side which can achieve this state of affairs will, other things being equal, always win in war.

When we arrived in Scapa, it was a perfect summer's evening, and we had a great reception from the battleships, who cheered us vigorously, whilst the *Orion* sent parties over to help us coal—a service which was very much appreciated, but which I never saw repeated. No less than three girls competed for the honour of sending me chocolates, and an unknown number of ladies sent sacks of warm clothing to the ship. Gradually, as was inevitable, this enthusiasm died out, the pendulum swung over, and I once more occupied the position of a giver of chocolates ; nor at the beginning of winter in 1915 did one go down to the half-deck and contemptuously cast aside knitted waistcoats because the colour did not suit.

On Sunday we were given four hours' leave, and the thirsty members of the Mess repaired to the hotel at Kirkwall, where each described the action to an eager group of officers from the battleships, pausing at intervals to " have another " and celebrate the victory. Towards the end of the afternoon some very divergent accounts of the scrap were in circulation.

CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE OF SCAPA FLOW

A FEW days after our return from the Heligoland scrap, the famous battle of Scapa Flow took place.

This incident, which has never reached the ears of the public, is famous with all naval officers who were in the Grand Fleet at the opening of the war. The whole business started towards the end of the afternoon, when sounds of gun-fire came from the light cruiser *Falmouth*, which was guarding the eastern entrance. She reported having fired at and sunk a submarine, whose periscope she had seen moving through the water.

It was considered possible that she had not sunk the submarine, if one ever existed, and it was assumed that a Hun submarine might quite possibly be inside Scapa. A signal was made that all destroyers were to raise steam as soon as possible and move about the harbour at high speed.

Within three-quarters of an hour the Flow was covered with destroyers rushing about at full speed, and the sky was black with volumes of smoke.

The Admiral Commanding Orkneys and Shetlands hoisted an admiral's flag in a destroyer and joined the glad throng.

The excitement was added to by the occasional discharge of a 4-inch gun from some battleship which imagined she had seen a periscope.

The traffic in the harbour was added to by the fact that all the big ships got their picket-boats out, and these, under the command of midshipmen, cruised

vigorously about looking for submarines. What they would have done if they had met one I do not suppose their commanders quite knew, for depth charges had not been invented then.

The question as to whether a German submarine had or had not got into Scapa Flow remained a somewhat doubtful point, and it was decided, as a precautionary measure, to take the whole Fleet round to Loch Ewe on the west coast, and this was done after dark.

Rumour has had it that an engineer rear-admiral was seen scrambling up a Jacob's ladder which dangled over the stern of the repair-ship *Cyclops*, such was the speed of the evacuation. However, after a day or two's absence, the Fleet returned to its base.

We had meanwhile carried out various sweeps towards the Norwegian coast in company with the battle-cruisers, in the course of which the only excitement was caused by a report we received one morning that a German light cruiser was being chased to the northward by the *Swift*.

Other ships picked up the signal, and soon an observer in an aeroplane with a radius of horizon of 100 miles would have seen a collection of light cruisers and destroyers spread over some 50 miles and headed by the *Swift*, all steaming north at full speed.

The German light cruiser had originated in the mind of someone who had caught sight of the *Swift*—a ship of unique appearance—in the distance. The *Swift* had intercepted the signal and seen some smoke on the horizon, which, coupled with a difference of opinion as to positions, had started the ball rolling. We got up to the latitude of Lerwick before we discovered the error.

At about this period we went to the Firth of Forth for a few days, and found submarines very active in the Firth.

I see I noted down :

"*Sunday, 6th Sept.*—Coaled ship; submarine scare by Forth Bridge batteries during the night.

"*Monday, 7th.*—Four hours' leave was granted to officers, so I went up to Edinburgh; it was nice being ashore in town. There are plenty of soldiers everywhere, and people turned round to look at naval officers in uniform, which was evidently a strange sight.

"I had my hair cut by a man whose brother had given the Russians cigarettes, so it seems it is true that the Russians are passing through.

"Fresh submarine scare by the soldiers during the night.

"*Tuesday, 8th.*—Weighed and proceeded out. We were not sorry to clear the land, as several submarines had been seen off May Island and Bass Rock."

. . . . . .

With reference to my remark about people turning round to look at naval uniforms, it was not long before more naval officers were to be seen on a fine afternoon in Princes Street than in any other street in the British Isles.

A combined sweep towards the Bight, which was intended as a repetition of the Heligoland action, ensued, but it was unproductive.

We returned to Scapa, spent a few days there, and then carried out another sweep, which was confined to the cruisers.

I was on watch at about 7 a.m. on the 22nd September, and we were steaming north, in beautiful weather, with the Norwegian coast on our starboard hand, which looked very lovely in the early morning sun, when I heard a voice exclaim: "Signal, sir!"

I took the flimsy piece of paper, which was dated 7.15 a.m., and was horrified to read these words:

"*Cressy* to all ships, *Aboukir* is sinking, so are we."

I was still trying to grasp what this meant, when at 7.25 we received two words: "*Hogue* sinking."

Then there succeeded an ominous silence, broken only by persistent efforts on the part of Harwich to call the three ships.

One more fragment, one last cry from the dying ships came through: it was a latitude and longitude close to the Hook of Holland. Then there was complete wireless silence.

It seemed terrible to think that we were powerless to help 1,500 to 2,000 officers and men who were fighting for their lives 300 miles away across the smooth sunlit sea.

Everyone in the ship was rather depressed by this disaster. One day the causes which contributed to the loss of these ships will doubtless be carefully examined by those in possession of all the facts.

In the afternoon we received an "Admiralty to all ships" wireless message, pointing out the necessity of big ships deserting one of their number who might have been torpedoed.

The German commander who torpedoed those three ships was Weddigen, in U.9. He was subsequently rammed by H.M.S. *Dreadnought* when he attacked the Grand Fleet in U.29.

U.9, decorated with an iron cross, is now lying amongst 120 other U.-boats in Harwich harbour.

A few days later we were once more at sea, off the Naze, and on the 28th–29th September, 1914, we encountered the heaviest gale I have ever met in the North Sea. We were obliged to heave-to for sixteen hours, and the seas in the Norwegian Deep (where we were) were truly mountainous, an appelation which is applied too frequently to seas without any justification.

The wind blew from the north-west, and the whole surface of the sea was white with streaks of foam and froth.

When the gale was at its height, with the wind blowing about force 10, we saw an interesting sight.

H.M.S. *Drake*, a big armoured cruiser in which I had a family interest, and a submarine drifted into sight. The submarine was E5, and this party had been on a reconnaissance inside the Skaw.

It was interesting to observe the three types of vessels, the *Drake* pitching and rolling and plunging heavily, her great bows being right out of the water one moment and her forecastle buried in a wave the next, the submarine moving like a half-submerged rock. E5 caused us some anxiety by disappearing for twenty-four hours. We found out afterwards that she had only got so " fed up " with the gale that she decided to dive for a day.

On our way back to Scapa we searched for seaplane No. 77, which had been missing for twenty-four hours, but without any success.

I see in my notes that on arrival at Scapa I visited the hospital ship *Rohilla*, where I was attending the dentist, and that I was greatly incensed by a lieutenant from the *New Zealand* whom I met there, and who enraged me by asking me whether the *Southampton* had let off their guns at the Heligoland action.

In the opening days of October the first Canadian Expeditionary Force came over in thirty-one ships.

For nine days the entire Fleet occupied various positions in the North Sea in order to guard against the possibility of the German battle-cruisers making a sortie and attacking the convoy. At least we were out for nine days, and I think the Battle Fleet farther north were at sea for a similar period.

The scheme was to have two patrol lines across the North Sea, at such a distance apart in a north and south direction that nothing could pass one line in the dark without being seen by the other line in the daylight.

Our beat (the First Light Cruiser Squadron) was the western end of the southern line.

The exact position of the lines was altered daily in order to make submarine attack less likely, as by this stage of the war the submarine menace was being seriously considered. On one night of this patrol an incident occurred which might easily have had serious results.

In a signal which we sent by wireless to our squadron, who were spread ahead of us, we intended to say that the squadron would turn together to south. Unfortunately the word south was coded as "east," and during the first watch the whole squadron suddenly came down on top of us.

Luckily it was a bright moonlight night and recognition was easily established, but had it been dark and a gun gone off, it would have been difficult to stop an action. In connexion with this question of recognition at night, the German enjoyed one great advantage at sea throughout the whole war: he knew that whenever he came out, he could safely open fire on anything he met at night.

We were not in the same happy position, as, apart from regular groups of ships whose position one always knew, there were invariably a number of detached single ships, bound from base to base, or to refit, etc., and innumerable patrols, sweepers, and other auxiliaries.

It was not always possible to know exactly when to expect to meet these odd ships; and the Germans showed great lack of enterprise in not sending over an occasional cruiser to make a raid on the night traffic up the east coast of England and Scotland.

There is no doubt that the advantage of initial surprise would have been with the German, as any system of challenging by flashing light is slower than a salvo of 6-inch, which would have been the German's reply to our demand.

It was whilst on this duty in connexion with the

Canadian convoy that the *Lowestoft*, of our squadron, discovered one float of the seaplane 77.

On Thursday, 7th October, we had the misfortune to lose a boy overboard. I tried to save him, but unfortunately he had a large copper voice-pipe on his head. I was in the water about twenty minutes ; it was damnably cold, and I had more or less given up hope when I was picked up. The temperature of the sea was 52° F.

Two or three days after our arrival at Scapa, having coaled, provisioned, and read a large mail, we were once more at sea.

In those early months we were the only light cruisers available with the Grand Fleet, and we did a very great deal of sea-time.

Five days in harbour seemed a boon, for the policy in the beginning of the war was to always have some ships sweeping and searching the North Sea, and on every trip we made, and the length of these trips seemed to be regulated solely by our fuel capacity, we hoped and for a long time even expected to encounter portions of the German Navy on a similar errand.

As the thousands of revolutions on our engine counters grew into hundreds of thousands, our expectations steadily receded and only the hope was left. Submarines were the only German ships one expected to meet in the North Sea.

In those early days C—— and myself did not get much sleep. We were the two night watch-keeping officers. One night, one of us kept the "middle" (12–4 a.m.) and the other fellow kept the "first and morning." The next night the rôles were reversed. I can remember the agony of turning out in the winter at 3.45 a.m. when one had turned in very tired and wet at 12.15 a.m. after the first.

On the first trip after my ducking, the *Hawke* was torpedoed close to us.

On the 17th October, 1914, we heard that the Grand Fleet was leaving Scapa, as submarines were supposed to have got in.

As a matter of fact it was subsequently discovered that a torpedo had rolled out of its tube on board a destroyer and passed close to H.M.S. *Leda*, who quite naturally reported "Torpedo has passed under my stern." This caused all the excitement.

Submarines were also reported all over the place, from St. Catherine's in the Isle of Wight to the Downs in the Channel, and again in the Western Isles of Scotland. Lough Swilly was selected as a temporary base, presumably whilst Scapa was being made more secure.

We arrived very late one night, and coaled ship most of the night. When the inhabitants of the village opposite which we were anchored woke up and saw a number of light-grey ships in the harbour some of the peasants thought we were German.

The day after our arrival at Lough Swilly I went ashore for a walk with the secretary and K—— the gunnery lieutenant. It was the first time I had been ashore, with the exception of one day in Edinburgh, since we left Weymouth, and we had done much sea-time.

I can still remember vividly how we loved being ashore amongst trees and pretty country. And because I enjoyed it so much I am going to revive the memory by copying down what I wrote that evening when I got back on board. I wrote :

"*Monday*, 19*th*.—Went for a glorious walk, eating blackberries and sniffing the green grass with K——, C——, and the soldier. We had a great battle on the hills, amongst the heather, with clods of turf.

"I also had speech with a dear old lady, who called down every blessing on my head, as she has a son who is a leading stoker in the *Argyll*, and I said I would write and tell him that I have seen her. Which I have done.

" An old man ashore thought that the whole British Navy was here—though the Battle Fleet wasn't even in. On being told that there were ten times as many as those he saw, he said, ' Thank God ! thank God ! ' and threw up his hands in delight.

" Just as we got back to the boat I saw an extremely pretty and well-dressed girl. I felt a tremendous desire to go up to her and say, ' Don't think me mad, but I just want to say " how do you do " to you and talk to you for five minutes.'

" It is three months since I spoke to a lady, and I frankly confess I like ladies ! K—— says he will fit me with a chain next time we go ashore.

" Our amateur band which the secretary and myself are getting up amongst the sailors is making good progress. I asked the Commodore whether he would recommend me for specializing in submarines, as I think they will have a great time in this war, but he does not wish me to leave the ship at present."

. . . . . .

We were not destined to remain long in the absolute peace of Lough Swilly, and a couple of days after my walk we were struggling east across the North Sea in the teeth of a furious gale. We were progressing only at the rate of about 5 knots, and after twenty-four hours of it we received orders to abandon the patrol and return to Scapa.

On the 26th we heard that the *Audacious* had been mined off the north coast of Ireland, and a few hours after the news came through we heard that it was to be kept very secret. But as photographs of her sinking appeared in the American papers it was always a *secret de polichinelle.*

On the 3rd of November the *Southampton* was detached from the squadron, and we proceeded to Cromarty to go on the floating dock for a week.

We were much interested in the " gate " and anti-submarine boom which had just been fitted, and which was a great novelty in those days.

We had been allowed to tell our female relatives in a guarded manner that if they came to Invergordon on a certain date they would " see something to interest them," and several wives came up and one mother, who was the lady I was interested in.

We had hardly got up to Invergordon and anchored when we suddenly heard that the Yarmouth raid was on, and that we were to get to sea as soon as possible.

I was lying in the smoking-room, cursing this unexpected event, when the officer of the watch came down and said, " There are several ladies on board, and one of them seems to want to see you."

I went on deck, and found that the wives and my mother had somehow found out that the ship was sailing, and as in those days every time a ship went to sea a battle was expected, the ladies had wangled a tug from someone and arrived alongside. The whole affair was very irregular, but they were allowed on board for ten minutes, at the end of which time they departed amidst cheers from the sailors.

We sailed half an hour later, but long before we could have got there the Germans were back in Wilhelmshaven, and so we found ourselves back in Cromarty harbour next morning.

We had a very pleasant ten days' rest. Officers and men were allowed forty-eight hours' leave as far as Inverness—an unheard-of concession in 1914—and it is very pleasant to record that we did not have a single case of leave-breaking.

Coming back from my forty-eight hours' leave, the train was one and a half hours late at Dingwall. I put my head out of the window and made some impatient remark to an ancient railway official. He looked at me

more in sorrow than in anger, and delivered himself of the following *obiter dictum* :

" Young mon, dinna fash yersel, the Hielan' Railway was no' deesigned ta stand the strain o' a European waur ! "

We left Cromarty for Scapa on the 15th November, 1914.

I noted down that :

" I had the middle watch, and at 12.50 the T.B.D. *Star*, without seeing us, cut right across my bow. I just avoided dividing her into two equal parts by putting the helm hard over and going full speed astern with one engine. Neither of us had lights, of course. I made him hop out of it when he did see us. In a few minutes we were back on our course, and no one any the wiser.

" *Nov.* 16, 1914.—Scapa—blowing very hard ; hoisted all boats ; snowed in my middle watch and was devilish cold.

" *Nov.* 17, 1914.—Blowing very hard and snowing ; went to sea and did some firing.

" *Nov.* 19, 1914.—Off Muckle Flugga (north-eastern point of Shetlands) saw a fat Norwegian liner, which made everyone lick their lips. To our disgust, found she had a pass from British Consul, New York, and had been boarded five miles off Sandy Hook by a British armed liner.

" *Nov.* 20, 1914 (p.m.).—Scapa—coaling.

" *Nov.* 22, 1914.—To sea."

. . . . . .

Our object in going to sea on the 22nd was as part of a large fleet which was to support an air raid on the German coast.

At the last moment the air-raid part of the business was cancelled and the seaplane-carrier returned to her base at Harwich, but having got close to the Bight, we thought we would have a look, and the Second Armoured Cruiser Squadron (Shannons). *Falmouth* and

Liverpool were told to go and see if there was anything doing.

The battle-cruisers and ourselves were about 20 miles to the northward of them, and the Battle Fleet north of us.

I remember we had a grievance in the *Southampton* at being kept in support, as we felt that the battle-cruiser force, as it eventually became, had established a priority claim to play in the Bight, at least as far as surface ships were concerned; for the Harwich submarines spent more time diving about in the Bight than anywhere else, in fact they almost used it as an exercising ground, and as depth charges and bombing from aeroplanes, etc., had not yet been invented the Eighth and Ninth Submarine Flotillas treated every effort of the Hun to drive them off the German doorstep with "stinking contempt."

Our only excitement was the sudden appearance of Commodore Tyrwhitt and his destroyers, who arrived looking very warlike. It transpired that when they first sighted us they thought we were Huns.

The Second Cruiser Squadron and company went in and reported that they could see Heligoland, which fired at them, but the shots fell just short, and that the only other signs of life were much smoke and a submarine on the surface. I believe this to be the only time in the war that the Heligoland forts have been able to open fire on surface ships.

We all retired at noon, and at 1 p.m. a solitary German seaplane droned up from the south and dropped two or three tiny bombs near the *Falmouth*. This must have been the first case of aerial bombing at sea.

We were detached from the Fleet next day and carried out a sweep up the Norwegian coast.

We returned to Scapa and the inevitable coaling.

We were at once told off for a monotonous four days' patrol from the entrance of Scapa to a point 60 miles

south-east, then 80 miles north, then back to our starting-point. A sort of triangular yachting course, and vile weather the whole time.

The ill-fated *Natal*, *Birmingham*, and ourselves carried out this business, which was intended to prevent fast surface mine-layers operating off Scapa.

My notes say :

" *Dec.* 4, 1914.—Came in and coaled ; blowing like the dickens.

" *Dec.* 5, 1914.—It blew like sin, and we dropped another anchor underfoot and almost lost our steam-cutter trying to hoist her. I was officer of the watch, and she was plunging about on the falls like a mad dog, surging up and down about eight feet. The fore guy of the foremost davit carried away twice, and the five-ton boat came into the ship's side with a crash. Finally dragged her up anyhow with the two davits at right angles to each other, after one and a half hours' struggle in cutting rain.

" *Dec.* 6, 1914.—Blew a full gale."

CHAPTER VI

SCARBOROUGH AND DOGGER BANK

On the 15th December, 1914, the Second Battle Squadron under Vice-Admiral Sir George Warrender, the Third Cruiser Squadron under Rear-Admiral Pakenham, and the First Light Cruiser Squadron (as we were called until the *Galatea* class formed a squadron under Commodore Sinclair) under our Commodore left Scapa Flow for a sweep.

A great deal of uncertainty as to what did happen exists amongst the officers who were present, and the whole affair lies under a shadow which is due to the disappointment experienced by the Navy in the fact that, whereas at one period of the day it seemed impossible for the Germans to escape action, yet a few hours later they were clear of the coast and steaming unmolested at full speed for Germany.

I intend therefore to make quite plain only what I saw myself, and only what I heard from eye-witnesses after the action was over and one met other officers in harbour.

At about dawn on 16th December we were to the north-eastwards of the Dogger Bank, when we received a signal to the effect that some T.B.D.'s had been in action with German cruisers, and the enemy were now retiring to the eastwards. We proceeded to chase east, as we gathered that the enemy cruisers appeared to be going only about 20 knots.

They had a start of some 30 miles on us, so it did not seem very promising. The battle-cruisers and ourselves soon left the Second Battle Squadron and Third

Cruiser Squadron behind, and we pushed east at full speed for about an hour, when destroyers were sighted ahead, which proved to be British and on an opposite course. They had been shadowing the Huns since they left the British coast, and the Huns had not appeared to worry about them much for some time, until the T.B.D.'s got rather close, upon which one of the German cruisers had lashed out at them and hit one of them. As at that period we were still 30 miles to the west of them, the destroyers had given it up and come back to us.

Hardly had the party joined up, when we were astounded to get a signal to say that Scarborough was being bombarded. This was at about 9 a.m.

To our astonishment we realized that the main body of the Huns was behind us the whole time, and at the moment we all felt that this detached party which we had been chasing east was a ruse to draw us away from the coast before the bombardment began. I have never been able to ascertain whether this was the German plan, but at all events circumstances worked out in that way.

We were at once ordered by the *Lion* to alter course 16 points and proceed west at full speed. The situation seemed simple, and it looked as if the Lord had delivered them into our hands.

One hundred miles east of the English coast, at about the latitude of Hartlepool, were the battle-cruisers and ourselves steaming west at full speed. Eighty miles east of England and a little to the southward of us were the Second Battle Squadron and the Third Cruiser Squadron, also going west.

Twenty miles from the coast of England a layer of minefields, about ten miles across in an east and west direction stretched north and south parallel to the coast. At intervals of 30 to 40 miles up and down the coast were gaps in the minefields. Somewhere

between these minefields and England were the Germans. As far as we knew, there were only two possible ways through which they could emerge into the open sea.

The sea was flat calm, the visibility extreme. Throughout the ship was the feeling, " Now, my bonnie Huns, we've got you cold."

During the forenoon we pushed west, straight for the gaps in the minefields.

At 10.30 a.m. we had news of the Hun, and we were somewhat " intrigued " to get a signal, " Light cruisers must penetrate minefields and locate enemy." Paravanes were a thing of the future, and this order made our position look rather murky.

The secretary, ever a philosopher, went down into the waist and selected a wooden door which had been taken off a certain compartment so that the door should not be blown in by gun-blast, sat down on the door, put the catch from " Vacant " to " Engaged," and lit a pipe. He refused to allow me to share it with him, as he mistrusted its power of flotation.

We were not sorry to get a signal shortly afterwards to the effect that light cruisers would not penetrate the minefields.

At 11.20 a.m. the situation was looking very interesting. The Huns had been seen leaving the coast and making for one of the gaps which lay straight ahead of us. The gap was 5 miles broad. We were just passing the Second Battle Squadron and Third Cruiser Squadron as the hands were piped to dinner for half an hour. We went below to the ward-room, leaving brilliant sunshine on deck.

We rushed up fifteen minutes later at the call of the alarm bells, to find it was raining hard, blowing freshly, with increasing force every minute, and a considerable number of Hun cruisers and destroyers emerging out of a bank of driving mist scarcely 4 miles away.

The light-cruisers' screen was spread as usual in groups of light cruisers about 5 miles apart ahead of the battle-cruisers. We were the southern group, and the *Lion* was about 8 miles on our starboard quarter. But a quick look round as I ran up to the after-control revealed nothing except the *Birmingham* shrouded in driving mist about 2 miles on our starboard quarter, bearing down to our support, and the two groups of Huns, which consisted of three light cruisers and a dozen destroyers on the starboard bow, and two light cruisers and an armoured cruiser (the *Prinz Adalbert*) and destroyers on the port bow.

We went straight on at 25 knots, head into the sea, and spray flying over the ship in sheets.

The Huns came straight on, with the sea behind them and the destroyers bobbing about like corks. As both the enemy and ourselves approached each other on opposite courses, it appeared as if we were about to pass between the two groups of German ships. In fact, both broadsides were in action for a short period, but when the group on the starboard side were bearing about on the bow, they altered course approximately seven points to starboard and stood across our bows towards the wakes of the other party, which by this time were bearing on our port quarter. To conform to this movement, the *Birmingham* having got astern of us in support, we altered course to port, and steered parallel to the two groups of enemy. The foremost group slowed down, and the Germans then assumed one long straggling line which extended from our starboard bow to our starboard quarter, the mean range being about 6,000 yards. Fragments fell on board, but they never hit us, which was a poor display for five ships.

We opened fire with all guns bearing, but the gunlayers became confused at the number of targets and each gun was firing more or less independently. This,

added to the fact that owing to the sea and spray the telescopes were useless and they had to use open sights, made accurate shooting impossible, and I don't think we hit any Huns, though we managed to straddle the armoured cruiser. We were, however, recalled to the northward, where the *Lion* was, as any minute the German battle-cruisers were expected to come out of the gap, and as we were short of T.B.D.'s the battle-cruisers wanted light cruisers with them in case they were attacked by the German destroyers. Half an hour later we had been in the gap, and to our indescribable rage we had heard that the Second Battle Squadron and Third Cruiser Squadron had sighted the German battle-cruisers steaming east at full speed. We rushed after them, but it was too late. The attached plan will illustrate the general scheme as to what took place, though it is not accurately to scale.

Looking back on it all, I think what happened was this.

The Germans decided to get out along the southern edge of the gap. They had the amazing luck to get the sudden storm which in an hour rose to a gale from a perfect day.

They sent their light cruisers and destroyers out first, bunched up in two divisions. This was the party we met. About 5 miles behind them the German battle-cruisers came along. Now had we proceeded west we should have run into these big brutes. It may have been lucky for us, but it was unlucky for our side that we did not.

We made a signal, " In action with light cruisers," when we had our affair ; and as the *Lion* knew we were opposite the southern edge of the gap, it seems to me probable that they assumed we had made contact with one or two isolated light cruisers which might have been the southern wing of the German screen, and that they thought in the *Lion* that the bulk of the Germans were

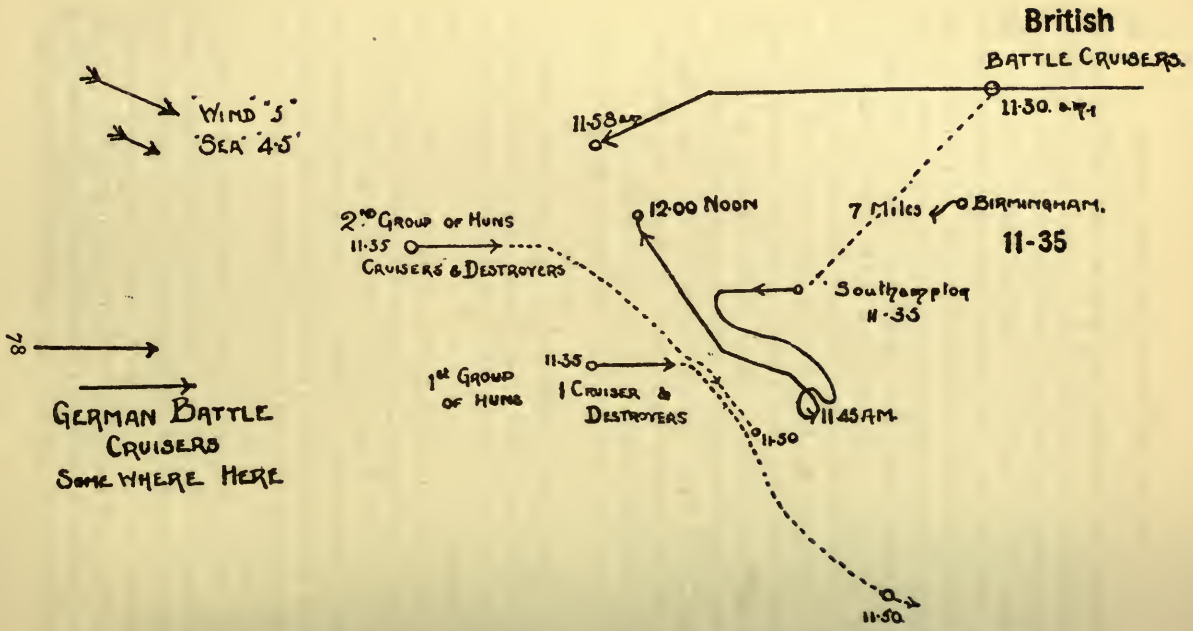

FIG. 2.—Sketch of H.M.S. *Southampton's* movements on Dogger Bank, 16th December 1914.

(Sketch is not accurate to scale.)

in the minefields to the west—hence they called us north, to concentrate everyone for the expected action with the German battle-cruisers.

Had this fog not arisen, we should of course have seen the Hun battle-cruisers behind their light cruisers. But war would not be what it is if it was not for the "might-have-beens." It is idle to speculate on "might-have-beens." If we had been able to destroy the German battle-cruiser fleet it might have profoundly affected the whole course of the war ; then again it might not have so done. Our failure when at one period everything had looked so promising was made the more bitter by the subsequent list of women and children killed in the bombardment.

In its main object the bombardment failed. The people of England and the Press were not panicked, and the Fleet was not dispersed from its strategic position and distributed in small packets along the east coast.

As an exhibition of Teutonic frightfulness, it may be held to have succeeded. Its most permanent result was the stimulus it gave to recruiting.

After the *affaire Scarborough* we repaired to Cromarty, which we were informed was to be our new base.

We were there for only two days, during which time I went ashore with B——, and we discovered a large sheet of ice on which we slid vigorously until B—— precipitated his 15 stone in a sitting position, which caused ominous cracks to appear, and we left the ice.

That night at 2 a.m. we received orders to get under way and go round to the Forth. We arrived there next day, and learnt that we were to form part of the Battle-cruiser Force which would be based there.

As the war dragged on the Battle-cruiser Force increased in size, and when I left the *Southampton* in March 1917 it was very different from what it had been in December 1914.

In March 1917 the *Queen Mary*, the *Indefatigable*, and

the *Invincible* were no more, but the *Repulse*, *Renown*, and *Courageous* stood in their places.

Instead of the one light cruiser squadron in 1914 and the Third Cruiser Squadron, there were three light cruiser squadrons.

The destroyer flotillas were more numerous, and I think I am right in saying that every boat was of a more modern type.

Balloon and seaplane ships were non-existent in 1914 in the Battle-cruiser Force; in 1917 they were always there.

Our leader in those days was Sir David Beatty, (now Earl Beatty) who flew his flag in the *Lion*.

When we arrived at Rosyth we passed under the Forth Bridge, and I gazed up in amazement at this monument of engineering. Many times in the next two years was I to pass under the bridge, but never did familiarity lessen the wonder of the thing. The great bridge, with its perfect proportions and wonderful span, that seems to be supported as much from above as from below in its airy flight, became to us the door of our home.

When we were going our people said: "What time do we pass under the bridge?"

When we were at sea, and the signal came to return, it was: "What time do we pass under the bridge?"

There are hundreds of naval officers to whom crossing the Forth Bridge in the days to come will be different from crossing any other bridge.

The fascination of the bridge has lured me from my story.

We passed the bridge, passed Rosyth dockyard, which was then very incomplete, and came to anchor off the village of Charlestown.

The battle-cruisers were anchored between us and the bridge, and the destroyers above us at Bo'ness. The Third Cruiser Squadron were opposite to us across the

river on the southern bank, and the old Third Battle-cruiser Squadron (the *King Edward VII* class), known variously as the "Behemoths" or the "Wobbly Eights," were between us and the battle-cruisers.

I shall have more to say about our home in another chapter, so will leave further description till then.

We arrived at Rosyth about the 23rd December, and naturally we all hoped, but did not expect, to be in harbour on Christmas Day.

Our expectations were fulfilled.

On the 24th a dense fog enveloped the Firth of Forth, but with much blowing of syrens, shouting through megaphones, and narrow shaves, we got under way at 11 p.m. and crawled out of harbour, under the bridge, through the boom which had just been fitted, past Inchkeith, May Island, and so out into the North Sea.

We were supporting an air raid on Cuxhaven.

I scribbled some notes on the first Christmas at sea, which I have found, and I will quote them.

. . . . . .

"Next day (Christmas day), at dawn, we took up our positions with the battle-cruisers ahead of the Battle Fleet. The whole Fleet was out, and at B.J. stations, which means continuous action stations, but people may go away in driblets for quick meals.

"I spent my Christmas Day from midnight to 4 a.m. on the bridge, 4–7 a.m. in my bunk, 7 a.m.–4 p.m. boxed up in my little after-control position, which is a gun-control station resembling a glorified long bath made of thin sheet iron, sitting on top of the beef-screen, about 6 feet above the deck, and situated athwartship abaft the fourth and after-funnel. It has a canvas roof which leaks abominably. [*Note.*—At the first refit I had this replaced by an iron one, on which we put a range-finder.]

"Luckily Christmas Day was fine and bright, though bitterly cold, so I decided to try and celebrate *Der Tag* in some form or other.

" Firstly, I managed to get a gramophone up into the after-control; my assistant, who in private life, *i.e.* when not at action stations, is the clerk, worked this. I then distributed a hundred cigarettes and chocolate and toffee to my staff, consisting of one boy and three ordinary seamen.

" Further, I surreptitiously got up a small arm-chair for myself and a camp-stool for the clerk, also a small library, as, owing to the great visibility (about 20 miles), there was no chance of being caught bending.

" At 10 a.m. I had a brain wave. Why not, I thought, be generous and distribute music. No sooner thought than done.

" The telephone to all guns, and the voice-pipes to the guns, together with the flexible voice-pipe to the fore-control-top, were all brought as close as possible to the gramophone, and where possible pushed into the horn.

" The idea worked beautifully, as delighted messages from various parts of the ship soon testified. The fore-control, though 50 feet above us and 100 yards away horizontally, reported that the sounds of music filled the top. [It occurred to me afterwards that this scheme would naturally work well, as the microphone transmitter of a telephone would be very sympathetic to gramophone notes.] The guns' crews also reported that they could hear very well.

" C—— and M—— solemnly went round the ship at 11 a.m., and presented each officer with a toy. I got a wooden horse.

" At 3 p.m. the *Birmingham*, 3 miles from us, reported ' A submarine in sight, close to me.' Almost simultaneously we sighted a periscope moving through the water like a shark's fin, about 1,000 yards on our starboard bow.

" A rather uncomfortable five minutes ensued, and I privately got my swimming collar ready. However,

nothing untoward took place, and the Battle Fleet got out of it as quickly as they could.

" A flotilla of destroyers hovered over the spot to have at them should they appear, but they did not rise again during the remaining hours of daylight.

" I finished my Christmas Day as I began it, on the bridge—8–12 p.m.—and beastly cold."

. . . . . .

Next day we started back to Rosyth. The weather broke very badly and it blew a gale, which made the ship roll as much as 40 degrees every now and then.

It was rather tragic, because, as we had been at action stations all Christmas Day, the mess man had arranged to postpone a very special lunch from the 25th to the 26th. During lunch the ship rolled so heavily that the chairs kept on sliding away from the table.

At one very heavy roll half a dozen officers hung on to the " fiddles " (which are wooden contraptions put on the table in heavy weather to keep the plates in position), in an effort to keep their chairs up to the table. The fiddles were unable to stand the strain, and one side broke. In a moment all on that side of the table, together with their chairs, plates, glasses, and half the lunch, were in a confused heap against the ship's side.

The return roll made matters worse by precipitating the whole pot-pourri under the table, where they fetched up amongst the legs of the people on the opposite side, who, surprised at this unexpected onslaught, in their turn let go of the table, and as the ship hung over on the starboard roll a blasphemous crowd, each trying to save that portion of the meal which attracted him most, slid over the soup-covered floor until further progress was arrested by the sideboard. The navigator and myself, at opposite ends of the table, and firmly anchored to it by its legs, derived much amusement from this exhibition.

Eventually the acrobatic party finished their meal sitting in upturned arm-chairs wedged into various angles of the ward-room.

We heard that a submarine had fired at a destroyer off May Island, in bright moonlight, a couple of hours before we came along, but we got in at 1 a.m. without seeing anything of Fritz.

In the next month we were at sea twice on "set pieces." The first time we went out for three days in a gale to do some firing, and the second time we went out with the battle-cruisers to do a stunt in the Bight: all we saw were a Zeppelin, a solitary Hun seaplane, and a number of floating mines. There was, of course, the usual submarine alarm.

On the 21st January I got a birthday present in the shape of an R.H.S. medal.

On Saturday, 23rd, I traded on being temporarily a "blue-eyed boy," and got four hours' leave to go to "the Burgh," that is Edinburgh.

I visited some friends of mine, and was invited to join a party which was going to the Haymarket Rink to curl. I had never played this great game before, and I was delighted to have a chance to learn. Whilst in the act of frantically "sooping it oop," the General Officer Commanding in Edinburgh, who was one of my opponents, informed me that a telephone message had been received ordering all light-cruiser officers back to their ships.

There was a good deal of excitement in Princes Street, where I managed to get a taxi. I am quite sure that in half an hour most of the inhabitants of Edinburgh knew that the Fleet was under sailing orders. Later on in the war, in fact as a result of experience gained on this day, the recall was arranged in a more cunning manner.

I got down to Dalmeny, with two strange naval officers I picked up, in twenty minutes, the taxi-driver

thoroughly entering into the idea of speed being a matter of vital national importance, though I dare say the ten-bob tip we promised him had a certain amount of influence. I had to wait half an hour on the Hawes pier before I could get a boat, and whilst I was there Engineer Captain Taylor, of the battle-cruisers, who was borne in the *Tiger*, came up and spoke to me. A most charming man, he never forgot a cadet who had passed through his capable hands whilst he had been Engineer Commander at Dartmouth College. He was the only officer killed on our side in the action which took place a few hours later.

Apart from his personal qualities, he was a great loss to the Service from a professional point of view. The Battle-cruiser Squadrons, Light Cruiser Squadrons, Third Cruiser Squadron, and attached destroyers proceeded to sea after dark, and rumour had it that there were wigs on the green amongst the staff in the *Lion* because the officers had been recalled from Edinburgh without Sir David's order.

We went to action stations at 6.50 a.m., the disposition of the Fleet being roughly as follows. On the port beam of the battle-cruisers the First Light Cruiser Squadron, astern the Third Cruiser Squadron, and I think the attached destroyers and their leaders were between us and the battle-cruisers.

We expected to meet the Harwich force at dawn, and at that hour the southern horizon was lit by a number of flashes, and the sound of gun-fire told everyone that something in the nature of business was to hand.

It appeared that the *Arethusa* and party had run into the German battle-cruisers and light cruisers, just about the spot where they expected to meet us. It was too dark to see what was happening, and I have never been quite clear as to this portion of the action. I remember one of the light cruisers—the *Aurora*—was hit.

Coming to more solid facts. As we pushed on at full

speed daylight made rapid headway, and we saw four German battle-cruisers which had been steering north turn 16 points and make off home at full speed. The sea was of an oily calm, and it was soon evident that the battle was to lie amongst the engineers as much as between anyone else.

At 7 a.m. it was fully light, and the whole situation became plain.

Imagine a Λ upside down.

The German battle-cruisers, disposed in starboard-quarter line, were at the apex, steering an east by south course for Heligoland. They were preceded by a cloud of destroyers and light cruisers, who were practically hull down from us. At the bottom of the right-hand leg of the Λ were our own battle-cruisers. Across the base of the Λ were many of our destroyers. At the bottom of the left-hand leg of the Λ was the First Light Cruiser Squadron, consisting of the *Southampton*, *Birmingham*, *Nottingham*, and *Lowestoft*.

We were about 17,000 yards on the port quarter of the German battle-cruisers, about 14,000 yards on the port beam of the *Lion*, which ship was about 18,000 yards fine on the starboard quarter of the Germans. The visibility was extreme, the day was young, the Germans were running, everything was favourable provided we could catch them.

It was then seen that the Germans had a fatal handicap, in that the last ship of their line was the *Blücher*, a big armoured cruiser, standing half-way between a battle-cruiser and an armoured cruiser and barely capable of 26 knots.

She was armed with 8·2-inch guns, and the story current in the Navy is that this armament was due to the fact that when our first battle-cruisers were laid down the Germans stole their plans ; but these plans were incorrect in that the guns of our ships were marked as 9·2-inch.

The opposite number to this gun in Krupp's catalogue is an 8·2-inch, and the *Blücher*, which was a reply to our first battle-cruisers, was given this weapon. To the discomfiture of the Germans, when our first battle-cruisers were launched, they were found to carry eight 12-inch guns apiece.

Shortly after 7 a.m. all ships had settled down to what was evidently going to be a stern chase.

There was something uncanny in the spectacle of all those ships rushing along in two great groups ten miles apart and not a gun being fired.

Some trawlers appeared right ahead, in a quarter of an hour they were abreast of us, in another quarter of an hour they were vanishing out of sight astern.

By 8 a.m. we seemed to have gained slightly on the enemy, who were evidently adjusting their speed to that of the *Blücher*.

At 9 a.m. we had gained appreciably, and a few minutes later the *Lion* and *Tiger* opened a deliberate fire from their foremost guns. The *Princess Royal* also joined in. At the third salvo the *Blücher* was hit, and it must have been borne in on her crew that the hour of their destruction was at hand.

The Germans opened fire in reply at our battle-cruisers, the range being about 18,000 yards, and after a time of flight of 20 to 25 seconds, huge splashes rose up around our leading battle-cruisers, which ships had begun to draw clear of our slower battle-cruisers of the *Indomitable* class.

There was a marked difference between the appearance of the gun-fire from our ships and the gun-fire from the enemy. Our guns flashed, whilst from the German ships each time a gun was fired a ball of flame and brown smoke seemed to roll comparatively slowly from the turret.

The firing was very deliberate and methodical, and for an hour without much visible result

To us, it was like sitting in the front row of the dress circle at a play.

Everyone who could get there crowded to the starboard side of the boat deck and sat there smoking their pipes. At about this period one of our destroyers between us and the battle-cruisers sprinted ahead and began to catch up the Germans with great rapidity. He got to within about 10,000 yards, when a salvo from some disengaged German guns soon caused him to drop back.

At 10 a.m. a dull red spot appeared amidship on the *Blücher*, slowly flared up to the size of a turret, and just as we were all cheering exultantly, our cheers growing with the flames, the fire slowly grew less and disappeared, whilst we subsided into disappointed silence.

I remembered that I had not had any breakfast, and managed to get hold of a banana and some pressed beef.

At 10.15 we had worked our way to a position appreciably closer to the *Blücher*, and whilst I was watching her I suddenly saw a series of jabs of flame down her port side. I was at a loss to account for this, until a moaning noise and a series of splashes on the far side of us revealed that we were her target.

We at once scuttled out another 1,000 yards, followed by a line of splashes. It was a battle of giants, and not suitable for light cruisers. The *Lowestoft* was hit by a ricochet, but no damage done.

I remember having a feeling that the *Blücher* was behaving rather badly by firing at us, and that we were not so much participants in the battle as interested and harmless spectators.

At 10.30 the *Blücher* was being badly hit ; repeatedly fires broke out on board her and were got under again. She began to gradually drop in position on her consorts, who were abandoning her to her fate.

Firing was now very lively, and both groups of big ships were surrounded by splashes.

At 11 a.m. the *Blücher* stopped, and seeing her do this, proud ideas of administering the *coup de grâce* entered our heads. We put the helm over and, followed by our squadron, dashed in to 14,000 yards, when, turning to port, the 6-inch broadsides of four light cruisers opened fire upon the tormented ship. We could see our lyddite bursting all over her very plainly, but she was by no means dead.

Our first group of battle-cruisers, the First Battle-cruiser Squadron, was passing the *Blücher*, intent on catching the *Derflinger*, *Seydlitz*, and *Moltke*, our Second Battle-cruiser Squadron was slightly astern, and for the moment the *Blücher* had only us to attend to.

She had four 8·2-inch left in action on our side, and with these she opened on us and made some very creditable shooting, the splash of one shell falling like a cataract on the side of our quarter-deck.

Furthermore, she pulled herself together for a last effort, and, smoking and burning in a dozen places, she got under control again and staggered along at about 20 knots. Beyond her our battle-cruisers spread out in chase, foamed forward, firing steadily at the flying Germans. We were able to tell the *Tiger* by wireless that her shot were falling over.

A Zeppelin had appeared at 10.30, and hung like a silver sausage between the two fleets. He cruised over towards us, but we fired our forecastle 6-inch with extreme elevation and a time-fused shrapnel at him, and he ponderously turned round and made off.

As we saw that the *Indomitable* was just about to come up with the *Blücher*, we resumed the main chase.

Two of the three remaining German battle-cruisers had big fires on board, but they were still steaming steadily and firing with vigour.

At this juncture we were somewhat surprised to see the *Tiger* and *Princess Royal* turn round and come back towards the *Blücher*. A hail of shell was poured into

the doomed ship, which as we passed her once more stopped and, evidently no longer under control, began to wander very slowly from south-east to north-east.

We were still following the other Germans, not understanding what had happened, and as we passed to the southward the *Tiger* suddenly advanced on the *Blücher*, steaming full speed and firing furiously. Again and again the *Blücher* was hit. I saw a shell burst against her foretop, and another obliterated her foremost funnel.

It seemed amazing to think that human beings could be in that hell. Clouds of grey smoke were pouring from inside her, and in places her very hull seemed to glow with a red heat. Once more she fired, a last wild shot, and then utter silence as the *Tiger* ceased fire.

We followed the Germans for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when we noticed that we were rapidly becoming the sole British occupants of the stage. Rather bewildered, we turned 16 points and hurried back to where we had last seen the *Blücher*. We found she had been sunk by a torpedo from the *Arethusa*, and the latter ship together with some destroyers was picking up survivors.

We were approaching to assist, when we were surprised to see a line of splashes stand up one after the other on the sea. The general direction of the splashes was across the large oily pool which marked the last resting place of the *Blücher*. A whirring noise made everyone look up, and we saw the ugly snout of the old Zeppelin slipping along between low-lying clouds.

Our Commodore, who was the senior officer present, directed all ships to clear out at once ; and we were obliged to leave a number of Germans swimming in the North Sea. In those days we regretted this considerably, for the *Blücher* had put up a stout fight against heavy odds, which we admired.

Getting under way, we proceeded north and heard for

the first time that the *Lion* had been damaged by a plunging shot and was in difficulties.

We soon overtook her, with a nasty list to port, in tow of, I think, the *Indomitable*. *En passant*, it may be a matter of curiosity to some to know why the Zepp bombed us when we were picking up survivors, an act which infuriated the Germans we did save, who kept on making two remarks in the *King Edward VII*, to which ship they were transferred on arrival at Rosyth. One remark was :

" That cursed Zeppelin " ; the other was, " My God, how you will burn ! " on seeing the woodwork in the *King Edward's* ward-room. They had had some experience of fires, the survivors of the *Blücher* !

However, to get back to the Zepp.

All British capital ships are fitted with tripod masts, and one German ship was so fitted, this was the *Blücher*.

The Zepp had seen the *Lion* fall out of the line, and soon afterwards, from a distance, she had seen a ship with tripod masts sink. Putting two and two together and making five, she had planted some bombs on what she imagined to be the *Lion's* rescue party. Doubtless the idea that we should waste our time rescuing our enemies never entered the mind of the fool in command of the Zepp.

The above theory would also account for the persistent manner in which the German Admiralty, doubtless acting on the evidence of the only witness they had, that is the Zepp commander, repeated the statement that the *Lion* had sunk.

Though the action was over at noon and the surface of the sea was devoid of Germans, our anxieties were by no means over. The great question in all minds was, " What is the state of the *Lion* ? Can she stick it ? "

Luckily the weather was perfect, which gave her every chance. There were only about eleven men

killed in the *Lion*, and four men killed and one officer (Engineer Captain Taylor) in the *Tiger*, also a few wounded in each ship.

At 3 p.m. we gathered round the wounded *Lion*, Sir David Beatty having transferred his flag to the *Princess Royal* as soon as the *Lion* fell out, he having made the passage in a destroyer.

Slowly the procession crawled north at about 7 knots. The day was succeeded by the night, but it brought little relief, as there was a bright moon. The Second Light Cruiser Squadron, ourselves, and forty-eight destroyers ringed her round.

Altogether an uncomfortable night, especially as we received information that enemy submarines were chasing us on the surface—though I hardly think this can have been correct, as I believe the Germans really thought the *Lion* had been sunk.

On the 25th of January, tugs met the *Lion*, and the rest of us swept south to see if anyone was following us. There were no jackals in the *Lion's* footsteps.

We received two good signals on the night of the 25th. One was that the *Lion* had got into Rosyth at 2 a.m., and the other was a congratulatory message from His Majesty.

On the morning of the 26th we entered Rosyth and passed close to the *Lion*. There was little sign of external damage.

Thus ended the first action between ships of the Dreadnought era.

To those who are interested in the study of war, and to naval officers, one of the great problems of this action is in the question as to why action was broken off at the moment it was. Many stories are in circulation, but until the facts are revealed no sound judgment can be formed, and it would be useless and improper to repeat what to a large degree can only be described as well-informed rumour.

There is one fact about the action which deserves mention, for it is not a very generally realized fact, and that is that during practically all the forenoon our battle-cruisers were open to torpedo attack from the stern tubes of the German ships. The risk of this had to be, and was, accepted.

As regards the German conduct of the action, for the personal conduct of those in the *Blücher* I have nothing but praise. They fought their ship till she sank beneath them : no man can do more. But I do not consider that Hipper, who I believe was in command, did well. With a Zeppelin at his disposal, he must have known exactly what he was up against, and I consider that the *Blücher* was prematurely abandoned, and another hour might have saved her.

Furthermore, his tactical position, on the port bow of our heavy ships, was ideal from the point of view of torpedo attack, and by sacrificing half a dozen destroyers he would have sensibly relieved if not saved the *Blücher* and stood a very good chance of getting one of our people.

At the beginning of the action, had the *Moltke*, *Seydlitz*, and *Derflinger* placed themselves astern of the *Blücher*, they could have put up an equal fight against our leading battle-cruisers, whilst the *Blücher*, unfired at, would have kept up a steady 26 to 27 knots.

We were in harbour for three days, and I had managed to see my friends in Edinburgh, when we went off at 1 a.m. to do an air raid in the Bight, but the weather broke badly and drove us in.

At the beginning of February 1915 the *Nottingham* and ourselves went to Newcastle to be fitted with 3-inch aerial guns.

We enjoyed the fleshpots of Egypt in that city, and very nice they were too, for six days, and on the 11th we were back off Charlestown village.

CHAPTER VII

THE ORDINARY ROUTINE OF WAR

By the beginning of 1915 a distinct change had begun to take place in the character of the war in the North Sea, at least as regards surface ships. The policy of large ships, such as battle-cruisers and battleships, cruising about on the chance of seeing something was the first thing to be abandoned. Still the light cruisers were employed in patrolling " areas " and sweeping portions of the North Sea. By the term " sweeping " I do not, of course, mean mine-sweeping.

But it was not long ere this method of using the scouting forces of the Grand Fleet fell into disfavour. It was evident in the spring of 1915 that ships went to sea for three reasons.

(1) To intercept, or bring to action, blockade runners or enemy ships whose presence was known or suspected.

(2) To carry out an offensive operation, in so far as the strategical situation ever offered us scope for such operations.

(3) For exercise.

If none of these three reasons was valid, the ships were in harbour.

Being in harbour did not mean going ashore, for this pleasure was only possible, and then as far as light cruisers were concerned with many limitations, when the ships were at more than two and a half hours' notice for steam.

The policy outlined above as opposed to being at sea, on general principles, came into being for the following reasons.

It became obvious that the Germans were not going to come out in the North Sea without a very definite object in the " operations " line ; and secondly, the presence of submarines and mines in the North Sea tended to make it an unhealthy place in which to cruise for the mere sake of cruising.

The year 1915 was not marked by an action of any size, but a great many operations of various kinds were carried out, in most of which, if not in all, the *Southampton* and most of her squadron participated. These operations were of three kinds.

The first kind, known as a " stunt," either good or bad, was an operation in which we went over to the other side, and in which, from the position of the Fleet and the fact that we were at action stations, it required no inside knowledge on the part of an observer for him to deduce that the powers that be thought that there was a sporting chance of meeting something.

A " stunt " lasted from three to five days, and was usually preceded by a " flap " or " panic."

I hope no one will conjure up a vision of the British Navy in a state of nerves because an order had arrived ordering us to sea.

A " panic " was different from that. A typical " panic " was something like this.

The hour would be 9 p.m., the ship at four hours' notice ; and everyone at that hour was usually in the ward-room engaged in playing cards, talking shop, arguing, or perhaps making arrangements to go ashore next day.

This pleasant scene would be interrupted by the arrival of a signal boy with a cipher signal for the secretary. The latter would at once disappear to decipher it. During his absence, the only subject of conversation would be, " Is it a flap ? "

The secretary would return looking very important and whisper to the Commander. The latter, catching

the air of mystery, would whisper to the Engineer-Commander. By this time everyone had guessed we were off. The watch-keeping lieutenants would at once embark on an acrid dispute as to who, if we weighed at 1 a.m., ought to keep the middle watch.

The two doctors and the paymaster and his assistant would have a similar bicker as to who should keep the morning decoding watch.

Meanwhile on the mess-decks everything was purposeful confusion. Stokers struggled to get below to the boiler rooms. Seamen struggled to get up the hatch and fall in on deck. The electric-light party scooted about with shaded lights. The gunnery lieutenant crept about on the forecastle, tripping up over cables as he made preparations to weigh.

The Commander damned everyone impartially, including himself ; this latter effort because he had been tempted by the fine night and had not hoisted the steam-boat at dusk, and now it had to be hoisted in the dark and in a hurry.

Ready use ammunition stowed below in harbour had to be got up. All boats had to be secured for sea, provisioned, and turned in.

Probably an official mail had to be sent over to some ship that was not going out.

Berthing rails had to be taken down and life-lines rove. The accommodation ladder had to be got in. Rumbling noises from aft and the clanging of bells indicated that the engineers were trying the steering engine and the telegraphs.

All these things and many others had to be done, and done quickly, before the ship could go to sea. Hence the term " panic " or " flap."

Although in theory we were entitled to claim four hours' notice if a signal came, " Raise steam with all despatch and report when you are ready to proceed," we should have felt ashamed of ourselves, and so would

any other light cruiser, if we were not ready in two hours at the outside.

This ability of the engineers, *i.e.* to raise steam from cold boilers to "full pressure" in half the time they were supposed to need, was often a nuisance when a "panic" took place in the afternoon and one was ashore. I always felt that, instead of having four hours up my sleeve, I only had about an hour and a half.

So much for the "panics" that usually preceded "stunts." The second kind of operations, viz. those in which we proceeded out to try and get at the inaccessible Hun, were chiefly air-raid parties on the Zepp sheds at Tondern, mine-laying parties in the region of the Bight, or "lucky dips" into the bran-tub of the Skajerack or up the Norwegian coast to try and pick up a few Hun patrols and un-neutral shipping.

Then there were the trips when we went out and steered steadily north till we reached the Grand Fleet's front garden, between the Shetlands, Iceland, and the grim Norwegian coast deep cut with fjords and dented by the eternal succession of Atlantic gales. Here, beneath the lace light of the Northern Lights, we P.Z'ded, and did other tactical exercises, playing with our big brothers the battleships and coming under the critical eye of J. J. in the *Iron Duke*.

Here we dropped targets and scouted around on the lookout for stray submarines, whilst the thunder of 13·5-inch and 12-inch broadsides rolled round the horizon.

There was a fascination about those northern latitudes which to me remained ever great. It seemed always either wonderfully calm or monstrously rough.

When it was calm and clear, the visibility was wonderful. The air was clean and cool like mountain water, the sea was leaden coloured and lifeless, generally wrinkled by a gentle wind that seemed to flow along breathing the spirit of the North—the spirit of great open spaces, of monotonous desolation, of the top of the

world. The loneliness of it all was fascinating. At night the stars shone with a purity I had never seen before—they were like fine diamonds on black velvet—and round the semicircle from east through north to west the Northern Lights rose and fell, flickered and flamed, and wove strange patterns in space.

I realize just a little why men risk death at the two ends of the earth, and having been spared once, go again and again to serve this mistress, whose arms are the ice and whose breast is the snow.

And when it was rough, it blew with the violence of despair. Rain squalls, snow squalls, and banks of fog succeeded each other like waves of attacking infantry. The long North Atlantic rollers swept round from Newfoundland to hurl themselves in a cataract of foam on the rock-bound coasts of the Northern Isles ; others, passing to the north, spent their forces on the Lofoten Islands and the Norge coast.

I hated rough weather, I hated the sickening, never-ending alternation between the roll and the pitch, though when I was alone on the bridge and had settled down, wedged between the compass and the bridge screen for a four-hour watch, there came a feeling of exultation in watching the waves break on to the forecastle, and then to feel the little ship lift her bows and throw a hundred tons of Atlantic whence it came. It was good to feel in charge of the handiwork of man that could defy such weather.

. . . . . .

Then, in addition to these trips there were many odd jobs that fell to the lot of the light cruiser. Chief and most hated of these was a thing called the D.N.P.—those letters stood for Dark Night Patrol. Every night when there was no moon a light cruiser and two destroyers left Rosyth two hours before sunset and cruised out to the eastward of the May Island, and returned to coal two hours after sunrise.

This was to guard against mine-laying off the port. How many Battle-cruiser Force and Light-cruiser folk have not joined me in singing

> " So blow up your Giever ! Come fill up your flask !
> You've had time for luncheon, what more do ye ask ?
> So open the Outer Gate, let us gae free,
> The signal is flying, ' Light Cruisers to Sea.' "

Most boring and hateful of all operations was the D.N.P. When London cursed the moon, we blessed it.

To quote in detail and enumerate all the trips we made in 1915 would be a monotonous business, and I have no record of many, as so often they were devoid of all interest one simply remembered " it blew " or " it didn't blow " ; but I kept a few rough notes of some of these trips, and I will quote a little from them.

. . . . . .

" *Feb.* 18, 1915.—At sea with destroyers ; we saw nothing, and returned to base on 21st—coaled ship 500 tons and averaged 162 per hour, which was good.

" We have now become the Second Light Cruiser Squadron ; the new First Light Cruiser Squadron are *Galatea*, *Inconstant*, *Cordelia*, etc.

" *Feb.* 27, 1915.—His Majesty the King paid the port a surprise visit. We were one of the ships honoured, and all the officers were presented to His Majesty.

" *Feb.* 28, 1915.—I shipped my second stripe—a great moment.

" *March* 3, 1915.—All the Battle-cruiser Squadron, First, Second, and Third Light Cruiser Squadrons, went out and did several days' combined exercises in very unpleasant weather. We saw and destroyed some floating mines. On our way in, we coincided with a submarine, and the Fourth Destroyer Flotilla went out to hunt him.

" At 1 p.m. on the 12th we heard the *Ariel* had bagged U.12 outside.

" *March* 25, 1915.—Up at Scapa for gunnery and

torpedo exercises. As a place to sojourn in, with its absolute lack of civilization, barren scenery, and wind-swept aspect, it is, in my opinion, 'the limit.'

"When I compare it with our pleasant existence at Charlestown the contrast is striking. However, the fellows in the Battle Fleet get accustomed to living on board, and never trouble to go ashore for months at a time, and some of them speak of Scapa with affection as being a nice quiet place.

"*March* 27, 1915.—At 7 a.m. I went away in a drifter in charge of a large target which cavorted about astern. We crawled out into the middle of the Flow. It was raining hard and there was a choppy sea—most unpleasant. The climax came at half-past ten, when the target capsized just as the ship was going to open fire.

"We were ordered to approach the ship. A painful scene ensued as the commander, about three lieutenants, and a couple of hundred men wrestled with the capsized target alongside the ship. I was vigorously damned because—

"(*a*) The target had capsized.

"(*b*) I was slow getting back.

"(*c*) I couldn't get the drifter to perform the impossibility of remaining broadside on to the sea and wind.

"(*d*) Because I was an adjectival young fool.

"Anyone who has been away with a large target and had trouble—and does one ever not have trouble?—will know exactly what I mean. However, the only thing to do is to sing out 'Aye! Aye! sir'—at regular intervals and endeavour to look worried.

"In the afternoon there was a 'panic,' and the whole Fleet went out in a hurry. At 4 a.m., when I went on the bridge, the stunt had fizzled out, and we returned to Scapa at 7 a.m. and coaled in a heavy snowstorm.

"*April* 1, 1915.—Left Scapa and rattled down to

Rosyth at 20 knots. Very pleasant getting to our proper base again.

"*April* 5, 1915.—Proceeded to our old stamping-ground. As soon as we got to the exercise ground, a gale started. Various intercepted wireless messages revealed that the 'Wobbly Eights' and 'Sea Cows' (Third Battle Squadron and Third Cruiser Squadron) were staggering in again, as weather was so bad.

"We waited in vain for a signal that light cruisers could return. We were required for screening the battle-cruisers.

"We spent most of our time plunging into it at 20 knots to get into station on big brutes of battle-cruisers doing 17 knots and going through the sea like submerged rocks. I believe their bridges are so high up that they are too far off to see how rough it is. We are low enough to feel it when a wave-top hops from the forecastle up to the fore-bridge.

"The gale blew out in the night, and next day was spent in going farther north. That night we spread out in wide lines between Norway and the Shetlands and did night firing.

"A tramp steamer bound for America foolishly crossed the line of fire, and a few shells whistled harmlessly over her. [Hence the tale a fortnight later of a great battle in the North Sea, and accounts in the German Press of the British Fleet firing into each other at night.]

"Early in the morning we started south. One of our armed liners made a fool of herself by sending a wireless message to say she was being chased west by a large ship. Two of our squadron were detailed off to go and help her, and they turned north again.

"Daylight dawned, and they were well on their way to the North Pole, having seen nothing, when it transpired that the 'large strange ship' was the New York to Bergen mail-steamer. We did another P.Z., and at noon received orders to return to base.

"It at once began to blow like Hades, and we got back at 1 a.m. in the teeth of a westerly gale on 9th April.

"We should not mind a week's rest. No such luck. They say there is no rest for the wicked, and I think the Battle-cruiser Force must be very sinful, for to-day, 11th April, 1915, we are out again, having left for the East at 10 p.m.

"*April* 14, 1915.—A glorious day. We are zig-zagging along at 28 knots, and are due to reach May Island at 3 a.m.

"On leaving May Island on 12th at 2 a.m. we steered due east until we were two-thirds of the way across to Denmark.

"We had hopes of something happening, as one always did have when the war was young and we thought the Germans had enterprise.

"The first day out we remained in touch with the battle-cruisers, and we all hoped that dawn would find us at action stations. Nothing of the sort, for we steamed about in glorious weather at 20 knots, with full speed at one hour's notice.

"The bureaux were baffled."

. . . . . .

Perhaps a few words as to what *Les Bureaux* were would not be out of place.

This was a war-time amusement, played by the engineer commander, the torpedo lieutenant, the gunnery lieutenant, the engineer lieutenant, and the sub and myself, on one side; the secretary, the flag commander, and the flag lieutenant, on the other side. We represented *Les Bureaux;* they were the Mystery Priests.

My bureau, known as the Q Bureau, was by universal consent the oldest established and most efficient, and was considered to compare very favourably with the infamous Wolff Bureau.

The object of the bureaux was to combat undue

secrecy on the part of the Mystery Priests, and our motto was "*L'Union fait la force*"; that is to say, each bureau, working separately, collected little bits of evidence, and then, at a general meeting, those isolated facts were pieced together. Having got a story together, the next move in the game was to announce in the Mess, in the presence of one or more of the Mystery Priests, that the Q Bureau begged to announce to all subscribers that the XYZ Squadron having returned to base through bad weather, the contemplated operation was off, and it was estimated we should return to base at 6 p.m. We became very expert at partly guessing and partly deducing the affairs of the day, and we were thus able to pull the legs of the priests with much success.

As the war proceeded, all the useless secrecy was dropped, and it was realized that once the ship was at sea it was quite safe to explain to officers why she was there and when she would get back, and so the bureaux died a natural death.

On this particular stunt of which I am writing the bureaux were baffled. All attempts to pump the Mystery Priests were in vain, until the Q Bureau evolved the startling theory that the mystery men themselves did not know why we were out.

They made a brave effort to conceal their ignorance, but on the second day out they broke down entirely and admitted frankly that they had not got the slightest idea as to why we were out. The strange spectacle was then seen of the men of mystery and the bureaux sitting together in the smoking-room, engaged in continuous speculative discussions.

On the third day out we caught a far-off glimpse of the serried lines of the Battle Fleet. Also on this day submarines began to be reported round us, one being seen by the *Roxburgh* and one by the *Lion*, though when I looked up the signalled position of this latter

Fritz, I remembered that we had passed through a shoal of porpoises about an hour previously on that spot.

"*April* 22, 1915.—Prepared for sea in the dog-watches, and every indication of going out.

"Met old Secret Harry (Secret-ary) and hazarded opinion that departure was imminent. True to the traditions of his race, he endeavoured to deny this.

"I then told him that as all the stokers had just been ordered below and were raising steam as hard as they could, I imagined this was to practise them in shovelling, on the same principle as loading drill for a gun's crew. He got quite peevish, so we had a drink together and then laboured amicably on the next number of the *Southampton Echo*, vol. ii.

"Slipped out at 9.15 p.m.; went over towards Horns Reef in beautiful weather; passed through the usual line of Dutch trawlers, and kept a sharp lookout for pigeons. We all suspect this party; they always seem to be fishing in a patrol line across the approaches to the Bight.

"*April* 23, 1915.—Passed a Norwegian sailing-ship burning furiously; she had evidently been caught by a Fritz a few hours previously. We saw no sign of any survivors or Fritzes.

"Did a P.Z. and returned home.

"*April* 24, 1915.—Amazing day! We've been given twenty-four hours' stand off. The engineers are delighted, as we have done 5,000 miles at high speed this month.

"S. A. and myself push-biked to Loch Leven, and we gorged with trout from the lake. It was delicious getting away from the war.

"*May* 6, 1915.—Back at Rosyth. We have been lying for days at two and a half hours' notice, which means that one can land for an hour or so in sight of the ship.

"*May* 31, 1915.—The whole party went to sea—a dud stunt.

"*June* 1915.—Our squadron have had a slightly unpleasant job during this month. We have been going out in groups of two light cruisers to do it.

"There is a big minefield in the middle of the North Sea that our little sweepers from Aberdeen are sweeping.

"We go out and guard them by cruising about between them and the Bight. I always felt how very uncomfortable I should be if a couple of German battle-cruisers popped up over the southern horizon.

"After three days the sweeping gunboats returned to coal. The poor little devils looked singularly helpless toddling back at 12 knots, whilst we kicked off to our base at 22.

"Also during this month we went up to the extreme north and played with the Grand Fleet. It was practically broad daylight at midnight, but the temperature fell to 40° F.

"When we got back from the expedition, two of our squadron—the *Nottingham* and *Birmingham*—and the 'Sea Cows' (Third Cruiser Squadron) went over to try and catch an armed German steamer called the *Meteor*, which has had the cheek to prey on commerce off the Naze.

"Our party seems to have 'bought it,' as when they got over there the place was a kind of congeries of U.-boats, torpedoes, and periscopes all over the place. The *Roxburgh* was hit once, and would have been hit three times had she not been splendidly handled. As far as I can make out, every ship had at least one torpedo fired at her.

"The *Roxburgh* was hit right forward, and the bottom of her cable locker more or less disappeared. This might have led to a very awkward situation, as the inboard end of 15 shackles (about 400 yards) of cable might have fallen out through the hole. This would practically have anchored the ship through her keel! I understand that with great foresight her commander

had foreseen this contingency, and he had caused the cable to be unshackled so that the whole lot could fall out harmlessly.

" From this day onwards we are always going to arrange ours like that ! It would be too fearful to be helplessly anchored whilst a Fritz potted the ship.

" The *Roxburgh* got in safely at 14 knots. Altogether a disappointing day for the party from the Hunneries, and a lucky one for us.

" *June* 25, 1915.—The Commander suddenly decided to inaugurate a spit and polish campaign.

" I thought he had been looking bored. He chased all the lieutenants quite in his peace-time manner, in fact more so, as this pastime had regained its novelty for him.

" We talked frightful mutiny every evening in one of our cabins, and made arrangements to avoid being hunted. However, he is diabolically clever at getting at us—a trait we rather admire.

" Various dull trips, and about the end of July battle-cruisers and light cruisers made a sweep over to Skajerack to bag German patrol trawlers. Unfortunately the weather broke as soon as we got over, and whilst the First Light Cruiser Squadron (Commodore Sinclair) and destroyers dashed into the Skajerack snorting defiance, we cruised on the Naze-Hantshohn line in case the German battle-cruisers came round from the Hunneries by the Horns Reef route.

" The Huns, like sensible fellows, had decided that it was no weather for gentlemen, and stayed at home.

" The First Light Cruiser Squadron got one patrol boat. The survivors expressed great pleasure at being captured, as they were due to be called up for the Landsturm in September. They said that the other thirty-nine patrol boats had gone in owing to bad weather.

" And so back to base—very sea-sick."

CHAPTER VIII

MORE ROUTINE OF WAR

"*AUGUST* 8, 1915.—Real old-fashioned 'flap' last night, as a 'raise steam with all despatch' arrived at 9 p.m. just as I was doing good business at a game of chance in the mess.

"At 12 midnight, crowds of destroyers came down the river and got well mixed up with us just as the squadron was weighing.

"Wonderful language floated about through megaphone. First Light Cruiser Squadron and ourselves got clear of Rosyth at 1 a.m.

"It appears that our old friend the *Meteor*, fitted as a mine-layer, and supposed to be capable of only 14 knots, has ambled over to Kinnaird Head, sunk an armed boarding steamer called the *Ramsey*, and laid a minefield off Cromarty.

"We are off to catch her.

"The tea-party consists of Commodore (T——) and destroyers from Harwich, First Light Cruiser Squadron and ourselves from Rosyth, and the *Royalist* and Co. from Scapa.

"*August* 9.—We all dashed across the North Sea, converging on Heligoland, and at 5 p.m. we were very annoyed to receive a W/T signal from Whitehall to say that if we had not found her we were to go back, as we were then getting fairly close to the Bight and none of our heavy ships were out with us. Fortunately at this moment the *Arethusa* sighted the *Meteor*, which ship blew herself up, the Huns escaping in a trawler. The appearance of a Zepp and his proximity to the Hunneries

decided Commodore (T——) not to waste time trying to chase the Huns, who were making off in the trawler.

" The Huns behaved very well to the survivors of the *Ramsey* whom they had on board, as before abandoning the *Meteor* they gave them some money and placed them in a Swedish trawler.

" I understand the Commander-in-Chief is causing this money to be returned to the German officer concerned, through a neutral embassy.

" *August* 17.—Up at lat. 64° N. doing a shooting party with the battle-cruisers.

" *August* 21.—We arrived at Scapa to pass the time of the day with the Grand Fleet.

" On the way on to Scapa I was on watch and was suddenly filled with a feeling that a man would fall overboard at a certain place I could see ahead.

" I ordered everyone off the forecastle, where some hands were getting the anchors ready, and told the people on the bridge to have lifebuoys ready. This behaviour on my part made the navigator look at me and say, ' What on earth's the matter with you ? '

" I felt I couldn't explain, and still less when we passed the place and nothing happened. I felt an ass ; but a minute or two later the next two ships astern of us each lost one man overboard as they passed the place.

" Then I explained my actions. I have only once had a similar experience, as I ' felt ' Jutland, only not nearly so strongly.

" The *Warspite* and other new arrivals were there. The weather here is beastly—rain and drifting mist.

" *Sept.* 13, 1915.—On our arrival back at Rosyth after a rough passage in which we had to make a large detour to the eastwards to avoid minefields, we found the atmosphere distinctly electric, as we were frequently at short notice for considerable periods.

" We also went out to search for a somewhat mythical mine-layer—though another theory popular in the smoking-room was that we were sent to sea to impress the idea of ceaseless naval activity upon a party of distinguished Frenchmen who were in the port, for we went out in daylight under their noses and the Third Light Cruiser Squadron came in at the same time; they had been out only twelve hours after a stay in harbour of several weeks.

" *Sept.* 26.—Last week we all went out on a job of work. At the last moment, just as the squadron was sailing, we developed a leaky condenser, so the Commodore and staff were hastily transferred to the *Birmingham.* We were all right by 7.30 a.m., and by steaming hard we caught up the Battle-cruiser Force at 5 p.m. Next day we were all in a position 40 miles or so north-by-west of Horns Reef at 3 a.m. To the south-eastward of us we could see the Harwich forces of light cruisers and destroyers, and inside them were several of our large mine-layers, who were engaged in laying a large field to harass German submarines going to and from the Bight.

" To our astonishment and pleasure we were not seen by Zepps; it was such a lovely morning we felt certain one or two would be out, but everything was very quiet, and at 5 a.m. we all came home fairly certain and rather surprised that we had laid our mines unobserved. We had perfect weather for the trip."

I suppose it is a very fine sight to see the Battle-cruiser Fleet at sea on a clear day. I have seen it so often that it tends to become commonplace, but I will describe what it looked like from our bridge on the last trip.

It was thus—

Eight miles away from us, and on our port quarter, seven battle-cruisers were silhouetted against the sky. From each of these great ships a graceful plume of

smoke rose like a dusky feather. As they zig-zagged about once every ten minutes, the sunlight reflected on their sides, and they appeared to change colour as they altered course.

On one tack they gleamed bright and silvery, on the other tack they appeared as if painted black. A stab of white rising up their rams, and a blob of white in their wakes, contrasted vividly with the deep blue of the sea and sky, and was an indication to the trained eye that these ships were moving at more than 20 knots.

They moved in two lines, and at the head of each line and around each line were dotted small black smudges which appeared to be stationary relative to the battle-cruisers. From these black smudges a puff of smoke occasionally shot up into the air. These smudges were the destroyers of the submarine screen.

All oil-fuel boats, they were normally smokeless, the intermittent puffs indicating momentary carelessness on the part of a stoker manipulating the air-inlet baffle-plates on their boilers. Turning to ourselves, the ever-faithful *Birmingham* (Captain Duff) zig-zagged in our wake about 400 to 600 yards away. Through glasses I could see the familiar figures on her bridge.

Five miles away on our starboard beam the *Nottingham* and *Lowestoft* formed a little group, completing our squadron and rounding off the starboard end of the light-cruiser screen which protected the battle-cruisers from surprise.

Five and 10 miles away on the port beam were two similar units of the Third Light Cruiser Squadron, delicately outlined in pearl-grey.

Fifteen miles away I could just detect the raking masts of two light cruisers of the First Light Cruiser Squadron, whose hulls were below the horizon.

I know that 20 and 25 miles away along the imaginary line were other light cruisers.

Thus we moved along.

At intervals a flash of light would start winking on the *Lion*, to be repeated to the right and left by the *Chatham*, the centre light cruiser. As soon as we had all got the signal, the *Lion* would wink with her search-light for ten seconds and the signal to alter course and speed would be obeyed.

When it grew dusk, the light cruisers closed in and became three lines, each ship following the pale blue stern light and shadowy form of the next ahead.

At dawn the three lines opened out like a fan and the screen was respread.

Such was the British Cruiser Force at sea.

"*October*.—Returned from a fruitless stunt; had rather a job getting out of the base for this trip."

Getting out of Rosyth at night is no pleasure trip for navigators—nor is getting in.

The shape of the harbour renders it obligatory for ships at the western end who wish to get out, to thread their way between the lines of battleships (*King Edward VII* class) and battle-cruisers. The battle-cruisers have bought up the eastern end of the harbour and are as close to Queensferry as they can get. The "Behemoths" (Third Battle Squadron) and "Sea Cows" (Third Cruiser Squadron) occupy the centre position, then come two lines of light cruisers.

Lastly, away at Bo'ness, amidst a welter of colliers, store-ships, oil-tankers, provision ships, and other Fleet auxiliaries, lie the bulk of the destroyers; the emergency boats lie at instant notice at buoys near the bridge.

When the destroyers are coming out with us, they frequently stop amongst our squadron just as we are shortening in. We then send them their operation orders in a borrowed motor-boat, as of course all our own boats are hoisted, turned in, and secured for sea.

Last time we did this the proceedings were very typical of what happens.

Imagine a pitch-dark night, raining persistently and with maddening Scotch penetration. Our four cruisers, without lights, were just aweigh, and struggling to get into line for leaving harbour. Suddenly four destroyers arrived on the scene, going about 10 knots, and apparently under the impression that we were about a mile farther down the harbour.

Much shouting through megaphones as they all go full speed astern, only to lie inert about 30 yards off our slowly moving ram. A galaxy of signalling, megaphoning, bad language, and narrow shaves.

During this performance the *Galatea's* motor-boat, of which we had the loan, was twisting and turning like a snipe amongst the moving ships in an endeavour to deliver his despatches. He had left the *Galatea* in such a hurry that the coxswain had left his navigation lights behind him, and, fearful of being run down, he was making a continuous screeching noise in his Klaxon hooter.

It was like a cock-pheasant gone mad.

We got into line and fox-trotted down the harbour, in and out between the big ships. Smoothly we passed under the bridge and counted our chickens (three cruisers and four destroyers—all correct) as we approached the outer gate in the first boom, which was just opening to allow a destroyer in.

To avoid all misunderstandings, for destroyers at night are kittle cattle, we switched on our navigation lights for a few seconds.

Then we led our line through the narrow opening. As we increased to 20 knots, the shore lights of Leith and the Fife coast slid past in a long procession, a breeze sprang up from the north-east and chilled the cheek, the lookouts crouched down behind the bridge-screens, and the guns' crews huddled into the gun-shields.

May Island winked its last farewell to us and, with

the spray lightly showering on to our forecastle and a bright phosphorescent wake astern, we passed out into the North Sea—the sea of derelicts, mines, strangely painted neutrals, submarines, and the monotony of naval war.

. . . . . .

Soon after this trip we went to Newcastle to refit, and we were given ten days' leave.

After a glowing account of London, I noted that—

" The leave, alas ! soon came to an end. We had a stormy trip from Newcastle to Rosyth, and it shook our beach-accustomed insides very unpleasantly. Once back at Rosyth the old routine soon gripped us, the accursed dark night patrol idea going full bore."

A quiet month followed, during which the *Argyll* was lost on the Bell Rock and we ourselves had a small adventure coming in from a sweep.

It was a thick night, and we were steaming 20 knots. At 9 p.m. we knew that we must be somewhere near the entrance, but as owing to bad weather the navigator had not been able to get any sights for forty-eight hours, we were a bit vague as to our exact position.

We were anxiously looking in every direction for the very feeble " war-light " which it was the habit of May Island to show, when without any warning a series of calcium lights went up all round us.

We had got right inside May Island, which is plumb in the middle of the entrance to the Firth of Forth, without noticing it, and then we had crashed right through the indicator nets of the submarine defences. This incident, together with the *Argyll* fetching up on the unlighted Bell Rock, led to a revision of the system of war-lighting in the Forth, and on future occasions when ships were expected May Island's full-power beam swept the horizon with its cheering light.

In November we made a sweep over to the Nor-

wegian coast, amongst other trips, and eventually arrived at Scapa.

Our first two days there were marked by a gale of typical Orcadian violence. The Flow was a smother of white foam, and the wind howled furiously from the north-west. Then the weather suddenly changed and became delightful: during the days we did our gunnery exercises, and in the evenings we dined with our friends in the battleships.

I went on board the *Iron Duke* and had dinner with a friend, after which there was a sing-song in the ward-room, which the C.-in-C. and all his staff attended.

I looked in at the telegraph office in the *Iron Duke*, which was in two sections. Section I was connected directly to the Admiralty, and whilst I was there a continuous stream of messages were passing both ways at the rate of seventy words a minute. Section II could be connected by relays to any place in the British Isles.

On Thursday, the 18th November, we were due to sail for Rosyth. We sailed, but hardly in the anticipated direction. I will quote my notes—

"By 5 p.m. that night we were bursting north-by-east at 20 knots.

"It appears that the somewhat ancient German cruiser *Freya* has been sighted steering north through the Sound, probably by one of our submarines. I cannot imagine what she is supposed to be doing, but at all events here we are at 9 a.m. on the 20th November patrolling a very rough, cold grey sea about 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle, viz. 68° 50′ N. 13° E. This is indeed a charming spot, for this morning the sun rose at 10.5 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time, and set at 11.55 a.m.

"Actually there are about five hours of grey, depressing twilight between total darkness 'a.m.' and 'p.m.' Nothing more has been heard of our friend. The gale

is getting worse, and I have been sea-sick not once but several times—the motion is abominable.

" Oh, why on earth didn't I join the army !

" We do not know how long we are to stay in this howling wilderness, but the engineers talk hopefully of coal running out soon.

" Heaven help the *Freya* if we do meet her—I do not feel that I could waste a second picking up Huns.

" *Sunday*, 21.—We are laboriously staggering back at 12 knots in the teeth of a south-west gale. I had the forenoon watch : it was most unpleasant. There is no news of the *Freya* at all ; I should say she is back at Kiel if the Huns have any sense—only maniacs and British sailors go to sea in this weather.

" Overhead it's dull grey, broken only by the never-ending procession of low clouds which scoot along from south-west to north-east. This morning, when I was on watch, with monotonous regularity we dipped our forecastle right into the seas, and then the splendid little ship lifted up her bows, a mass of seething foam which rushed aft and broke against the conning-tower ; the wind caught it and flung it upward and aft, so that it fell in sheets on the upper bridge.

" One blinked one's eyes to get rid of the stinging salt, and then another one came. Damnably cold into the bargain, and the feet like blocks of ice.

" At 11 a.m. the submarine lookout excitedly reported a periscope on the beam.

" A block of ice in the infernal regions seemed as likely a possibility. I could see nothing, and could do less.

" Curse the ship, how she rolls and pitches ! I can hardly write. And yet, though I hate it, I like it. Dashed funny thing the sea !

" The rest of the squadron are lost. In this thick weather one can see about a mile in the spindrift, spume, and general dirtiness.

" We are now about 700 miles from home.

" Well, I'm going to get my head down till 4.30 p.m. Thank goodness, I have not been sea-sick to-day. Yesterday I was sea-sick eight times—most monotonous !

" Roll on ! Creak on ! Play pitch-and-toss to your heart's content, my little ship. I don't care if it snows ink between now and 4 p.m., and if Number 1 is feeling strong he will keep the first dog-watch, and I shall not be on your ' demned damp bridge ' till midnight."

. . . . . .

The day after that on which I scribbled the above lines found the Second Light Cruiser Squadron in a poor way. We had been for three days without a sight of any sort, or a glimpse of sun or stars ; and all this while we had been struggling with the gale.

The nature of our mission decreed that we should remain spread at night, so as to cover the maximum amount of frontage. The result of this was, that when it became intensely thick we quite lost touch with the other three ships of the squadron. We could hear them wailing piteously on short-distance wireless, and we knew from the strength of the signals that they must be within a radius of about 40 miles.

But which way ? North—south—east—or west ?

We ordered the squadron to try and close the *Southampton*. Poor devils ! they no more knew our relative or our correct geographical position than we did theirs.

The *Birmingham* wirelessed her estimated latitude and longitude. It happened to coincide exactly with our estimated position—which, as Euclid would doubtless have said " was absurd," as by the strength of her signals we put her about 20 miles off. Eventually we made a signal to the squadron, which told them to proceed independently.

The *Lowestoft* and *Nottingham* hit off the Shetlands, and proceeded down the eastern coasts thereof.

We shaped a course which we fondly hoped would lead us to Sumburgh Head (the south point of the Shetlands). At 4 a.m. we were saddened by seeing Muckle Flugga (the northern point of the Shetlands) loom out of the haze.

We coasted down the Shetlands, and picked up the *Notts* and *Lowestoft* off Fair Island, where some monstrous seas were running through the Fair Island Channel.

The *Birmingham* missed the Shetlands, and passing "north about" boomed off south-west into the Atlantic on a course which in time would have taken them to Mexico. After a few hours they smelt a rat, and altered course south-easterly, and luckily heard the Fair Island fog and mist signal. They came through the Fair Island Channel and joined us.

At 6 p.m. we reached Scapa—united once more. All next day we were coaling, and at 6 p.m. we left for Rosyth.

A fresh gale was blowing from the north; but we rather liked it, as it boosted us along in great style, and we got back to Rosyth on the 24th November at 8 a.m. It would be incorrect to say that when we received orders to sail with the whole Battle-cruiser Force on the 28th, that we were pleased.

What irritated us was the reason for sailing.

It was for exercises and for the purpose of giving the battle-cruisers a blow through and a shake up, as Sir David had not taken them out for several weeks. As part of the Battle-cruiser Force we had to go as well. We all went up to the region of 62° N. eastward of the Shetlands, and, as we expected, met a gale. We rolled along all one day like a hog in its sty. I was feeling very sea-sick that morning, and I had kept the first watch during the night.

I see from my diary that we altered course beam on to the sea at 7.30 a.m., just as I was called to get up

and go on watch for the forenoon. I lay in my bunk and watched my cabin wrecked twice, with absolute indifference.

First, every book I had not carefully stowed away slid gracefully to the deck. Tins of tobacco, cigarettes, pipes, photos, etc., followed suit.

I watched these dispassionately—unmoved—cynically.

My pet pair of binoculars jumped off a hook. Their fate left me cold.

My servant came in and stowed everything away in what he imagined to be safe positions. Five minutes later she gave a tremendous roll of about 40°—perhaps more. Everything that wasn't on the deck crashed thereunto. With the disinterested gaze of sea-sick philosophy I watched my household goods surge backwards and forwards across the floor.

At ten minutes to eight, fearing to miss breakfast, I forced myself to get up, and noted with utter indifference that a large bottle of hair-wash had fallen and broken into my wash-basin, and that the photograph of photographs was floating in the mess. For the moment I had ceased to love her.

I hurriedly pulled on sweaters and jerseys, and clambered on to the upper deck. A playful sea flopped into the ship, and filled up my sea-boots.

Quite slowly and contemptuously I was sea-sick. Somewhat strengthened, I went below and consumed two indifferent eggs.

At 8.30 a.m. I was once more on that hated but fascinating forebridge. Three steps one way, two steps the other.

On our return from this trip we were all rather tired, as we had done over 5,000 miles in bad weather in seventeen days.

We had a very quiet time, and Christmas Day in harbour.

The Third Light Cruiser Squadron were at sea on the 25th December, and struck a very hot gale. We smiled, and drank their health at dinner.

Our three weeks' rest was all the pleasanter, in that during this period it blew with amazing pertinacity.

It was with no surprise that on the 5th January we went out to our old northern ground and did three days' exercises in bad weather. Various other sweeps, mostly in bad weather, ensued, and once, on the 10th of February, when we were out, we very nearly had an action.

Unfortunately the German Battle-cruiser Force, which was out, and thought to be coming over a certain distance, had some destroyers ahead of it who encountered the Tenth Squadron of sloops, who were sweeping off the North Dogger.

They sank the *Aramis*, and, I suppose, fearing this would give a general alarm, they abandoned whatever they had in hand and went back to the Hunneries. We were probably nearer to them than they thought—a few more hours and we might have bagged them.

"*March* 3, 1916.—A dull sweep.

"*March* 12, 1916.—At sea in wretched weather—everything seems wet, the only bright spot in life is afforded by the misfortune of the sub, who came down off watch to find his cabin flooded out, with 6 inches of water in all his drawers.

"To-morrow will be our fifteenth coaling in thirty-nine days.

"Query—Shall I join the Coal-miners' Union?"

We had another trip, a few days later, which took us over to the Skajerack, and during this trip the sub and I, who were on watch together during the middle, were startled by a tremendous crash of some heavy body falling between us.

We struck a match and discovered a slab of ice about the size of a paving-stone. This *billet de glace* had been

forming on top of the fore-control, whence it had slid off and fallen 50 feet, missing us both by a few inches.

I at once appropriated the large brass binnacle cover of the compass, which I put on after the fashion of a gigantic and toadstool-like helmet ; after the famous precedent created by Commander, now Captain E., in the action when four German torpedo-boats were sunk off Terschelling.

The sub protested that he had nothing.

I was obliged to point out officially that a two-striped officer was worth not twice but, at a modest estimate, three times as much to England as a one-striped sub. He disagreed, and there was a coolness between us until the arrival of the 2-a.m. cocoa.

After this the weather ceased to be of the " galey " variety and became very foggy and damp.

The chief bosun's mate, who used to unburden himself to me whilst the hands were scrubbing decks when I had the morning watch, beat an enormous chest with a huge fist, and trying to wheeze, said—

" Ah, you 'as to 'ave the lungs of a helephant to stand this 'ere weather ; it's like a young piece of skirt, it's that contrary."

During the next few months we had a good many trips of various kinds, including an attempted air raid on the German coast, and a Zeppelin raid on Edinburgh. We had the annoyance of hearing them nipping back to their homes, 10,000 feet above us, for we were at sea off St. Abb's Head. In the west, a huge conflagration at Leith indicated the fate of much good whisky, ignited by an incendiary bomb.

It would have rejoiced the hearts of the Liquor Control Board to see this oblation to the gods of Temperance.

We went up to Scapa and came back to Rosyth. Jutland was getting near.

CHAPTER IX

HARBOUR LIFE

I HAVE tried to describe in the last two chapters what the ordinary business of war was like.

We were soon destined to pass through the fires of battle—the ultimate object of fleets and armies, the climax of sustained effort and of preparation.

Before passing to an account of what happened to us at Jutland, there is another side of naval life which deserves a few words.

The British do not make war sadly, and whenever we could, we got as much fun out of life as possible.

I would like to write a little of what we did when we were not at sea. For at sea, life was so delightfully simple ; of two things, one was certain—either I was on watch or I was not.

If I was not on watch, of two things, one—either sleeping or eating.

Could anything be simpler or more elemental ?

In harbour it was more complicated, though here again, of two things, one was certain. The ship was either at short notice or at long notice.

If she was at long notice, *i.e.* over two-and-a-half hours' notice (but never more than four), then it was possible to go ashore.

If she was at short notice, there was no leave.

And that was that.

Ashore meant walks within a radius of three or four miles of the pier at Charlestown, or visits to Dunfermline by the Charlestown express. For the sum of " saxpence," at infrequent intervals, I used to drive the engine of the aforesaid express.

Dunfermline is chiefly notable for the fact that it was the capital of Scotland till Princes Street came into its own, and also for the fact that Andrew Carnegie was born in a small house on the hill.

Thanks to this latter fact, Dunfermline possesses a beautiful park, a public library, a Turkish bath, an Institute of Music, a Physical Training College for young women, and a great many other public benefits administered by the Carnegie Trust.

We all used this delightful park in the summer, its glorious gardens were a paradise.

In the winter there was only the local cinema-house. I was lucky, and received much kind hospitality at the house of Sir William and Lady Robertson.

Twice we managed to get up a game of mixed hockey with the young ladies of the Physical Training College. These sporting events were looked upon with the gravest displeasure by the directors of the College. Who could say what such goings on might lead to—" Aye ! it was verra injudeecious ! "

So, for the winter months ashore, we founded a club called " The Robbers' Retreat." Membership was limited to fifteen, and to approved gentlemen of any rank from the three light cruiser squadrons. The motto of the club was : " ABANDON RANK ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE."

The club premises consisted of a small cottage on the pier. We furnished it ourselves, and as the club had a water entrance, a careful observer could have detected mysterious boats slipping in after dark and discharging strange bundles of service gear at the club doors.

I myself found difficulty in walking past two admirals whilst I tried to look as if I were in the habit of strolling about with two long condenser tubes instead of walking-sticks. These were our curtain-rods.

Two small boys dressed as sailors, kept the place clean and waited on us during tea. Tea, milk, and

butter were provided by the club. The rest had to be brought by the members.

It was a popular institution, and it was not uncommon to see post-captains and even higher ranks sitting on an upturned biscuit-box enjoying the club's hospitality.

At rare intervals an occasional hardy soul would go to Edinburgh. I never really enjoyed myself on those afternoons, and it was with an uneasy feeling that I visited the North British Hotel once an hour to see if I had been recalled.

The people from the battle-cruisers spent every afternoon in Edinburgh, but for light-cruiser folk it was rather too far away from the ships, for we had to get out of harbour before the big ships in the event of a panic taking place.

As far as the sailors were concerned their life ashore was simple. They landed at 1.30 and marched up to Broom Hall, lent by Lord Elgin. In the fields of the Park they played football at all seasons of the year. At 3 p.m. they marched down to the village green of Charlestown, where each man was allowed to buy one bottle of beer. The ladies of the village used to lend them glasses.

Through this little ceremony romance stepped in, and two years after our first arrival there was a wedding.

The bridegroom would have had to have averaged about a quarter of an hour's courtship once or twice a week for a year, for, strictly speaking, the men were not supposed to leave the party, but he confided in me one day and we had an unofficial conference of landing-party officers at which certain arrangements were made. He used to disappear at two o'clock and slip in again amongst the party on the village green.

These were our pursuits when the ship was at long notice.

When we were at short notice the two main amusements were medicine-ball and deck-hockey. Our decks were rather small for these games, but " they make you sweat " and thus fulfilled the first demand of the young Anglo-Saxon.

In the evenings when we were at short notice we sometimes used to play with fate and organize charades or a ward-room sing-song. Every time the ward-room door opened there was a delicious moment of uncertainty as to whether it was the steaming signal. Then if it was not an order to slip at 10.30 p.m. the whole mess experienced to the full the real joys of being in harbour. If it was blowing so much the better.

We prided ourselves on our cheery evenings, and large contingents of the " Brummagems " and the " Notts " used to come over.

The *Birmingham* had a very talented concert party, which gave frequent performances. We organized a similar party and gave concerts once a fortnight, when " the exigencies of the service permitted."

Every day in harbour we exercised control drill, and twice a week general quarters.

Training the newly joined drafts, and teaching cinematograph actors, newspaper reporters, coal-miners, professional musicians, etc., to be sailors, took up much of the time.

Then we had " Our Band."

We were the first light cruiser in the Grand Fleet to start an amateur band, for we laid its foundations in November 1914. For further account of " Our Band's " strange adventures, I refer you to a little book called *Strange Tales from the Fleet.*

My own personal amusement during the war has been the study of music, about which art I was in utter ignorance in 1914. I decided, as a preliminary, to teach myself the piano. Enough success has rewarded me to convince me that the method of teaching the

piano practised by governesses, and teachers in and out of schools, is quite wrong in these cases where the pupil has no intention of doing more than play to please his friends.

My mess-mates naturally suffered terribly. I cannot give them a higher testimonial to their good-nature than by saying that they allowed me to practise for an hour and a half daily when the ship was in harbour.

The extent of my knowledge was contained in the sentence "Middle C is opposite the keyhole." Even I found my efforts at Rachmaninov's Prelude in C minor terrible. To my mess-mates it must have been one of their saddest experiences of the war.

I shall always look back on the mess-life in H.M.S. *Southampton* with the greatest affection.

There were usually about fourteen or seventeen of us, and we were exceptionally lucky in that we all got on very well together, and under these circumstances the mess of a small ship can be one of the happiest of places. If people don't get on well together, a small mess is appalling, it is so impossible to get away from one's *bête noire*.

There was one pastime I forgot to mention, which was very fashionable for several months. We were asked to make munitions for the Army, when we had a spare hour or so.

Our contributions consisted of rope grommets for the protection of the copper driving-bands of shells, whilst the latter were lying in dumps in France. A perfect fever for grommet-making set in throughout the ship. This disease was carefully fostered by the publication of what other ships were doing.

Night after night everyone rushed to the smoking-room, before and after dinner, and sat down to make grommets as hard as he could. If one worked for four hours incessantly it was possible to produce a hundred. Anyone who could not boast of a daily out-

put of twenty was considered a distinct worm, and a blot on the escutcheon of the mess honour.

Sir David himself was reported to be making not less than twenty-five a day.

The Minister of Munitions wrote a complimentary letter to the Battle-cruiser Force.

The infection spread, and ships clamoured for more ambitious tasks. Canvas slings for shells were wanted; at once each ship was issued with a Singer treadle sewing-machine. This was operated at a furious speed by relays of enthusiasts.

The engineers despising "women's work" concentrated on gauges for fuses and the base-plates of small shells.

In the course of time enthusiasm fell somewhat, then England turned her "munition corner," and the Fleet contribution was stopped.

Following the Army example, very little was wasted in the Fleet. Once a week tugs came round and collected waste-paper, bottles, and fat. The results of these collections were all collated, and one would note with pride that H.M.S. *Southampton* headed the fat list for the current quarter.

In such manner did the peaceful river of life glide on to the waterfall of Jutland.

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

THERE is no doubt that this action at which the most powerful fleets that have ever sailed the seas met in battle, will provide material for discussion for many years.

Trafalgar has been discussed and studied for over a hundred years, and it seems likely that the problems of Jutland will displace the problems of Trafalgar in the minds of the students of naval war. Such being the case, I feel that anything written about Jutland should be written, if it is meant to be a serious contribution to naval literature, with a due sense of responsibility.

In the battle of Jutland, I was by the chance of war placed in certain positions, at certain times, in such manner that in looking back on the action, I do not believe that a single observer could have seen more, except from an aeroplane. Most of the time I was engaged in taking notes, and it is of what I saw that I proposed to write.

It may thus be accepted that, unless otherwise stated, the incidents described are facts for which I am prepared to vouch to the extent of my belief in my own eyesight.

On the afternoon of the 30th May, 1916, we were lying at Rosyth, and I was walking up and down the quarter-deck on watch when a string of flags rose from the *Lion's* signal bridge.

I recognized it to be a steaming signal, and it turned out to be—

"Flag: *Lion* to Battle-cruiser Force and Fifth

Battle Squadron. Raise steam and report when ready to proceed."

We at once began to get the ship ready for sea. Our sub-lieutenant, one H. B—— by name, was in the hospital ship close at hand, where he had been sent to, have his tonsils cut out. I had a curious feeling that we were going to have a "show," and quite without authority I sent him this note in our steamboat.

"DEAR H. B——,—I believe we are going out on a stunt, the steamboat is going to be hoisted, but if you want to come and can get away from the hospital ship, nip into her and come over."

The Commodore had just come back from the shore, and I told him what I had done, and though he did not exactly disapprove, I saw that he thought it rather unnecessary.

When H. B—— arrived straight from bed—I believe he practically broke out of the hospital ship—our Fleet Surgeon was scandalized, and promptly ordered him to bed. I remember that I felt rather foolish when I went down to see him, and could only reply in answer to his inquiries as to how long the Huns had been out, that as far as I knew they were not out at all.

We sailed at 9 p.m.

The three light cruiser squadrons were up to strength, but the Third Battle-cruiser Squadron was at Scapa doing gunnery exercises; they were commanded by Admiral Hood.

We were reinforced by the Fifth Battle Squadron, consisting of the *Malaya*, *Warspite*, *Barham*, and *Valiant*, under the command of Rear-Admiral Evan Thomas. The only other absentee was the *Australia*, away refitting.

We did not know why we were going out, and to this moment I have never been able to find out officially what we hoped to do, but the *on dit* was and still is,

that we were to support an air raid or perhaps a mine-laying expedition in the Bight. At all events our immediate destination was a rendezvous near the Horns Reef.

The Germans stated after the action that their forces were engaged on an enterprise to the North.

I strongly suspect that this enterprise consisted in getting the British Battle-cruiser Force between their battle-cruisers and battle-fleet, for they knew very well that the region of the Horns Reef was a favourite spot of ours when we were making a reconnaissance towards the German coast.

Everything points to the fact that for once they expected us there and laid their plans accordingly ; or else they were out to do a raid on North-sea trade.

It will be seen how very nearly this former state of affairs materialized, though it is impossible to assert definitely whether it was by accident or design. We did not appear to be expecting Huns, as we cruised along to the eastward at no great speed ; I think we were making good either 17 or 19 knots. At noon we received orders to have full speed ready at half an hour's notice, but as we were getting well over towards the Danish coast, this order partook of the nature of precautionary routine. The order of the Fleet was the usual cruising formation by day. Course approximately east.

The battle-cruisers were in two lines and close to them was the cruiser *Champion* and the attached destroyers. The seaplane-carrier *Engardine* was also in company. Five miles ahead of the *Lion*, the light-cruiser screen was spread on a line of bearing roughly north and south.

The squadrons were in groups of two ships—5 miles apart, and the order from north to south was First Light Cruiser Squadron under Commodore Sinclair, with his broad pennant in the *Galatea* ; Third Light

Cruiser Squadron under Rear-Admiral Trevelyan Napier, with his flag in the *Chatham* ; and Second Light Cruiser Squadron, consisting of *Southampton* flying the broad pennant of our Commodore, the *Birmingham* (Captain Duff), the *Dublin* (Captain Scott), the *Nottingham* (Captain Miller).

Those of us who were off watch were dozing in the smoking-room after lunch, when the secretary put his head in, and said, "*Galatea* at the northern end of the line has sighted and is chasing two hostile cruisers."

This was at 2.23 and woke us all up with a jump.

I quickly went to my cabin and made certain preparations which I always did when there was a chance of something happening. These preparations consisted in putting on as many clothes as possible, collecting my camera, notebook and pencils, chocolate, and other aids to war in comfort in case of a prolonged stay at action stations.

At 2.56 the *Galatea* reported that she had sighted the German battle-cruisers, and we went to action stations, and the ship began to throb as we worked up to full speed.

At about 3 p.m. we all turned to the N.E. to close the reported position of the enemy, who had turned from their original course of north to south.

As the northern edge of our screen only just made contact with the western edge of their screen it will be seen how nearly we missed them.

The turn towards the north-east had brought us (Second Light Cruiser Squadron) on the starboard quarter of the *Lion* and distant but 2 miles from her.

At 3.55 the *Lion* turned to south-east and the battle-cruisers assumed line of battle. This placed us before her starboard beam, and without orders we pressed at our utmost speed, followed by our three light cruisers to a position ahead of the *Lion*.

The First and Third Light Cruiser Squadrons,

without signal, took station astern of the battle cruisers.

It was in these and subsequent movements without signals that the value was exemplified of all the exercises we light cruisers had done with the *Lion*. The light-cruiser commanders knew exactly what Sir David expected of them, and they did it.

As the battle-cruisers turned into line, I caught a faint distant glimpse of the silvery hulls of the German battle-cruisers, though owing to the great range only parts of their upper works were visible for short intervals. They appeared to be steering a slightly converging course.

As the battle-cruisers came into line, with the *Champion*, her destroyers, and ourselves ahead of them, both our own battle-cruisers and the Germans opened fire practically simultaneously.

Our line consisted of the *Lion*, *Princess Royal*, *Queen Mary*, *Tiger*, *New Zealand*, and *Indefatigable*, in the order named.

The Germans were almost entirely merged into a long, smoky cloud on the eastern horizon, the sort of cloud that presages a thunderstorm, and from this gloomy retreat a series of red flashes darting out in our direction indicated the presence of five German battle-cruisers.

It was at once evident that though the Germans were but indifferently visible to us, we on the other hand were silhouetted against a bright and clear western horizon, as far as the enemy were concerned.

The German shooting, as has been the case throughout the war, was initially of an excellent quality. Our battle-cruisers about a mile away just on our port quarter were moving along in a forest of tremendous splashes. Their guns trained over on the port beam were firing regular salvos.

At 4.15 (approx.) I was watching our line from my

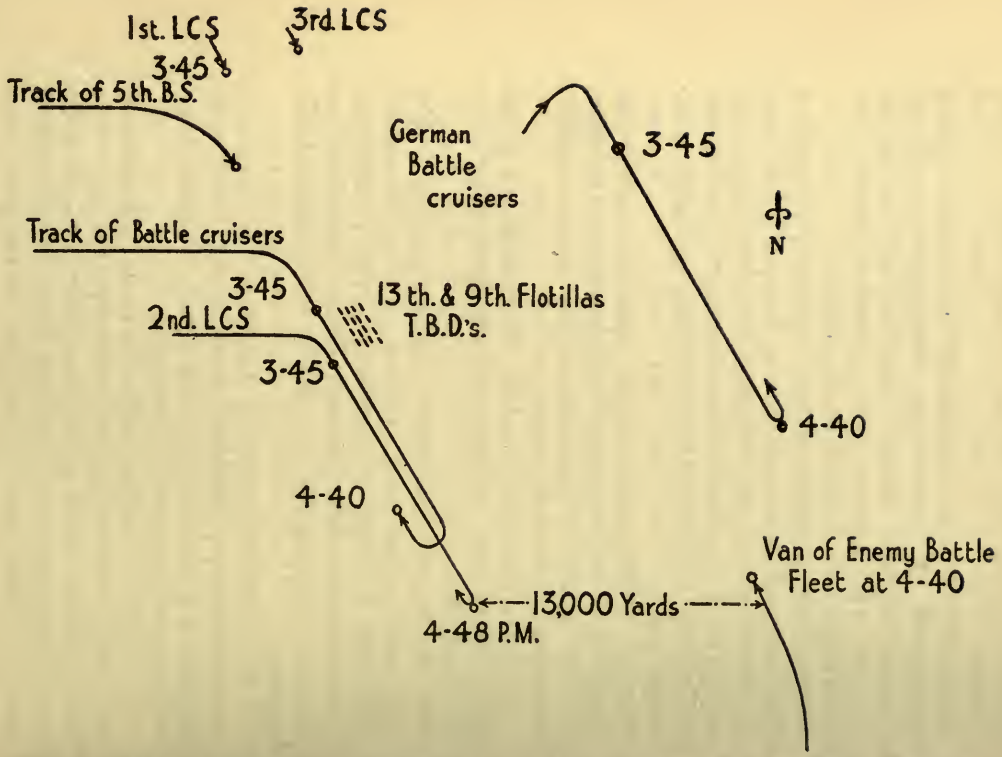

FIG. 3.—General situation from opening fire of *Lion* to arrival of German Battle Fleet, and general turn to the northward.

position in the after-control, when without any warning an immense column of grey smoke with a fiery base and a flaming top stood up on the sea, where the *Indefatigable* should have been. It hung there for I don't know how many seconds, and then a hole appeared in this pillar of smoke, through which I caught a glimpse of the forepart of the *Indefatigable* lying on its side ; then there was a streak of flame and a fresh outpouring of smoke.

I turned with a sinking heart and watched the remaining five battle-cruisers.

I can—nor could I next day—remember no noise. We were not, of course, firing ourselves, and it seemed to me that I was being carried along in a kind of dream.

I wondered what would happen next ; each time the splashes rose on either side of the line of great ships it was like a blow to the body. We could not see from our low deck where the 13·5-inch shells were falling on that sinister eastern horizon from which the maddening jets of flame darted in and out.

At 4.23, in the flicker of an eyelid, the beautiful *Queen Mary* was no more. A huge stem of grey smoke shot up to perhaps a thousand feet, swaying slightly at the base. The top of this stem of smoke expanded and rolled downwards. Flames rose and fell, in the stalk of this monstrous mushroom. The bows of a ship, a bridge, a mast, slid out of the smoke—perhaps after all the *Queen Mary* was still there.

No ! it was the next astern—the *Tiger*.

Incredible as it may sound, the *Tiger* passed right over the spot on which the *Queen Mary* had been destroyed, and felt nothing. The time interval between her passage over the grave of the *Queen Mary* and the destruction of the latter ship would be about 40–60 seconds.

Just before the *Tiger* appeared, I saw some piece of

debris go whirling up a full 1,000 feet above the top of the smoke—it might have been the armour plates from the top of a turret. I remember that I found it impossible to realize that I had just seen 2,000 men, and many personal friends, killed; it seemed more like a wonderful cinematograph picture.

What did worry me was that we were now reduced to four.

I remember saying to H. B——, who incidentally had appeared from his sick-bed in pyjamas and a dressing-gown, though he subsequently put on some more clothes, "At this rate, by 5 p.m. we shall have no battle-cruisers."

He nodded solemnly—he was so hoarse he could only whisper.

"But," I added, "by the laws of chance one of them will blow up next, you see."

We were by now right ahead of the *Lion*, and as I watched her, I saw a tremendous flash amidships, as she was hit by a shell or shells. I saw the whole ship stagger; for what seemed eternity I held my breath, half expecting her to blow up, but she held on and showed no signs of outward injury.

Actually her midship turret, manned by the marines, was completely put out of action, and had it not been for the heroism of the major of marines the ship might have gone. He lost his life and gained the V.C.

Soon after the *Lion* received this blow the Thirteenth Flotilla was ordered to make an attack on the German line.

It was extremely difficult to see the destroyers after they started, but I could vaguely see that they were coming under heavy fire as they got about half-way across.

It was during this attack that *Nestor* and *Nomad* were lost and Commander Bingham gained his V.C.

At 4.38 a very startling development took place.

We suddenly saw and reported light cruisers followed by the High Seas Fleet bearing south-east. Sir David Beatty at once signalled to the Battle-cruiser Force to alter course 16 points (180°). This manœuvre was executed by the battle-cruisers in succession.

The German battle-cruisers were doing the same thing at the same moment.

We disobeyed the signal, or rather delayed obeying it for two reasons—

Firstly, we wished to get close enough to the High Seas Fleet to examine them and report accurately on their composition and disposition.

Secondly, we had hopes of delivering a torpedo attack on the long crescent-shaped line of heavy ships which were stretched round on our port bow.

It was a strain steaming at 25 knots straight for this formidable line of battleships, with our own friends going fast away from us in the opposite direction.

As we got closer I counted sixteen or seventeen battleships with the four *König* class in the van and the six older pre-Dreadnoughts in the rear.

Seconds became minutes and still they did not open fire, though every second I expected to see a sheet of flame ripple down their sides and a hail of shell fall around us. I can only account for this strange inactivity on their part by the theory that as they only saw us end on, and we were steering on opposite courses to the remaining British ships, they assumed we were a German light cruiser squadron that had been running away from the British battle-cruisers.

Only in this manner can I account for the strange fact that they allowed us to get to within 13,000 yards of their line, and never fired a shot at us.

This theory is supported by the fact that when at 4.45 the calm voice of Petty Officer Barnes on the foremost rangefinder intoned, " Range one, three, five, double ho ! Range, one, three, two, double ho ! "

the Commodore saw that we could not get into a position for a torpedo attack, and as we should be lucky if we got out of the place we were then in, he gave the order for the turning signal, which had been flying for five minutes, to be hauled down.

Over went the helms, and the four ships slewed round, bringing our sterns to the enemy. As we turned the fun began, and half a dozen German battleships opened a deliberate fire on the squadron.

My action station was aft, but I could hear everything that passed on the fore-bridge, as I was in direct communication by voice-pipe. I heard the imperturbable Petty Officer Barnes continuing his range taking—"Range one, three, two, double ho! Range one, double three, double ho!"

Crash! Bang! Whizzzz! and a salvo crumped down around us, the fragments whistling and sobbing overhead. Suddenly I heard Petty Officer Barnes say, with evident satisfaction, "Range hobscured!"

I took a general look round, and the situation was as follows (see Figs. 3 and 4).

About three or four miles north of us our battle-cruisers were steaming along, making a good deal of smoke and firing steadily at what I imagined to be the German battle-cruisers' distant hulls on our starboard bow.

Then came a gap of two miles between the battle-cruisers and the Fifth Battle Squadron.

These latter four ships had passed the battle-cruisers on opposite courses when Sir David Beatty turned north, and as soon as they had passed him, Rear-Admiral Evan Thomas turned his squadron to north-by-west, and followed up the battle-cruisers.

It will be remembered that whilst this was going on we (Second Light Cruiser Squadron) had still been going south. When we turned to north, we found ourselves about a mile behind the last ship of the Fifth

Battle Squadron. Our squadron was not in line, but scattered as shown in Fig 5.

As flagship we had the post of honour nearest to the enemy. We maintained this position for one hour, during which time we were under persistent shell-fire from the rear six ships of the German line.

But we had them under observation, and we were able to transmit news of great importance to Sir John Jellicoe, whom we knew to be hurrying down from the north to our support.

We had experienced one shock to the system, on sighting the German Fleet right ahead, and we all anticipated that the Huns would shortly enjoy the same sensation

The Fifth Battle Squadron just ahead of us were a brave sight. They were receiving the concentrated fire of some twelve German heavy ships, but it did not seem to be worrying them, and though I saw several shells hit the *Warspite* just ahead of us, the German shooting at these ships did not impress me very favourably. Our own position was not pleasant.

The half-dozen older battleships at the tail of the German line were out of range to fire at the Fifth Battle-cruiser, but though we had gradually drawn out to 15,000–16,000 yards, we were inside their range, and they began to do a sort of target practice in slow time on our squadron.

I was in the after-control with half a dozen men, H. B——, and the clerk. We crouched down behind the tenth-of-an-inch plating and ate bully beef, but it didn't seem to go down very easily. It seemed rather a waste of time to eat beef, for surely in the next ten minutes one of those 11-inch shells would get us, they couldn't go on falling just short and just over indefinitely, and, well, if one did hit us—light cruisers were not designed to digest 11-inch high explosives in their stomachs.

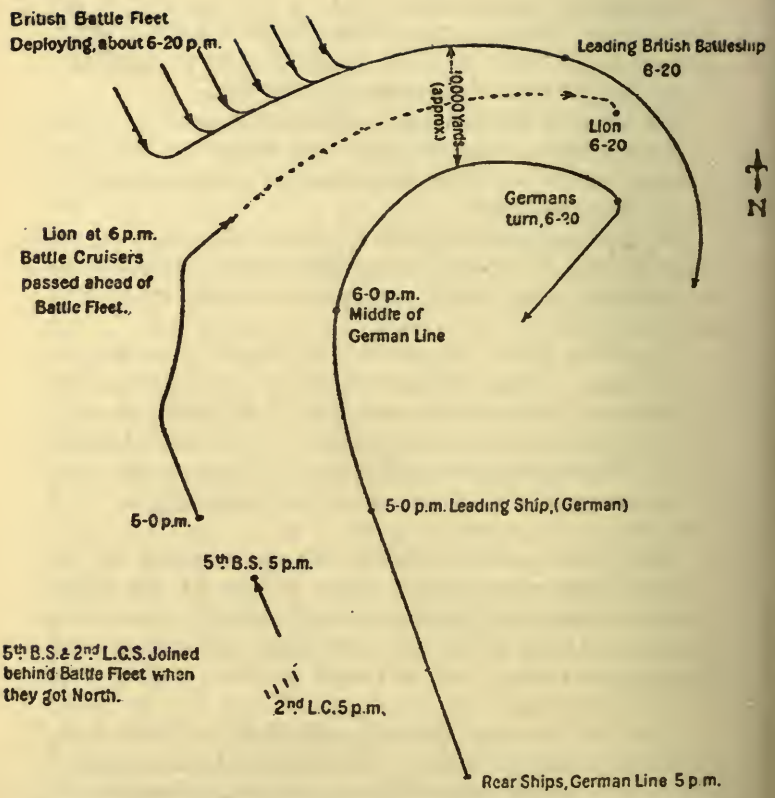

FIG. 4.—Approximate situation whilst meeting Battle Fleet and during deployment; courses of Battle Cruisers and Battle Fleet and times only approximately accurate, as we were too far south to see very well.

The sub, who was practically speechless owing to his bad throat, and I agreed that we would not look at the Hun line. But we could never resist having a peep about once a minute, and somehow we always seemed to look just as two or three of the great brutes flickered flames from their guns at us, and we knew that another salvo was on its way across.

We knew the time of flight was twenty-three seconds, and the sub had a wrist-watch with a prominent second-hand—we almost agreed to throw it overboard after three-quarters of an hour's shelling; at the twenty-third second the sub would make a grimace, and as if in reply a series of splitting reports and lugubrious moans announced that the salvo had arrived. Frequently they were so close that torrents of spray from the splashes splattered down on the boat-deck. Each shell left a muddy pool in the water, and appeared to burst on impact.

We all compared notes afterwards and decided that during this hour about fifty to sixty shells fell within 100 yards of the ship, and many more slightly farther off.

I attribute our escape, as far as we were able to contribute towards it, to the very clever manner in which "I——," our navigator, zig-zagged the ship according to where he estimated the next salvo would fall. It was possible to forecast this to a certain extent, as it was obvious that the Huns were working what is technically known as "a ladder."

That is to say, the guns are fired with an increase of range to each salvo until "the target is crossed," and then the range is decreased for each salvo until the splashes are short of the target once again. It is thus a creeping barrage which moves up and down across the target.

The best way to avoid it, is to sheer in towards the enemy when the groups of tall splashes are coming

towards the ship, and as soon as they have crossed over and begin once more to come towards the ship, then reverse the helm and sheer away from the enemy.

The fascination of watching these deadly and graceful splashes rising mysteriously from the smooth sea was enormous. To know that the next place where they would rise was being calculated by some Hun perched up in one of those distant masts, and that he was watching these " leetle cruiser ships " through a pair of Zeiss binoculars—and I was watching his ship through a similar pair of Zeiss—was really very interesting. It would have been very interesting indeed if I could have been calculating the position of the splashes round his ship ; but he was 16,000 yards away, and our gun-sights stopped at 14,500, so we just had to sit and hope we'd see the Grand Fleet soon. At 6.17 p.m. the news that the Grand Fleet had been sighted right ahead spread round the ship like wild-fire.

Forgotten was the steady shelling—now we'd give them hell. The battle drew on to its dramatic climax when as faintly ahead in the smoke and haze the great line of Grand Fleet battleships became visible curling across to the eastward (Fig. 4).

They had just deployed.

Then two armoured cruisers appeared from rightahead between ourselves and the German line. They were steering about south-west, and were moving in an appalling concentration of fire from the German battleships.

Whom could they be ?

As I watched, the leading ship glowed red all over and seemed to burst in every direction. Our men cheered frantically thinking it was a Hun. Alas ! I had caught a brief glimpse of a white ensign high above the smoke and flame, it was the *Defence* flying the flag of the gallant Sir Robert Arbuthnot.

The ship astern was the *Warrior*, and it was evident that she was hard hit.

The Huns redoubled their efforts upon her, when a most extraordinary incident amazed both sides. The *Warspite*, just ahead of us, altered course to starboard and proceeded straight for the centre of the Hun line (Fig. 5). For some moments she was unfired at, then as she continued to go straight for the Germans the tornado of fire lifted from the *Warrior*, hovered as it seemed in space, and fell with a crash about the *Warspite*.

The *Warrior*, burning in several places, battered and wrecked, with steam escaping from many broken pipes, dragged slowly out of the battle to the westward ; she passed about 400 yards under our stern.

Meanwhile with sinking hearts the sub and I watched the *Warspite* and wondered what her amazing career portended. I focused her in my reflex camera, but so certain did I feel that she would be destroyed that I could not bring myself to expose the plate. I should guess that she reached a position about 8,000 yards from the German line when to our relief she slowly turned round, and still lashing out viciously with all her 15-inch guns she rejoined the British lines. At our end of the line there was a distinct lull. In fact, the speed of the tail of the Fleet became so slow that our squadron turned 32 points (a complete circle) in order not to bunch up on the battleships. In the course of this manœuvre we very nearly had a collision with one of the Fifth Battle Squadron, the *Valiant* or *Malaya*.

It was now possible to try and take a general survey of the battle (Fig. 5).

It was evident that the day of days had dawned, though too near sunset to suit us. At last the Grand Fleet and High Seas Fleet were up against each other, and the fate of nations was being decided.

For a seemingly endless distance the line of Grand Fleet battleships stretched away to the east. To the south, the German line, partially obscured in mist, lay in the shape of a shallow convex arc.

The Grand Fleet were loosing off salvos with splendid rapidity.

The German shooting was simply ludicrously bad. Looking up our line, I sometimes saw a stray shell fall short of our battle fleet, and every now and then I saw a few fall over. Otherwise nothing anywhere near them.

I remember seeing the *Agincourt*, a few ships ahead of us, let off a 10-gun salvo—a truly Kolossal spectacle, as a Hun would say.

It was about now that I noticed that though the surface of the sea was quite calm, yet the ship was rolling quite appreciably. I then discovered that the whole surface of the sea was heaving up and down in a confused swell, which was simply due to the wash created by the two-hundred-odd ships which were moving about at high speeds.

Far ahead, rapid flashes and much smoke indicated that furious attacks and counter-attacks were taking place between the rival destroyer flotillas and their supporting light cruisers. The battle area of these desperate conflicts between gun platforms of ¼-inch steel, moving at the speed of an express train, was the space between the vans of the two Fleets.

We were too far off to see any details of this fighting ; but at 6.47 we reached the spot where it had taken place. The first thing we saw was a German three-funnel cruiser, the *Wiesbaden*. She was battered badly, as she had been lying inert between the two lines, and whenever a British battleship could not see her target she opened on the *Wiesbaden*.

We were simply longing to hit something, and this seemed our chance. Increasing speed to 20 knots we turned and led our squadron in to administer the *coup de grâce*.

Turning to bring our broadsides to bear at 6,000 yards, we directed a stream of 6-inch on the Hun, who replied

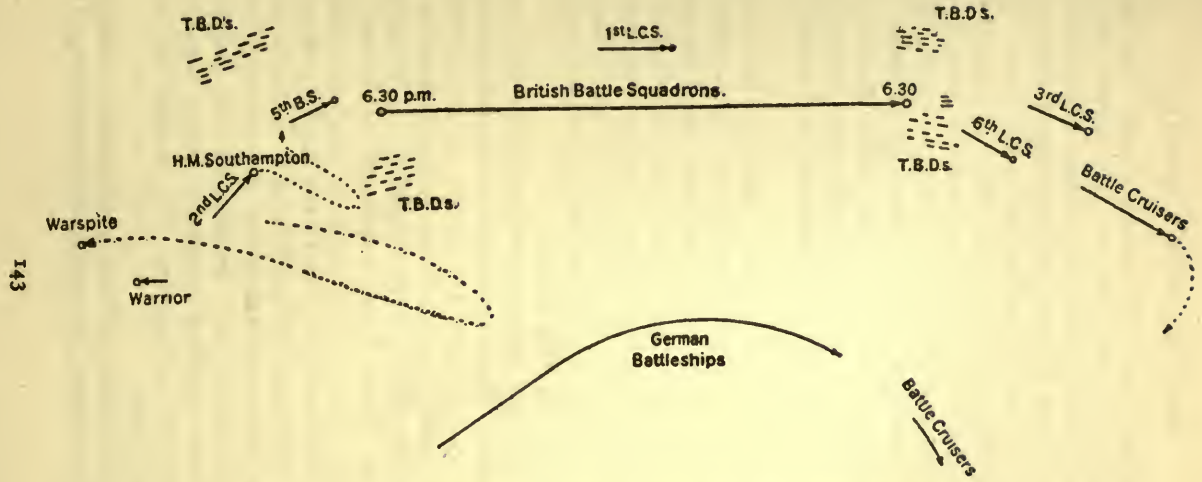

FIG. 5.—Approximate grouping of ships during period battle fleets were in action.

feebly with one gun. There is no doubt that the men who worked that gun had the right spirit in them.

Beyond the *Wiesbaden*, at a range of about 14,000 yards, our old friends the pre-dreadnoughts were toddling along at the stern of the German line. During our approach to the *Wiesbaden* they had preserved an ominous silence. It did not remain thus for long. The six of them opened a rapid fire on us, and we were at once obliged to open the range without delay.

We scuttled back to the tail of the British line as hard as we could, zig-zagging like snipe, with 11-inch crumping down ahead, on both sides, and astern of us. (See our track, Fig. 5.)

I counted a bunch of three about 40 yards on the starboard beam of the ship, and H. B——, who was hanging out over the other side of the after-control, reported a group of seven close to the ship on the port beam. At this period (7.5 p.m.) twilight was beginning and the visibility was partly spoiled by low-lying clouds of funnel and brown cordite smoke, which hung like a gloomy pall over the scene.

It was apparent from the curve of our line that we were gradually working round to the eastward of the Huns, and at 7.30 p.m. the Germans decided to make a supreme effort to get out of the nasty position they were being forced into, *viz.* the centre of a semicircle, of which the British Fleet was the circumference.

That they got out very cleverly must be admitted. A few destroyers crept out at the head of their line, and almost immediately afterwards a dense smoke-screen unfurled itself between us and the enemy. Before this screen had reached its full length the Germans were altering course 8 points together to starboard, and escaping from the deadly fire of the British battleships.

One of the minor incidents of battle now took place. A German destroyer, part of the débris of the destroyer

actions some twenty minutes earlier, was lying, incapable of movement, between the two Fleets. Unfortunately for her, she was in such a position that the smoke-screen rolled to the southward of her. She was alone for her sins in front of the British Fleet.

No battleship fired at her ; but we gave her a salvo at 6,000 yards as we came abreast of her. We hit, and a large explosion took place amidships. However, she still managed to float, and the *Faulkner* and some destroyers, who were hanging about near us, went over and finished her off. It rather annoyed us, as we intended to do some more target practice on her.

The Germans had disappeared somewhere to the south-west behind their smoke, and for a few minutes everything was strangely calm.

At 8.25 the *Birmingham* sighted a submarine, and I saw that the Grand Fleet had got into five columns for the night. Four columns were abreast of each other, and the fifth, composed of the *Valiant*, *Malaya*, and *Barham*, was astern of them. We were on the starboard beam of this latter column (see Fig. 6). The course of the Fleet was south, and the Germans were somewhere to the westward of us in the growing darkness.

At 8.50 p.m. we sighted four German destroyers approaching us on the starboard bow, apparently intending to deliver an attack on the Fifth Battle Squadron.

We opened fire at once, and hit the leading destroyer amidships. All four turned round and, pursued by our shells, disappeared behind a smoke-screen.

Curiously enough I met the captain of this damaged destroyer, at a later period in the war, under different circumstances. For he left the German destroyer service soon after Jutland, and entered submarines. In the fullness of time his boat was destroyed, and he was the only survivor. Under my care he journeyed to

London and a prison camp—but I am straying from Jutland.

This feeble little destroyer attack may be said to mark the conclusion of the day action as far as we were concerned. Directly afterwards we went to night defence stations, and nerve-strings were tightened up another turn.

I busied myself in getting the notes I had taken into shape, and testing communications to the guns. I have a curious little note on a crumpled signal pad. It is dated 8.50 p.m., and says—

"I see I've smoked five ounces of tobacco since half-past three."

CHAPTER XI

NIGHT ACTION[1]

At 9 p.m. heavy firing started and the south-eastern horizon was lit by flashes.

I subsequently discovered that this was the Third Light Cruiser Squadron and our battle-cruisers still worrying and harassing the head of the German line and forcing them farther and farther away from their bases and out into the North Sea.

H. B—— and I were fortunate enough to discover a slab of chocolate and some strong tea, which refreshed us greatly. We were drinking, about our tenth cup, when some dark shapes appeared on the starboard bow and in a couple of minutes resolved themselves into a flotilla of destroyers approaching on opposite courses and at a high speed. We held our fire, and when they were about 1,000 yards off recognized them as our own.

There had been no time to get the cumbersome challenge and recognition signal started. They flashed past us, and as the last one passed her after-gun fired a solitary 4-inch shell in our direction. It whistled harmlessly overhead.

I account for this rude behaviour by supposing that at this gun some gunlayer was dozing away, and happened to wake up as we were passing. Seeing the dim outlines of some light cruisers, he obeyed his first instinct and pressed the trigger. We quietly steamed on astern of the Fleet ; there was nothing to do except

[1] See Fig. 6.

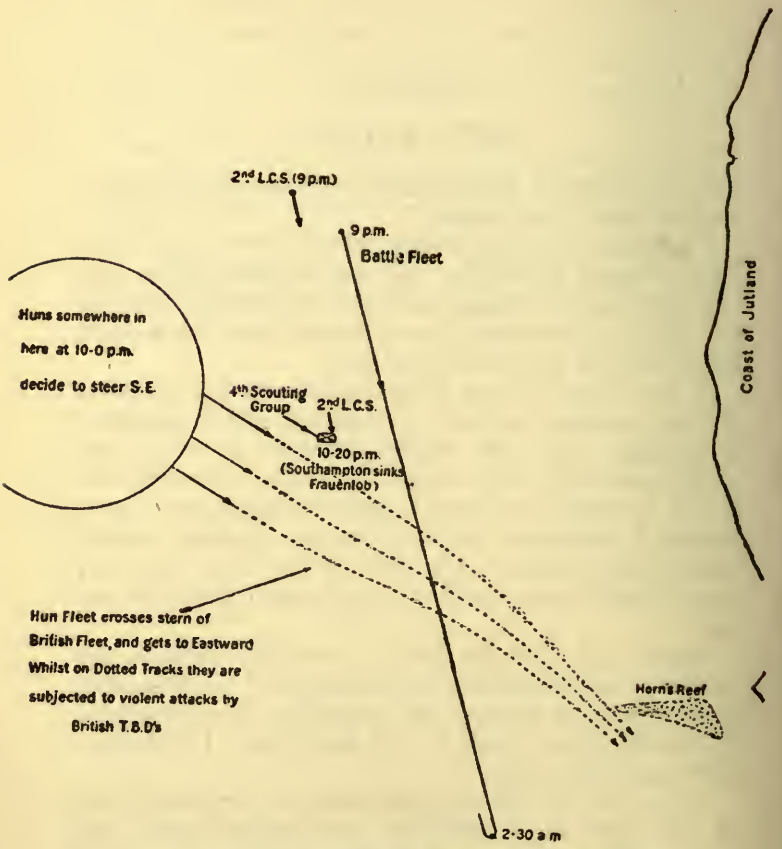

FIG. 6.—Hun Fleet crosses stern of British Fleet.

stare out to starboard and imagine vague shapes. It was very easy to imagine ships on the night of the 31st May, 1916.

At about 10 p.m. searchlights criss-crossed on the far western horizon ; they rose and fell, turned and twisted, and finally fixed their implacable and relentless light on a group of destroyers.

Fascinated, we watched the destroyers rushing up the bright paths of the lights. The white splashes gleamed all round them, and then a great red lurid stain started in one of the attacking craft and spread to a vast explosion of fierce white flame, beside which the cruel searchlights seemed pale. Instantly the searchlights were extinguished, the attack was over, and once more all was dark.

We had probably witnessed one of the many and glorious attacks in which the British destroyer flotillas threw themselves without stint upon the German Fleet throughout this strange night.

The sudden disappearing of all signs of this attack ever having been made, left a curious feeling of emptiness in the atmosphere.

I groped my way on to the bridge and had a chat with B——, the gunnery lieutenant, as a result of which he arranged that in the event of night action he would control the guns from the forebridge and I would be in general charge aft.

A signalman, and R. I. the navigator suddenly whispered, " Five ships on the beam."

The Commodore looked at them through night glasses, and I heard a whispered discussion going on as to whether they were the enemy or the Third Light Cruiser Squadron.

From their faint silhouettes it was impossible to discover more than the fact that they were light cruisers. I decided to go aft as quickly as possible. On the way aft I looked in at the after-control, where

H. B—— said to me, "There are five Huns on the beam. What on earth is going on?"

They were evidently in as much doubt as we, for as I got down into the waist by the mainmast, a very great many things happened in a very short time.

We began to challenge; the Germans switched on coloured lights at their fore yardarms.

A second later a solitary gun crashed forth from the *Dublin*, who was next astern of us. Simultaneously I saw the shell hit a ship just above the water-line and about 800 yards away.

As I caught a nightmare-like glimpse of her interior which has remained photographed on my mind to this day, I said to myself: "My G——, they are alongside us."

At that moment the Germans switched on their searchlights, and we switched on ours. Before I was blinded by the lights in my eyes I caught sight of a line of light grey ships. Then the gun behind which I was standing answered my shout of "Fire!"

The action lasted 3½ minutes. The four leading German ships concentrated their lights and guns on the *Southampton*; the fifth and perhaps the fourth as well fired at the *Dublin*.

The *Nottingham* and *Birmingham*, third and fourth in our line, with great wisdom did not switch on their lights and were not fired at.

In those 3½ minutes we had 89 casualties, and 75 per cent. of the personnel on the upper deck were killed or wounded.

It is impossible to give a connected account of what happened. Many strange and unpleasant things happen when men find themselves in hell on earth. Men—strong men—go mad and jump overboard. Wounded men are driven to the oblivion of death in the sea by the agony of their injuries. It is not good to look too

closely into these things which are the realities, the plain facts of battle.

The range was amazingly close—no two groups of such ships have ever fought so close in the history of this war. There could be no missing. A gun was fired and a hit obtained—the gun was loaded, it flamed, it roared, it leapt to the rear, it slid to the front—there was another hit.

But to load guns, there must be men, flesh and blood must lift the shells and cordite and open and close the hungry breeches. But flesh and blood cannot stand high explosives, and there was a great deal of H.E. bursting all along H.M.S. *Southampton's* upper deck from her after-screen to the forebridge.

The range was so close, the German shots went high, just high enough to burst on the upper deck and around the after superstructure and bridge. And in a light cruiser *that's* where all the flesh and blood has to stand.

So in a very few seconds my guns stopped firing, all through lack of flesh and blood—it was a great pity. In fact, the sergeant-major, with a burnt face, and myself seemed to be the only bits of flesh and blood left standing.

Where on earth were the others ?

Why had the men on each side of me fallen down in such funny heaps ? It was curious, very curious ; as a matter of fact, daylight revealed that it wasn't so very remarkable. The really remarkable thing was that the sergeant-major, with his burnt face, and myself were still standing about and representing flesh and blood.

One shell had burst on the side just below the gun, and the fragments had whipped over the top of the low bulwark and mowed the men down as standing corn falls before the reaper.

Another shell had burst on the searchlight just above us, and hurled the remains of this expensive instrument

many feet. Three men who looked after it and had guided its beam on to the enemy died instantaneously.

The fragments from this shell descended upon " the waist " like hail, and scoured out the insides of the gun-shields of the two 6-inch, manned by marines, one gun each side. And then I seemed to be standing in a fire. The flash of some exploding shell had ignited half a dozen rounds of cordite.

A shell exploding in the half-deck had severed the connexion to the upper deck fire main. I put my head down a hatch and shouted for a good hose. The wine steward came up on deck with one, someone turned on the water down below, and the fire was quickly out.

The wine steward forgot his servitude, he rose to the heights of an officer, he was my right-hand man. He spoke words of fierce exhortation to the wounded; those who could get up did so.

Then it became lighter than the day.

I looked forward.

Two pillars of white flame rose splendidly aloft. One roared up the foremast, the other reached above the tops of the second and third funnels.

This then was the end ! The heat warmed the cheek. It was bad luck, just after we had got the small fire aft extinguished. But there could be no doubt; the central ammunition hoist was between those two funnels.

What was it going to feel like to blow up ?

Let me see, how had the *Queen Mary* looked ?

Of course we were a smaller ship, perhaps we would blow up in a gentler manner.

Might as well take one's greatcoat off, just in case one fetched up in the water. I took it off.

What ought one to do?

Could not be more than a few seconds now. What could one do in a few seconds ?

Could not fire a gun—no men.

Fascinating sight, those two pillars of white flame.

By Heaven, the centre one had turned red, it wavered, it decreased in height, it grew again ; but the spell was broken and I rushed to the ladder which led from the waist to the boat deck in order to get up to the fire and assist.

I ran a few steps and tripped up, over a heap of bodies. I got up, tried not to tread on soft things, and arrived on the boat deck.

The firing had ceased, the Commander and H. B—— were at the central fire. It suddenly went out, so did the foremost one.

Everything was pitch black.

Where were the Germans ?

Nothing but groans from dark corners.

Though I did not know it at the time, the Germans had fled.

They fled because A——, our torpedo lieutenant, had fired a 21-inch torpedo. At 41 knots the torpedo had shot across and, striking the *Frauenlob*, had blown her in half. Out of 300 Huns in her 7 survived.

I have their account of the action before me.

They say, " The leading ship of the British line burst into flames and blew up . . . then we were torpedoed." They were wrong—their friends sheered off just a few seconds too soon.

I will admit that they probably think they saw us blown up.

A friend of mine, McG——, who was five miles away in one of the Fifth Battle Squadron, read a signal on the bridge by the light of our fires.

In the ships of our squadron astern they thought we had gone, and took shelter from the bits they expected to come down.

It was a near thing.

It is after the firing is over that the real horror of a night action begins. We did not know where the Germans were, our guns' crews were practically non-

existent, the voice-pipes and telephones to the guns were in shreds. We simply had to have time to reorganize, so we didn't dare show a light.

Yet the upper deck was strewn with dead and wounded. One stumbled on them as one walked. By the aid of discreetly struck matches and shaded torches the upper deck was searched.

I heard a groan and came upon a poor boy named Mellish. He could only say, "My leg—my arm." Another man and myself got him down one of the two steep hatches that led to the lower deck. His injuries were sickening, but with a smile he said: "It's no good worrying about me, sir!" and then he died. I don't think he felt any pain.

I went up to the bridge to see B—— about reorganizing the men left for guns' crews and rigging up temporary communications. As I passed the chart house a well-known voice called me in. It was the Commodore.

He told me to go down to the fleet surgeon and find out what our casualties were. And once more I went below.

I went down the foremost hatch and along the central passage—nicknamed the twopenny tube—which in this class of ship runs down the centre of the ship above the boiler and engine-rooms. There was about six inches of water in this passage, which had slopped in from some holes almost exactly on the water-lines.

The operating room—at the after end of this passage—was the stokers' bathroom.

Imagine a small room which a shore-goer might hesitate to use as a dark room in his house, it might get so stuffy. The size of this room was about 8 feet high, 12 feet broad and 12 feet long. The centre of the room was occupied by a light portable operating table. A row of wash basins ran down one side, and the steel walls streamed with sweat.

Four bright electric lights were fixed to the roof,

but with its faults the stokers' bathroom had some advantages. It had a tiled floor and a drain in the corner.

Stepping carefully between rows of shapes who were lying in lines down each side of the passage-way, I put my head inside the narrow doorway.

Bare-armed the fleet surgeon and C——, the young doctor, were working with desperate but methodical haste. They were just taking a man's leg off above the knee, so I did not interrupt. When they had finished and the patient had been carried out, I gave the P.M.O. the Commodore's message, whilst his assistants went outside to get another man.

"About 40 killed and 40 or 50 wounded," he said.

I thanked him, and went back to the bridge.

He was hard at it for eleven hours: truly the doctor is one of the finest products of modern civilization.

I told the Commodore what I had learned. He made a remark. I realized we were only one light cruiser in a very big fleet.

I went aft again and down to the ward-room. The mess presented an extraordinary appearance. As it was the largest room in the ship, we placed all the seriously wounded cases in it. The long table was covered with men, all lying very still and silently white.

The young doctor was in charge, and as I came in he signalled to the sick-berth steward to remove one man over whom he had been bending. Four stokers, still grimy from the stoke-hole, lifted the body and carried it out.

Two men were on top of the sideboard, others were in arm-chairs.

A hole in the side admitted water to the ward-room, which sploshed about as the ship gently rolled. In this ankle-deep flood, bloodstained bandages and countless pieces of the small débris of war floated to and fro.

All the wounded who could speak were very cheerful and only wanted one thing—cigarettes. The most dreadful cases were the "burns"—but this subject cannot be written about.

An hour's work on deck connected with the reorganization of the guns' crews, the impressment of stokers off watch for this duty, and the testing of communications followed. Then H. B—— and myself decided we'd sit down somewhere. We went up to the fore-bridge, and rolled ourselves up in the canvas cover of a compass.

Horrors! it was wet. We hastily shifted to a less gruesome bed.

We had just lain down when fresh gun-firing broke out right astern, and every one was on the *qui vive* with a jump. It died down—I wasn't sorry, we were not as ready for action as we could have wished.

We increased speed to 20 knots, and as dawn slowly grew the ghostly shapes of some battleships loomed out of the mist. I heard a pessimist on the upper bridge hazard the opinion that we were about to take station astern of the German Battle Fleet, but as the light grew brighter we saw that we had rejoined the British Fleet.

Complete daylight enabled us to survey the damage.

The funnels were riddled through with hundreds of small holes, and the decks were slashed and ripped with splinters. There were several holes along the side, but the general effect was as if handfuls of splinters had been thrown against the upper works of the ship. The protective mattresses round the bridge and control position were slashed with splinters. The foremast, the rigging, the boats, the signal lockers, the funnel casing, the mainmast, everything was a mass of splinter holes.

Our sailors firmly believed, and continued to do so up to the day on which I left the ship, that we had been

deluged with shrapnel. It was certainly surprising that anyone on the upper deck remained unhit.

The flag lieutenant, one P—— by name, had a remarkable escape. The secretary asked him what he had done to his cap during the night. P—— took it off, and there was a large rent where a splinter, which must have been shaped something like a skewer, had entered his cap just above his ear and gone out again through the crown. P—— had felt nothing. This sounds almost impossible, but I can vouch for its absolute truth.

There were other curious escapes.

O——, the paymaster, was sitting in the decoding office under the waist when the action began. A shell came through the side, passed through the canvas walls of the decoding office and burst near the ward-room, taking a man's head off *en route.* O—— "felt a wind"!

H. B—— was leaning over the ledge of the after-control when a shell passed through a bracket supporting the ledge he was leaning over. From here it went through the funnel and burst with deadly effect in the inside of a gun shield of one of the guns on the disengaged side.

The Commodore walked round the upper deck at about 9 o'clock, and was loudly cheered.

The morale of the crew was splendid.

It suddenly occurred to me that I might as well go and have a look at my cabin. I got through the water-tight doors and discovered an extraordinary scene of confusion in the foremost cabin flat. Three shells had burst therein, and one had apparently chosen my cabin for its final effort. The place was smashed to pieces, and water was splashing in through a small hole in the ship's side.

I've only seen one sight comparable to it, and that was the inside of a German submarine after a strong

party of souvenir hunters had been invited to go round her.

I paddled about, feeling like a lost soul, for a few moments in what had been a rather fashionable cabin, and then retired, closing the water-tight door on the beastly scene.

My first impulse, which I obeyed, was to find S. B—— and one or two others and invite them to look at their cabins—even thus can joy be extracted from the sorrows of others.

To return to the movements of the ship.

As soon as it was daylight, squadrons had sorted themselves out, and we searched about until we discovered the *Lion* and other battle-cruisers, to whom we attached ourselves.

A Zepp passed overhead at 10 a.m., but otherwise we saw no signs of the enemy, though we cruised about in different directions.

At noon it became evident that the Huns had got in, and so the signal was made for the Fleet to return to its bases.

Soon after lunch on our way north we passed the bow of a destroyer sticking up out of the water, and near by we steamed through an immense oily and smooth pool of water, which doubtless marked the resting-place of some great ship.

In the afternoon the Commodore held a short service in the waist. It was a moving scene. Overhead the main-top mast, which had been half-shot through, swayed giddily about and seemed likely to go over the side or come down on the boat deck at any moment. In serried lines the officers and men stood bare-headed round the Commodore, who read a few of the wonderful prayers for the use of those at sea. I think we all felt strangely moved.

That night the weather became nasty, and we had trouble with the temporary shores and plugs that had

been improvised for the holes near the water-line. We had to heave to for short periods. I spent most of the night either on the bridge or searching for a sleeping billet.

Next day we continued on our course for Rosyth, which place we reached at 2 p.m. We were the last ship of the Battle-cruiser Force to enter harbour, and as the battle-cruisers had been in since 2 a.m. our belated appearance caused much relief amongst certain ladies ashore.

On our way in we had buried a poor fellow, who had lain like a marble statue on the ward-room table for thirty-six hours. There were no injuries upon him—he died of shock. I used to go in and look at him ; he seemed so peaceful and still that it was almost impossible to believe that in that body life was yielding inch by inch to death.

The burial service at sea is the most poignant of all ceremonies. Doubtless he had welcomed the sight of May Island many times as we returned from trips in the North Sea, and as his body slid from beneath the Union Jack into the waters bubbling along our side there was a silence in which as if by a prearranged signal the voice of the lookout floated aft—" Land on the port bow." It was May Island.

As soon as we had anchored, hospital drifters came alongside, and the wounded were lifted out in cots and transferred to an adjacent hospital ship.

It was this afternoon that a reaction began to set in. Everyone was very snappy and irritable, there were horrible rumours (with a basis of truth, I regret to say) that men landing from ships like the *Warspite*, that had been in some time, had been the object of hostile demonstrations ashore.

It was impossible to find out any facts as to what damage the Germans had sustained ; and our own losses had been only too apparent. There were de-

pressing gaps in the lines of battle-cruisers where the three lost ships had been in the habit of lying.

I felt very miserable, largely due, I think, to lack of sleep, and to the fact that the ward-room being uninhabitable, and my cabin wrecked, I had nowhere to go to. There was also the official communiqué—a bit of a damper. I felt I wanted to burst into tears, hit somebody, or do something equally foolish.

At 5 p.m. a definite order to go into the basin of Rosyth dockyard relieved the strain, and, with a job in hand, everyone became cheery again. As we were slowly wharfed through the lock gates, large crowds assembled to greet us, chiefly composed of dockyard men, and men from the *Warspite*, and survivors of the *Warrior*, which had sunk some 80 miles from the action, after being towed by the *Engadine*.

The survivors of the *Warrior* were garbed in a mixture of uniform and plain clothes, and were in great spirits. They were making much of the men of the *Warspite*, to which ship they rightly ascribed their salvation, as had the *Warspite* not turned in towards the German line when she did, there is little doubt the *Warrior* would have followed the *Defence* in a very short space of time.

Next day most of the officers and crew went on leave, a few men under my command being left to superintend the refit.

The Commodore shifted his broad pennant to the *Birmingham* whilst we were out of action.

Before our ship's company went on leave Sir David Beatty came on board and made us a very charming and complimentary speech.

During the three weeks in which we were being repaired at Rosyth, we had a great many visitors on board, including His Majesty the King, to whom I had the honour of being presented.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) and a party also

visited the ship. I was showing him my cabin, and he commented on the damage to my private effects. I was about to strike when the iron was hot, and hint at the desirability of bringing pressure to bear on the Treasury to treat all claims in a broad-minded manner, when I suddenly recollected that, as my guest was First Lord of the Treasury, he might think it somewhat pointed if I enlarged on the iniquities of that department.

Large parties of technical sight-seers came up from the Admiralty, the gunnery school (Whaley), and the torpedo school (*Vernon*), and swarmed over the ship, asking innumerable questions and taking notes.

The *Tiger*, *Princess Royal*, and *Warspite* were in dock alongside us, and I had a good look at all their damage, and heard many interesting stories of their share in the action.

On the 17th June I went on leave, and was more than glad to see dear old London again. When I returned in a penniless condition, on the 29th June, we were once more back in our old billet off Charlestown and flagship of the Second Light Cruiser Squadron.

In one way we were changed. There were sixty new faces amongst the ship's company, and as these new arrivals had joined no ordinary ship, but a ship with a reputation, we started as hard as we could to train them up in the way they should go.

CHAPTER XII

SOME REFLECTIONS ON JUTLAND

We now know as a result of the Great Surrender that the German Fleet received such a hammering on the 31st May, 1916, that from that date they decided never to try an engagement with heavy ships again.

That they did not lose more ships than they did, although at least ten were struck by British torpedoes, may be ascribed to the excellent underwater construction and subdivision into minute compartments of their ships, coupled with the fortune of war.

The causes of the constructional defects which led to the loss of three battle-cruisers on our side by single shots, which striking anywhere else would have done little harm, were investigated in due course, and no good purpose can be served by trying to inquire into these things in the pages of a book of this description. The constructional defects themselves were remedied in a short time as a result of a conference held immediately after the battle.

Our system of fire control, possibly inferior to the German system in the opening moments of an action, but certainly superior after the first few minutes, was modified with a view to improving the rate of hitting when action commences.

The great value of aerial scouts was shown at Jutland.

Had Scheer made use of Zeppelins during the afternoon of the 31st he would have known exactly when to break off action in order to avoid having to meet Sir John Jellicoe.

The importance of "light" conditions, from the gunnery point of view, was shown to be very great. Our handicap in this respect during the battle-cruiser action was very noticeable. There was only one way to avoid it, and that was to break off action; but that's not the way to conduct war when the enemy is sighted for the first time for sixteen months.

As to whether the distance between the Grand Fleet battleships and the battle-cruisers was excessive, I prefer to offer no opinion. The facts are plain, let each judge for himself. One thing is certain, if the Battle Fleet had been in visual touch with our battle-cruisers, there would have been no battle.

One of the cleverest tactical moves of the day was the German smoke-screen. It was executed with precision and accuracy at the psychological moment, and taught us a lesson as to the value of smoke-screens when properly used.

There is a lot of talk flying about and a certain amount of nonsense has been written (much more to follow, I'm sure) about what the leading divisions of our Battle Fleet ought or ought not to have done. As I was at the other end of the line I don't propose to add to the aforesaid flood of eloquence by the critics on the hearthrugs.

At 8.30 p.m. Scheer was in a very nasty hole. He'd not done badly up till then, for he had inflicted considerable losses on the British battle-cruisers, though his subordinate Hipper's flagship, the *Lutzow*, was in a sinking condition, and he had managed to remain under the fire of the British Battle Fleet for a sufficiently short period to avoid annihilation.

But, and it must have been a very big BUT, it was a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire, for he was in a position which, to the commander of an inferior fleet should be like holy water to the Devil. Scheer found himself being forced out into the North Sea with Sir

John Jellicoe insinuating himself between him and his bases in the Bight.

There must have been some anxious moments in the staff-room of the German Fleet flagship between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m.

Scheer had three choices :

(1) Try and get home round the Skaw.

(2) Try and get into the Bight by Horns Reef.

(3) Try and get into the Bight by Borkum.

And the British destroyer flotillas hanging on to him like grim death throughout the dark hours.

His battleships rammed them, they bumped down their sides, so close the guns couldn't depress enough to hit them.

His battleships sank some by 6-inch gunfire, others came out of the night. Like a nightmare they were with him till the day. Day—ah ! that was the rub.

Another day action *must* be avoided at all costs. Choices (1) and (3) meant daylight and many miles to go, and so I believe for this reason he chose (2).

" It is true," I can imagine him saying, " the British Fleet is there, but I may miss them, and at the worst it will be a colossal mix-up in the night—all in favour of the weaker side."

And so, as soon as he had shaken Sir David off at about 9.30 p.m., he sent the Fourth Scouting Group to the south-east to reconnoitre. As already described, this group of German light cruisers encountered the Second Light Cruiser Squadron and retired back to the west—minus the *Frauenlob*.

When the news of this engagement reached Scheer he must have felt that it would be well-nigh impossible for him to get to Horns Reef without encountering the British Fleet.

However, the hours of darkness were few, and he pushed east in detached divisions of battleships continually being harassed by our destroyer flotillas.

Certain evidence at my disposal justifies me in saying that the main body of the German Fleet crossed our wakes between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m., a few miles to the northward of us. We were about 5 miles to the north of the tail of the British Battle Fleet, and there is reason to believe that at least one big German battle-cruiser passed ahead of us and astern of the Fleet. (See Fig. 6.)

Once the Germans were well to the eastward they steered south, and as at dawn the British Grand Fleet turned north again, the Germans were slipping south through their minefields and coastal channels. Had the day been moderately clear we should have seen them, but the visibility was about 2 miles, and hidden from each other by the mist, we passed on opposite courses, probably scarcely 10 miles apart.

At 10 a.m. we were once more sweeping south, but by that time they must have been practically home.

How had we missed them ?

How had they crossed our wakes during the night without our Battle Fleet knowing exactly where they were in the morning ?

There are a great many contributory causes to this misfortune from our point of view.

It must be admitted that certain sections of the British Fleet were in touch with the Germans until dawn—these were our destroyer flotillas. It was from them that information could have come.

One destroyer, at the least, did send a wireless message reporting exactly where the Huns were.

I am told it was jammed by Telefunken. The Germans were fully alive to the necessity of spoiling our wireless signals and the ether jangled with discordant and high-power Telefunken wireless notes.

It must also be remembered that the *Tipperary* (Captain D.'s destroyer) was blown up, and in the heat and fury and bewildering uncertainty of the continuous night attacks it is very probable that several people

thought others were doing the reporting. It is so easy to sit down comfortably, two or three years after the event, and say what might have been done ; but, when the first Fleet action of the war is fought, everything can hardly be expected to " develop according to plan." I wish to mention another point. The British Grand Fleet has been the hub of the Allied wheel during this war.

In my opinion it is absurd to say, as has been said, that once battle was joined, the above fact should have no place in the minds of those who directed the movements of the Fleet. That it did not weigh unduly in those minds is my firm personal opinion.

Amongst other tactical lessons which were brought home to our ship in a very forcible manner, was the fact that searchlights, unless used with great care, can be of more harm than value to the side using them.

The difficulty of challenging doubtful craft at night was emphasized. The first ship to start a flashing signal gets a broadside in reply if the other ship is enemy.

I need hardly say that a book could be written dealing in detail with the strategical and tactical aspects of Jutland, from the great deployment into battle of the Grand Fleet down to the medical arrangements in the various classes of ships.

Such things are beyond the scope of this book.

Again, in the personal account of the action which I have endeavoured to set out on the previous pages, I have omitted many facts which, though of my knowledge, did not come under my observation or affect in any way the ship in which I served.

Such incidents are the destruction of the armoured cruiser *Black Prince* by one stupendous salvo from a German battleship at point-blank range in the middle of the night, or the hazardous work of the *Abdiel*, which ship laid down a minefield in the approaches to the Bight whilst the night action was going on—mines

which were subsequently heard to detonate by one of our submarines which was lying on the bottom some 30 miles away.

I myself have an impression of the after-effects of Jutland which stays obstinately in my mind. It was on the 3rd June, and the embargo on people leaving the dockyard had been removed. I decided to go to Dunfermline, and walking past the shell-scarred battle-cruisers I went through the gates and boarded a tram.

It was packed, and the air of excitement and babel of noise were intense. Doubtless the action, I thought, and listened to hear what they were saying.

Not so.

The cause of the excitement was a football match in which Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath strove together in a League Semi-Final.

We are a remarkable nation—and doubtless that is why Providence has allowed us a remarkable Empire.

CHAPTER XIII

CARRYING ON

THERE was a pause for breath after the Battle of Jutland, during which period both the Hun and our own yards were busy.

Rosyth proved itself to be of untold value, and, though not supposed to be in a finished state, coped with three large ships and the *Southampton*.

A great many dockyard workers came up temporarily from Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth. The success of Rosyth was largely due to the personality of the Commodore in charge, of whom many amusing stories are in circulation.

He lived in a tin shed in the centre of the yard, and was reported to be in the habit of convening meetings of dockyard officials at any hour of the day or night, if he considered the matter to be at all urgent.

He spared no one less than himself, and was a relentless worker. He was to be seen walking slowly about the yard with an eye on everything and everybody ; at his approach parties of workmen were galvanized into activity.

He had a strong dislike to fast driving in the dockyard ; and one day I went past him on a motor bicycle.

The policeman at the gate told me that I was to report myself at the Commodore's office. Full of fear, I repaired to his quarters, where he asked me why I had driven furiously in the precincts of the yard ?

I murmured something about " only going six miles an hour, sir."

He fixed me with a stern look, and replied, " There is one speed in this yard, MY speed."

I saluted and withdrew.

Yet with all the enormous work and responsibility on his hands after Jutland, it was through a telegram from him that my people first heard I was all right.

There were many conferences going on at this time both in the Battle-cruiser Force at Rosyth and the Battle Fleet at Scapa, to consider the various technical aspects of Jutland, and at the conclusion of these we (Second Light Cruiser Squadron) went up to Scapa to shoot. We particularly needed this in the *Southampton* owing to our large new draft, some of whom had never heard a gun go off.

Just before we left we sold the clothing bags and effects belonging to the ratings who had been killed. In the Navy if a man is lost, and his dependants do not want it, his clothing is sold by auction, on the upper deck. It was a sad sight to see the odd thirty-five bags piled up in a heap.

The sailor is a most generous man, and, on these occasions, flannel collars worth 2*s*. sell for 15*s*., and are then thrown in again, especially if the man has left a widow. All our widows were also being well looked after in other ways by officers' wives.

On the way up to Scapa a new R.N.R. lieutenant, P—— by name, whose ambition in life was to get into a Q-boat [1] (but to his annoyance he had come to us to relieve a fellow wounded at Jutland), found himself on watch alone at 3 a.m.

He wished to switch on a shaded light in the chart table, so finding a small switch painted red, he turned it on. The immediate effect was not noticeable, but in about 90 seconds P—— was astonished to see a crowd of half-dressed officers headed by the Commodore burst on to the bridge, whilst every hatch to the upper deck

[1] Mystery ship.

vomited forth semi-naked sailors. Shouts of "P2 gun cleared away!" "P3 ready!" "S2 cleared away!" etc. etc., resounded through the ship, more and more sailors struggled on to the upper deck, until poor P—— felt quite bewildered.

It was then explained to him, somewhat forcibly, that he had switched on every alarm rattler in the ship. Amidst the curses of 300 officers and men, P—— resumed his solitary vigil.

After the usual orgy of gunnery and torpedo at Scapa we returned to Rosyth.

Meanwhile the Hun had been preparing a little booby trap for the British Fleet, and to give the Devil his due we did put one foot into it.

On the 18th August we were at sea, ahead of the battle-cruisers and steaming down towards the Dogger Bank. Forty or fifty miles astern of us we knew that the Grand Fleet were coming south at their best speed.

The bait was the High Seas Fleet, which were reported by the Harwich force to be well over to the west in the southern part of the North Sea. From the chart it looked as if we stood a fairly good chance of forcing them to action at about 2.30 p.m.

The day was fine and seemed full of promise.

Somewhere about 7.30 a.m. the *Nottingham* was torpedoed at a position several miles on our port beam. As far as I remember, I think one of the survivors told me that it took three torpedoes to put her down.

Some of the crew got away on rafts and in boats, but a good many people, including the captain, were in the water for half an hour, until picked up by destroyers. She went down quite slowly by the head, and we heard afterwards that when her forecastle sank flush to the water her captain formed up the officers and men who were still remaining into a procession, which solemnly goose-stepped down the forecastle in single file, and so into the sea.

It was after breakfast that we heard definitely that she had gone, and that destroyers were taking the survivors, fortunately numerous, into Newcastle.

The loss of the *Nottingham* was felt very severely in the *Southampton*. We had done so much together, and knew each other so intimately, that to lose her was like losing one of the family. This feeling of camaraderie, which exists in various degrees in all squadrons, was especially strong in the Second Light Cruiser Squadron, and we all hung together throughout the war, and felt proud to belong to the Second Light Cruiser Squadron.

We were cruising south at 10.30 a.m. with destroyers in company, when one of the latter suddenly increased to full speed and dashed ahead from a position about half a mile on our starboard beam. As she did so she began to flash a signal to us. Letter by letter it came through—

"P–E–R–I–S–C–O–P–E A–H–E–A–D O–F Y–O–U."

Before it was completed we had rung down for full speed, and were making a sharp turn to port, whilst between decks, every door that wasn't closed was being shut. For ten minutes I felt rather as if I were walking on quicksands, but at the end of that period we knew that we must be outside the radius of that particular Fritz, so we resumed our course and speed on the screen.

At noon we heard from the Harwich forces who were in touch with the Huns that the latter were steaming east at high speed, and all our hopes faded away; we lost them by about two hours. After lunch we retired to the northward and caught a distant view of the Battle Fleet, lines of battleships, watched over by kite balloons and surrounded by busy destroyers.

At half-past three, whilst on our way north, we sighted a large German submarine on the surface. He was about six or seven miles away. Just as we were going to give him a broadside, he seemed to melt into the skyline—he had dived. Shortly after this, the

Falmouth was torpedoed, a few miles on our starboard beam. Destroyers and other salvage vessels made a great attempt, lasting throughout the night to get her into the Humber, but she gave up the struggle and sank in sight of the English coast. She was hit either four or five times.

By tea-time this submarine business was getting beyond a joke, and it was with great pleasure that we welcomed what poets call "The shades of night." I am uncertain as to how often the battleships and battle-cruisers saw submarines or were fired at, but I know that for them the day held plenty of thrills. The Germans came out with a fantastic tale of torpedoing and blowing up a battleship—details were given, including the height of the flames which went up "above her funnels." I can only suppose that this story emanated in the brain of an officer who wanted an Iron Cross.

At the close of the day it was evident that the High Seas Fleet had been a lure to draw us over an area in which Fritzes were plentiful. They got to "windward" to the extent of two light cruisers, and on the whole, though we were "had," the Fritzes certainly ought to have got home on our Battle Fleet. I am certain that had British submarines had a similar opportunity they would have hit at least three big ships or perished in the attempt.

On getting back to Rosyth we settled down to the old routine. I seem to have had a grievance at this period, for I wrote :

"*Aug.* 27, 1916.—This confounded Dark Night Patrol has come on again. We went out and did our turn, and had very good weather, but we can't hope for much more of it.

"We are now Emergency Squadron at short notice. It is a curious fact that the smaller the ship the more strenuous time does she have. Note this for future wars ! But on second thoughts I wouldn't change.

" For instance, the battle-cruisers have quite a comfortable time ; they only go to sea on genuine stunts and they've each got a place like the body of a Rolls-Royce perched up on the bridge, in which I presume the officer of the watch walks at his ease. When in harbour they are nearly always at four hours' notice.

" Then there are the three light cruiser squadrons, containing eleven of us at present, as we are only *Southampton*, *Dublin*, *Birmingham*, and the First and Third Squadrons. We have a moderately strenuous time ; the little crosses we have to bear are—

" (*a*) There is always one of us Emergency Squadron, which is like hanging on to a split yarn by the skin of one's teeth.

" (*b*) When there is no moon, one of us is always out on a D.N.P.

" (*c*) Odd stunts of no interest.

" Lastly, there are the destroyers.

" These little ships seem to be continually nipping in and out in a perpetual bustle of excitement ; and it is quite habitual for them to lie at one hour's notice when in harbour. I hate one hour's notice, and whenever we get to that stage, I want to go to sea.

" During the day, every time a flag goes up one thinks it a steaming signal, and at night I can't get to sleep, as I'm so certain I'm going to be called and told we're off. I should think it must be like that in France, only worse, much worse, when attacks are postponed.

" *Sept.* 4, 1916.—As we were Emergency Squadron we had every expectation of being the sacrificial lamb for D.N.P. to-night.

" In the middle of the forenoon we were quite elated to hear that the *Royalist*, who is down here temporarily from Scapa, was to do it instead of us. However, the arrival of three envelopes from the *Lion*, and sundry other signs, told us that we were ticked off for a routine stunt.

" I hope something happens.

" At 6 p.m. three battle-cruisers of the Second Battle-cruiser Squadron, ourselves, and six destroyers left the base and went easterly.

" We picked up a gale almost at once, and during the first watch a heavy sea landed on the bridge, burst in the bridge opposite the wheel, smashed up a searchlight, carried away the bridge ladder, and did other damage. The gunner (T——) had his head cut open.

" When I went up for the middle it was a disgusting night. I held out till 3 a.m., and had great hopes of keeping the enemy at bay till 4 a.m., when I knew that I could laugh at him in my bunk.

" Drink was the cause of my downfall, like many a good man before me. I foolishly drank cocoa at 3.15—the result was instantaneous. All to-day (Sept. 5, 1916) we have been wallowing about towards the Danish coast. We have been at action stations all day. I hear we go home to-night.

" *Sept.* 16, 1916.—Jutland Honours List came out and caused a good many smiles—and heart-burnings too, I dare say.

" *Oct.* 4, 1916.—Up at Scapa—*Dublin* and ourselves did a sweep lasting forty-eight hours in the Dogger Bank direction.

" *Oct.* 7, 1916.—Left Scapa and came back to Rosyth. There was some sweep in the Dogger Bank area on the tapis, and *Birmingham* and ourselves were detailed for it.

" *Oct.* 18, 1916.—The day appointed for our departure, it blew so hard that it was quite impracticable for destroyers to keep the sea outside, so the affair was postponed for twenty-four hours. Next day we were again all of a quiver during the morning. But it was still blowing very hard, and once more it was postponed.

" Next day we were told to start, and we did. So at noon, with four Torpedo-boat Destroyers in company, we shoved off.

" By 5.30, the wind having veered to W.N.W., we began to feel it as we got away from the land. Two of our destroyers had their bridges smashed in, so we sent them all back. At 8 p.m. we were labouring along in a heavy sea, and had to ease speed to eight knots. At 9 p.m. we received a wireless to return to base. We anchored the ship at 2.30 a.m., a task I performed and found a chilly one.

" Turned out at 6.30 a.m. and coaled ship.

" At noon we received a signal to revert to four hours' notice for steam. We were hastily shifting for a run ashore when at 12.30 we received a signal—' *Southampton* and *Birmingham* raise steam with all despatch and report when ready to proceed.'

" A collection of snappy officers gathered round the ward-room stove to curse the gentleman on the staff, unknown to us, who was responsible for all this countermarching. I had my gaiters on, and registered a vow not to remove them till the anchor left the bottom.

" At 2.40 p.m., five minutes before we were due to weigh, a signal came cancelling everything and putting us back at four hours' notice."

. . . . . .

It was about this time that we heard that our very old and trusted friend the *Birmingham* was due to leave the squadron and pay off owing to " boileritis," an affliction of the boiler tubes which few light cruisers have escaped, at least speaking of those built before the war. Whilst on this subject it should be recorded that whereas before the war a ship of the *Southampton* class would steam about on cruises at a speed of 14 knots with a quarterly full speed trial for a few hours, during the war she never went less than 20 knots if the weather permitted her to do so.

Yet notwithstanding this great difference between peace and war-time practice, added to the greater distance steamed, the British Fleet was marvellously

free from engineering troubles. Which was a feather in two caps. Firstly, in the cap of the engineering firms of the country; and secondly, it was one in the cap of our engineer officers.

But to resume.

When we heard that the *Birmingham* was really going to desert us, after three years' comradeship, it was decided that we must dine their mess *en masse*.

After several false starts, due to short notice, "panics," "flaps," and similar whatnots, the great night arrived. We were at four hours' notice, the Hun was reported to be well up the canal, and we prepared to forget the war for a few hours.

Extra tables were squeezed into the mess, which was packed. Our local artists (the two doctors) did water-colours on the backs of the menu cards, each one representing an incident in the *Birmingham's* past career.

The Commodore came in and made a speech, the band played noisily, the mess-man surpassed himself, and the wine caterer produced some champagne he had been hiding till the end of the war. After dinner we all went up to the picture palace in the waist and saw Charlie, after which we repaired to the ward-room and "harmony ensued," as the local paper would have said. A special feature was a topical song in honour of the *Birmingham*, the chorus of which was simple; it consisted of the *Birmingham's* list of officers as shown in the Navy List. There were fifteen verses! But it was encored *in toto*.

At 11 p.m. the order was passed that "coats will be taken off." This operation, by virtue of the fact that it removes all signs of rank as well as the most expensive portion of a naval officer's uniform, permits of much violent exercise being taken.

The centre of attractions in the carnival which followed were:

"Ye Olde Arme-Chair" and "Ye Round Table."

Two very simple articles of furniture, and yet what a lot can be done with them.

For instance. "Ye olde arme-chair" is placed in an open space, and a gallop started on the piano, *tempo con fuoco*. Everyone lines up in two lines, facing each other, with the chair between them. At the word Go, the leading officer of the line facing the front of the chair runs and leaps at it feet foremost. This pivots the chair on its hind legs, and with a crash he lands sitting in it with the chair's back on the ground. The leader on the other side now rushes forward and, leaping into the chair, strikes the forward edge of the seat, and pivoting again, the chair resumes its normal position. The game gets faster and faster, and the chair rocks backwards and forwards like a pendulum until one of its legs breaks.

"Ye round table" is of the three-legged variety with a top about 5 feet in diameter. With the table one can play many games, a good one being "Swat the flies."

Three strong officers seize the table by its legs and, holding it as a shield before them, rush round the mess trying to pin a fly between the top of the table and the ship's side. It was not uncommon with us for the flies to combine and, by exerting superior pressure, nip the "swatters" between the end of the table legs and the side of the mess. After a short bout of this game, the top usually came off, due to some ambitious gentlemen trying the "round the world on a wheel" stunt, or the "great gyroscopic turn."

On the night which was ever after spoken of as "*Birmingham's* night," we did all these things and ended up with free dancing *à la* Mordkin and Pavlova.

A healthy row with our new commander at 12.30 a.m. on the quarter-deck concluded a memorable evening. And, as the great diarist would have written—

" And so to bed, no one foxed, it being time of war, all save myself (not foxed), but not to bed, for I had a plaguy middle watch to keep."

On the 28th November Sir David Beatty hoisted his flag as Acting Admiral in command of the Grand Fleet. This was the first of many changes, one of which hit us very hard, as our Rear-Admiral was appointed away to hoist his flag in the *Orion*. I think he felt leaving the ship as much as we felt losing him and his staff—and that was a great deal.

He was succeeded by Commodore C. F. Lambert, with Captain Lecky as captain of the ship, who relieved Captain Crawfurd, who had relieved our Commander Rushton, promoted to captain over Jutland.

The new Commodore took up his appointment a day or two before Christmas. He walked round the divisions on Christmas Day, and on arriving at the first division said—

" What division is this ? "

" Boys' division, sir ! "

" Ha ! I wish the boys a Merry Christmas." Then turning to the officer of the division he said—

" When was their underclothing mustered last ? "

The gunnery lieutenant was so taken aback by this sudden broadside that he could only mutter in an absolutely inarticulate manner, whilst I began to tremble in my shoes lest he should ask to see my divisional clothing book, which at that moment was far from ready for inspection. However, I was spared the shame of exposure !

A day or two after the new Commodore arrived on board, we went to Scapa, and from that base we were detailed for a vile patrol between the Faroe and Shetland Islands, in typical January weather. We arrived

at Scapa at 5 p.m. on the 15th and started coaling at once.

This is what I wrote about that coaling, the next day.

" It was the most abominable coaling I have ever taken part in, and I have done 192 since the war started. An ugly great whelp of a collier came alongside (it was of course dark), and after a great deal of juggling we found that we could just use three or four holds, by landing the foremost hoist on the forecastle.

" Her derricks were not long enough, and B—— and myself were unable to get hoists from our holds over the ship's boat-deck. Each hoist as it came up had to be pulled in by the party inboard, and released at the critical moment by the winch-man in the collier. This entailed very nice judgment on his part, and it was absolutely essential to success that he should be able to watch the hoist the whole time.

" The mate of the collier told me that ' she had come by an accident, and that the exhaust steam-pipes from her winches were a little defective.' He lied—her winches had no exhaust pipes at all, they had been broken off at the scuppers.

" As soon as I raised my first ten bags up to test the gear, dense clouds of steam rose between the two ships, and completely obscured the *Southampton*.

" It began to rain.

" For an hour and a half not a bag of coal was got on to the *Southampton's* deck.

" In the wet coal-dust, and in the crude glare of electric arc lights, each officer fought his winch and tried to devise some methods of either condensing the exhaust steam or leading it out of the way. I tried wet sacks—the steam laughed at them ; eventually we all found that the only partial remedy were lengths of hose-pipes tied over the broken exhaust pipes and triced up the rigging. These kept on blowing off or splitting, and slowly the night dragged on. The men got more

and more weary and bored with the operation, and as the hours slowly succeeded each other the collier's gear began to break down.

"We eventually finished at 2.30 a.m., and sat down to a much-needed sardine supper.

"By Jove! she was a bitch of a ship, and I would dearly love to kill the coaling officer who landed us with her. I find she hasn't coaled a ship for fifteen weeks. I suppose they all know about her here, and she is reserved for unsuspecting strangers like ourselves. It appears that she was a banana ship before the war, and the sooner she gets back to her trade the better. As a collier she is too rose-coloured for words.

"*Jan.* 22, 1917.—We have been out on a good many sweeps of one kind and another, and have had a great misfortune in the ship.

"Last Friday morning, at about 7 a.m., when 100 miles east of May Island, the cover of the navel pipe carried away, and as we were plunging into a very considerable sea, about a hundred tons of water got down into the cable lockers.

"Our first lieutenant and navigator, Ralph Ireland, who was temporarily doing executive officer of the ship, went down to put a mat over the hole. The mate, the gunnery lieutenant, and three men were already on the forecastle.

"The ship dipped her nose into the sea, and scooped up a big sea which carried every one off their feet. When it passed, 'guns' and the mate were lying in the breakwater only bruised, but of the others nothing more was ever seen. Clad as they were in sweaters, sea-boots, and oilskins, they must have sunk at once in the sea that was running.

"An hour later we read the burial service in the waist, when at about the spot where they were lost. A driving snowstorm added to the almost unbearable melancholy of the service.

" Ralph Ireland, our Number 1, was a great friend of mine, with whom only a few hours before I had been yarning on the bridge, and but twelve hours before we had been rehearsing our parts together in a home-made *revue* we intended to produce. He had come to us from the *Birmingham* when that ship paid off. His death under such tragic circumstances together with the three sailors caused a deep gloom in the ship, where he was immensely popular. Ireland was a very lovable personality—brilliantly clever, a King's medallist, an athlete, he was marked out for certain advancement in the Service. It was not to be, and within a few days of his twenty-eighth birthday the North Sea claimed him as part of the price of Admiralty.

" *Jan.* 29, 1917.—Herewith the diary of a ' flap '—

" 5 a.m.—Went to two hours' notice.

" 12.30 p.m.—Sailing.

" 12.45 p.m.—Cancelled—one hour's notice.

" 1.30 p.m.—Two and a half hours' notice.

" 8 p.m.—One hour's notice.

" 10 a.m.—Two hours' notice.

" 12.40 p.m.—Sailing.

" 12.50 p.m.—Cancelled.

" 12.55 p.m.—Half an hour's notice.

" 1.30 p.m.—Sailed. Swept up past the Norwegian coast, which was looking very picturesque in its winter covering of snow; but it was bitterly cold in the fore-top where I had to spend the day. Went to Scapa.

" *Feb.* 9, 1917.—A three days' patrol in 62° N. We saw one antique German mine.

" *Feb.* 17, 1917.—Back at Rosyth.

" *Mar.* 20, 1917.—Made my last trip in H.M.S. *Southampton*, for when we returned to harbour I found that, in accordance with my request some months ago, I had been appointed to H.M.S. *Ramillies* on commissioning.

" *Mar.* 25, 1917.—Arrived in London. I left H.M.S. *Southampton* yesterday morning. The night before I left there was a concert at which I sang a potpourri of all my topical songs, and could hardly go on—as everybody was so nice. They dined me in the ward-room, and then insisted on undressing me and putting me to bed at 1 a.m. (May I be allowed to remind anyone who may come across this diary that I am a tee-totaller.)

" Next morning I left the ship. The band played ' Lying off Limekilns '—one of my songs which nearly led to a free fight between our sailors and those from another light cruiser squadron one day when our ' matelots ' sang it to them ashore—and the sailors gave me a very nice send-off.

" It was a very great wrench to part from the *Southampton* after three years ; but in the Navy these things must happen, and I had been considerably longer in her than any other officer, and nearly all the men—and a change is good for everyone. I can never hope to serve with nicer mess-mates, or be in a happier ship. Long may her name be on the Navy List."

CHAPTER XIV

H.M.S. *RAMILLIES*

H.M.S. *RAMILLIES* is *le dernier cri* in battleships, and I could hardly have chosen a bigger change than to have gone from the *Southampton* to this ship.

Of the *Royal Sovereign* class, she is heavily armoured, and disposes of eight 15-inch guns and a 6-inch secondary battery each side. At the time when she was commissioned, in the spring of 1917, she was unique in that she was the first capital ship to be fitted with protective " bulges " or " blisters " on her sides as a counter to torpedo attack.

When I left the *Southampton* she was completing at Beardmore's on the Clyde, and was not to be ready for some weeks. I filled in time, by first going on leave, from which pastime I was ordered to report myself at Whale Island, the gunnery school at Portsmouth, and rub up my big ship gunnery, as in the *Ramillies* I had volunteered to take charge of the main transmitting room and its various jealously guarded secrets.

On arrival at Whaley, I found a strange and melancholy change had taken place in the three years of war. In days of peace Whaley was a scene of " frightful " activity from dawn to dusk. One went to Whaley as junior officer expecting to be shaken, and no one was ever disappointed. At the rising of the lark crowds of sub-lieutenants, snotties, yea, even lieutenants and sailors, sweated round the obstacle course which exists on " THE ISLAND." As the day began, so it carried on—at the rush. Walking became a forgotten habit—everything was done at the run, except funeral exercises.

The parade ground presented an animated appearance, as squads of officers and men, the former invariably clad in white flannels and gaiters—the outward sign of being under instruction—were drilled in rifle drill, gun drill, and field exercises by brazen-lunged ramrod-backed gunners' mates.

The "Whaley" gunners' mate, with a voice that carried a quarter of a mile in a gale of wind, was the counterpart of the Sergeant of the Guard:

"Now class, 'shun! Stand at EASE! Wake up in the rear rank Sub-Lootenant Jones, sir! Class, 'shun! Now wot I sez—GOES!"

And what they did say—went, or else the black-trousered, horny-eyed, immaculate lieutenant-commanders and commanders who prowled about seeking whom they might devour, and never fasting, wanted to know the reason why. These were "THE STAFF"—officers of super-smartness, who had devoted choice years of their lives to the study of the great god gunnery.

In the instructional sheds and batteries that ring round the Island the same furious energy was maintained. Guns' crews sweated and blasphemed in their efforts to load a 6-inch gun twenty times a minute instead of nineteen.

Half a mile away across the mud-flats the old three-decker *Vernon* and her appendages lay placidly on the water. This was the torpedo school run on somewhat different lines. More of her anon. Day after day the Staff at Whaley laboured from morning to night to smarten people up, and stuff them with gunnery, and they performed marvels.

Day after day the voices of the gunners' mates rose on the air with:

"On the corpse leaving the dead 'ouse, mort-tuary, or whatnot, fer the scimitery, or groive, the few-nereal party will rest on the arms re-versed, 'anging the 'ead

on the breast with a melan-choly yet resign'd arspect."

Or else :

"Now the h'objec' of the rebound spring is NOT (*fortissimo*), as some 'ave herroneously said, to absorb the recoil of th' gun, BUT—on the hobturatin' pad re-hasserting himself the mush-room 'ead springin' to the front, . . . etc. etc."

. . . . . .

Such is a brief and inadequate sketch of Whaley in peace time. Such was my conception of the place I was about to join.

As my cab rumbled over the bridge which separates Whaley from the attractions of Portsmouth, I perceived the formidable obstructions of the obstacle course and shuddered. Ugh ! fancy going over these ropes at my age—twenty-five—and three years of war service, it was incredible, and yet—strange things happen at Whale Island. Yes, very strange things had happened at Whaley in the years of war, which I very soon discovered.

The Staff, affable officers temporarily at Whaley on their return home from foreign service, and awaiting appointments to the Grand Fleet, conversed with interested attention to the lieutenant straight from the mysterious Grand Fleet itself.

What was the life like ?

What were the latest ideas on fire control ?

What sort of ranges were battle practices done at ?

What was the anti-submarine gunnery organization like ?

There were three of us from the Grand Fleet ships waiting to go to the *Ramillies*, and we stood in front of the hall fire and laid down the law.

Once or twice I wandered round the batteries—it was pathetic—ancient old pensioners unfit for sea service quavered out the drill. The classes were often composed of elderly R.N.R. officers, fathers of families ;

doing an anti-submarine course, they moved from place to place at a dignified walk. You can hardly hunt the captain of an 18,000-ton liner across a parade ground.

Then I realized that " for the duration " the focal spot of the radiance of gunnery was situated in the Grand Fleet, that was the explanation.

Whaley was being used for experimental work, and the training in the elements of gunnery of hundreds of R.N.R.s, R.N.V.R.s, officers and men. They came, they learnt a few simple facts, and in ten days they had gone.

I decided to do likewise, and departed, to do a special course in London by arrangement with the gunnery lieutenant of the *Ramillies*, whom I had not met. The readiness with which he agreed to this request on my part made me feel sure we should get on together.

After more leave of about ten days, I was ordered to repair to Glasgow to join the ship on commissioning. I had always heard that commissioning a big ship was a fearful agony, but found the actual event quite a peaceful operation.

Three hundred of our men were already on the spot, living in the Town Hall at Dalmuir, and these went on board first.

At 9 a.m. a special train with 500 men on board arrived from Devonport, and drew up near the ship. As each man got out of the train he was given a commissioning card, which tells him exactly where he has got to go, which part of the ship he belongs to, and what he must do in various emergencies.

In the afternoon we exercised, " fire," " collision," and " action " stations.

That night we all slept on board for the first time; it was most uncomfortable living in the ship, as there was no water on, no lights would work, and the ship abounded with dockyard workmen, who made the night

hideous with pneumatic riveters, electric drills, and caulking tools. Sleep was well-nigh impossible.

On May 7th we left Beardmore's, still full of dockyard workers, and towed by six tugs we started down the Clyde.

Magnificent as the ship looked above water, appearances were deceptive, and all was not well with the *Ramillies*. When she had been launched, she had charged across the river and hit the opposite bank. This contretemps had damaged her bottom, cracked her great stern post, and more or less destroyed the larger and more important of her two rudders.

As there is no dock on the Clyde big enough to take the ship, we were faced with the problem of getting the vessel to the Gladstone dock at Liverpool, where the extent of the damage could be accurately ascertained and the necessary repairs carried out.

We set out down the Clyde at about two o'clock on a lovely afternoon, sped on our stately way by the cheers of thousands of men and women who had raised up this ship, from the bare keel laid down in 1914.

Of all the acts of modern man, this never ceases to astonish me vastly, this gradual assembling of a hundred thousand intricate parts, and then their co-ordination into one harmonious whole—a battleship.

As we went downstream, four tugs astern and two ahead, an aeroplane looped the loop and did other stunts just above the tops of our masts. All went well until we had just passed Dumbarton Rock, when, without warning, she sheered off to starboard, and despite desperate efforts on the part of the tugs she grounded heavily. To make matters worse the tide began to ebb.

All the tugs churned up the water and the mud as they struggled to get us off. There were some amazing jumbles of tugs round our stern. One tug had her mast snapped off like a match by a wire flicking across

like a released violin string, another wire got under the paddle-wheel of another tug and threatened to turn the whole tug upside down. Greatly alarmed, the crew of the tug hastily severed the wire with an axe.

Our quarter-deck was a mass of seething, writhing, coiling of large wires and hemp. A large wire is a most dangerous thing when it alternately takes and releases a heavy strain. It seems to be possessed with almost human intelligence and diabolical mischievousness ; large wires must be watched very carefully—treat them with contempt and they will catch you in a coil and have your leg off. When they hum, and quiver, and sing, stand clear ! they are about to part. We completely blocked the traffic both up and down the river, and in the Clyde an accumulation soon takes place.

At 4 p.m. we suddenly slid off the mud, and nearly grounded on the other side of the channel.

Our troubles had only started. Two miles farther on, off Gourock, we grounded bang in the middle of the channel.

Owing to our first delay the tide had fallen too much, and we could not get over the bar. It was hopeless to try and get on, and we lay there until midnight. As the tide fell, our huge blisters on the sides came into view, and she looked like a monstrous great fort ; at low water we only had 14 feet under our bottom, and owing to lack of circulating water the condensers were overheating and everything in the engine-room began to fill with mud.

On getting off again it began to blow, and we had several narrow squeaks, as the tugs were small and had little control over the ship, which dragged them about like toys when she yawed. At 2.30 a.m. we more or less drifted into deep water off Greenock and thankfully let go an anchor.

These various bumps had not improved our existing

injuries, but we decided to try and start for Liverpool on the 10th May. We had four tugs to get us clear of the Clyde, and four destroyers and sweepers as escort in the open sea.

As soon as we started, we began to surge about in a disconcerting manner, and notwithstanding every effort on the part of the tugs, we drifted (there is no other word) more or less broadside on through the anti-submarine gate, hitting, but not damaging, one of the trawlers moored as gate-post.

Once through the gate we cast off the tugs and tried to steer with our own engines. Each time we went ahead, she kept perfectly straight until we had reached a speed of about 4 knots, whereupon she would swerve rapidly either to port or to starboard ; it being quite impossible to predict which of the two shores she would make a bee-line towards. This behaviour entailed immediate " Full speed astern both engines " to avert a disaster.

By noon, three hours after our departure, we had made good 3 miles towards Liverpool in a series of gigantic semicircular swoops. It was now obvious that the ship was unmanageable under her engines alone, so with four tugs dragging first one way and then the other we waddled back to our anchorage, and managing to hit off the gate entrance in the arc of one swoop we " came to " off the Tail o' Bank at 5 p.m. Thus ended our first attempt.

At the time I wrote :

" *May* 11.—Bowler-hatted experts from Beardmore's are now on board discussing the situation, which seems an awkward one. It would be almost impossible for us to get to Liverpool on our own under peace conditions, and with submarines about it would be madness, except that we swerve about so that I don't believe they could hit us ! We'd hit either England or Ireland though ! Divers are going down to have a look at the

rudder, and if it is very mis-shapen there is some talk of trying to cut it off—a big under-water job. The question is, how much rudder is down there ? I think the best thing would be to have an escort of about 12 T.B.D.s and then tow a tramp and make her steer us.

" There are rumours of a congregation of Fritzes outside ; perhaps they have got wind of this entertainment.

" *Monday, May* 14.—On Saturday we tried again, as the bowler-hat brigade discovered that only a small bit of the large rudder remains. We stayed inside the gate this time, and as far as the steering of the ship was concerned it was a dismal failure. The small rudder has about as much effect on her as if I dangled my foot over the side, and there was nothing doing at all in the direction of steering her with the engines. Once she starts swinging one way or the other, she goes on until her stern is up in the wind. The only way to get her straight is to stop and turn her on her heel. Swooped back to our anchorage at 6 p.m. She has got Clyde Bolshevism in her plates, and doesn't want to go to the war !

" The skipper has been summoned to the Admiralty.

" *May* 23, 1917.—At 11 a.m. we set out on our ticklish journey to Liverpool. Large protuberances resembling cantilevers of a fair-sized bridge have been tacked on to our stern, one on each quarter. They call them ' whiskers,' and the idea is that the stern tow ropes shall go round them, and give the tugs a better leverage. We had quite an imposing escort, consisting of eight sweepers, eight Liverpool tugs (fine fat fellows), eight trawlers, and six destroyers.

" The scheme is to have the sweepers ahead, an outer screen of T.B.D.s, and an inner screen of trawlers. Four tugs in two tandems tow us forward ; four tugs are aft, two on each quarter. The whiskers are useless,

as the tug masters flatly refuse to use them, saying the whiskers would part their wires.

" We successfully managed the gate entrance, and slowly went down river. At 1 p.m. we passed the Cumbraes Light, and at 2.30 p.m., about six miles farther on, the trawler *Merse*, one of our inner screen, when distant about a mile on our port bow, struck a mine and was blown to atoms. There was a large cloud of white and grey smoke, a report, and in a few seconds this cleared away and there was nothing except an oily patch and a few pieces of wood.

" She was the senior officer of trawlers' ship, and her two officers, including the captain, Lieutenant Fane, R.N.R., were in our smoking-room this morning. There were no survivors out of the crew of 15.

" I was on watch at the time, and the ' cat on hot bricks ' feeling was rather unpleasant as we slowly passed the place where she had gone. We were fortunately able to warn a heavily laden passenger ship from Brodick that was steering straight for the spot where the *Merse* went down. At half-past eight we drifted past Ailsa Crag, which looked very beautiful with the sun sinking behind it.

" The weather was gloriously fine, which was lucky, as she yawed abominably from three to seven points off her course. Speed made good 4½ knots !—and our contract speed is 23 !

" I had the middle watch, and felt very lost 80 feet above the water and with 500 feet of ship behind me, and 45 feet each side, after the modest dimensions of the *Southampton*.

" A breeze sprang up which made it very hard to steer her. We do it by signalling to the quarter-decks with coloured lamps, and by careful manipulation of the engines, as one has to be very much on one's guard against overrunning the tandems. The tide set against us in my watch, and at times we only made good 2 knots !

"*May* 23, 1917.—Our run from noon yesterday to noon to-day was 108 miles.

"The weather continues fine and hazy, which suits us, as I can't imagine what she'd do in the slightest lop. We are slowly creeping down with the Isle of Man on our starboard beam. A submarine was reported here yesterday; in one way it would be interesting to see the effect of a torpedo on these blisters. I think we could stomach one. At present (2 p.m.) I am going to get my head down for an hour and repair the ravages of the middle last night.

"*May* 24, 1917.—Arrived at Liverpool and lay for the day in the stream.

"It was ludicrous to see Cammell Laird's hard at work cutting off the whiskers which had been put on in such a hurry at Glasgow and then never used. We can't dock till they are off.

"*May* 25, 1917.—Entered Gladstone Dock, and bumped on the way in, but not badly."

. . . . . .

On the 7th September I left H.M.S. *Ramillies*, and left her still in the Gladstone Dock. I had been appointed to the torpedo school, H.M.S. *Vernon*, to do a course in torpedo work, electricity, mining, and wireless, with the object of emerging at the end of the course as a qualified lieutenant (T——) and being appointed somewhere as a specialist at an increased rate of 3*s*. a day. I had placed my name on the waiting list for the *Vernon* early in 1916, so I was not surprised when my appointment came through.

Thus ended my brief service in the *Ramillies*, in which I made one trip in tow of tugs.

CHAPTER XV

H.M.S. *VERNON*

H.M.S. *Vernon*, the home of torpedoes and electrics, was an old three-decker hulk which lay amidst the mud at the upper end of Portsmouth harbour. In actual fact she was four old ships—three connected together by bridges, and the fourth lashed alongside. For a big instructional school she suffered from the grave disadvantage of not being alongside a jetty. This was being remedied in 1917, as the whole establishment was gradually migrating to the gun-wharf, whither the mining school, own child to the *Vernon*, had already established itself.

There were nine of us undergoing the course, which lasted six months, with frequent exams. The work was fairly strenuous but very interesting, and nobody cared how hard he worked during the week, as on Friday afternoon, week-ends until Sunday night were available.

Incidentally, the Whaley week-end was not of such generous proportions, being only from Saturday morning to Sunday night.

The *Vernon* has a totally different atmosphere to Whale Island, and the difference between the two establishments is reflected in the difference between the average torpedo lieutenant and the average gunnery lieutenant. It has been said in the Service that the "gunnery jacks'" motto is "GUNS, GAITERS, AND GHUFF," whilst "Torps" live up to "COOL, CALM, AND COLLECTED." Pretending enemies of Whale Island say gunnery lieutenants are nothing but "GHUFF"; whilst those who pretend a similar enmity to all things that come from the *Vernon*, say that

torpedo men are always so calm and collected that whenever anything happens they are always asleep.

However, like the jokes levelled at different branches of the Army, all these things make a good story, and in actual practice in a ship the gunnery lieutenant and his opposite number in the torpedo world are generally hand in glove with each other, concocting schemes which they think will improve the efficiency of the ship, but which everyone else thinks are a confounded nuisance.

The naval war at Portsmouth was chiefly visible in the movements of the patrol boats. These war-designed and quickly built boats did excellent service escorting the troop-ships across the Channel. Every evening they left the harbour, took a convoy over to France, and then hurried back to Portsmouth, arriving there at 11 a.m. They fuelled and were then ready to go out again that evening.

Each boat did this for three weeks and then had a week's rest. It was tiring work, but there was always a chance of a Fritz.

Nearly every week-end I was up in London, and I was there when the great German spring offensive started and continued its irresistible advance.

It was a wonderful experience to be in the heart of the Empire on those days of tremendous peril. I rank it second only to Jutland amongst the experiences that have interested me most in the war. Day by day the line went back on the big map in the club, and one began to measure by eye the distance to the Channel ports.

It was with a feeling of awe that I watched generals come in to lunch from the War Office, looking perhaps a little more preoccupied than usual, as I wondered what *they* thought about it; they, who were in the know!

I felt very helpless, being in the Navy, for surely

those were days in which everyone ought to do something, and here was I sitting in front of a map at a club —it didn't seem right.

In the streets and restaurants of London there was a sense of strain, a tension ; London was bracing herself up to hear bad news, and right well she did bear it, as day succeeded day and still the Hunnish hordes swept on. There was not a sign of any inclination to give in in London, or admit any ending to the war except eventual victory for the Allies. In tubes, one looked over one's neighbour's paper and he said, " They've crossed the Somme "

" Ah !" you replied.

" If this goes on, we shall have to evacuate the Channel ports."

" But surely——"

" It will only add a couple of years to the war."

This was the type of conversation that could be heard on every side in London.

The situation was grave, there was no attempt to conceal the fact—it was seriously grave, and London knew it ; but her heart beat as strong as it did in the days Napoleon dominated Europe, and Pitt lay dying after Austerlitz.

London never forgets she is the chief city of the greatest Empire the world has ever known. It is possible to startle London, but she cannot be frightened. The first air raid startled London, but she soon treated them as a joke in the worst possible taste.

I saw London startled once.

It was during the great German advance, and rather against my will I joined a party for a dance. None of us felt very keen on dancing, but it was being given by three soldiers who were leaving for France next day. Of those three, but two are left, so I am glad we went, if it helped the party at all.

I was standing in a doorway, when a man in evening

dress came into the house, and came up the stairs. He stopped by me and said :

" Have you heard ? "

" What ? " I replied.

" Paris is being bombarded."

" Nonsense."

" Paris—is—being—bombarded," he repeated.

" My dear fellow, how on earth——"

" I've just come from my club, and saw it come through on the tape-machine—it's official."

" But how on earth could they ? They're 80 miles away."

" Exactly, no details are given ; but I'm a civilian and I don't know. I thought if you were in either of the Services you could tell me, is it possible ? "

" I'm in the Navy, but I've met guns, and I don't believe it is possible."

" But it says Paris—is—being—bombarded—official."

" Well, I give it up," I replied as a third man joined us, who had also come from his club and was able to confirm the amazing intelligence.

A hush spread over the room as the news travelled round ; half the people were frankly incredulous and said so, the other half were bewildered and jolted out of their attitude of expecting even the strangest things to happen in this war as a matter of course. I believed —and felt I could dance no more, and walked home.

Paris—La Ville lumière—that charming, flirtatious, delightfully naughty girl amongst the cities of the world, being lashed by Boche shells. One shuddered at the thought, it was like contemplating a pretty girl being beaten by a drunkard—and it wasn't a matter of contemplation, it was an actual fact, just over there, a few hundred miles away. Poor Paris !

. . . . . .

I am afraid I have strayed rather from the title of

my book, but the physical labour of writing entitles the scribe to occasional darts into forbidden and therefore fascinating lands, otherwise one wearies of the undertaking.

Life in the *Vernon* was very like what it is at any other big training establishment. Amongst a great many facts I was privileged to glean one of the most remarkable definitions of an alternating current ever put before the scientific world.

The lecturer was an old gunner called up for the duration, and the subject of his discourse to a class of newly joined electrical artificers was "Simple Cells." One of his class, wishing to show he had heard of electricity before, raised his hand and asked what an alternating current was. For a moment the old man hesitated, then pulling himself together he bellowed at the class as follows :

"The exact understanding of an halternatin' current ain't rightly understood by only scientific men ; but I SEZ as 'ow it's a positive current a-nippin' along a wire follered at a short relapse by a negative current a-nippin' along after it, but one don't never catch the other no-how, savee ?"

Beneath this bombardment the heckler bowed his diminished head.

. . . . . .

Having overcome all the examinations I added the letter (T) to my name in the Navy List, and after a few days in town to celebrate the occasion and spend in advance some of the extra shillings a day, I was appointed to H.M.S. *Defiance*, the Torpedo School at Devonport, for temporary duty on the staff.

The *Defiance* consists of two old ships moored within a few yards of the north shore of the St. Germans river. It has the most delightful situation imaginable. A stone's-throw distant is a lovely garden, on which one lands by an automatic ferry. A path winds up the hill

through the garden to the Defiance Halt on the Great Western Railway. A quarter of a mile away are the ship's private golf links, five sporting little holes on a promontory jutting out into the river.

There was plenty of work in the *Defiance*, and the strenuous atmosphere was well to the front. I spent all days and part of the nights during the week lecturing, setting papers, and correcting the latter.

At the end of April I was appointed to the *Maidstone* as assistant torpedo lieutenant for duty with the Harwich submarines, and I left the *Defiance* to enjoy a completely new series of experiences.

CHAPTER XVI

SUBMARINES

THE submarine has ever been a secret thing, and its very *raison d'être* presupposes secrecy and concealment, and this perhaps is why so little is known about submarines, outside the submarine service itself. The ignorance is not by any means confined to the general public, but is to be found on an extensive scale in the general service of the Navy.

Before this war, submarine officers naturally knew to a certain extent what their boats could do, though it is certain that on neither side of the North Sea did the average submarine officer realize what great potentialities were possessed by the best boats in 1914.

The rest of the Navy knew very little about submarines. The average lieutenant, commander, or captain looked on submarines as dangerous craft into which light-hearted and nerveless officers descended and went out to the open sea, escorted by a ship flying a red flag ; the submarine then dived and, after an uncertain period, rose again in an unexpected spot. Sometimes she never came up at all, and it was the general opinion in the Service that the submarine fellows fully deserved their extra six shillings a day.

Then came the war.

Until the advent of the big fleet submarines, towards 1917, the Grand Fleet hardly ever met a British submarine. In my three years in the *Southampton* I met British submarines at sea three times, and on two of these occasions we thought they were Fritzes.

The *Hogue-Aboukir-Cressy* disaster woke everybody

up to the submarine menace, and from that day every periscope seen at sea was an enemy to every surface ship, and the submarine was never given the benefit of the doubt, even when on the surface herself.

When the Germans decided to concentrate on the submarine as a weapon with which to paralyse our efforts and bring us to our knees, a vast anti-submarine organization of destroyers, trawlers, sloops, yachts, P. boats, motor-launches, aircraft, mines, nets, explosive devices, etc., came into being, and the life of a submarine at sea became a hard one.

The work of the British submarines in and out of the North Sea has been of a very dangerous nature, as is testified by the fact that their casualties in killed are a higher percentage of the whole than the casualties in killed of either the surface Navy, the Air Force, or the Army.

Their work in the North Sea has been of two kinds. Firstly, they have carried out the work of observation. Secondly, they have played a large share in the plans of the anti-submarine division at the Admiralty. Their work of observation has perhaps been the most important of all their duties, though they have, of course, attacked and sunk German surface craft on those infrequent occasions when the vision of a man-of-war through the periscope has created a red-letter day in the monotonous calendar of patrols.

In the Napoleonic wars Lord Nelson relied on his inshore squadrons, when he was cruising with his fleets off Toulon or Brest, for information concerning the movements of the enemy.

In 1914 Sir John Jellicoe was equally anxious to obtain information of German movements, but it was obviously impossible to keep a squadron of observation hovering in the Bight. The Submarine Service stepped into the breach, and, though the losses were heavy, from 6th August, 1914 to 16th November, 1918,

British submarines were keeping observation on the Bight and reporting by wireless any enemy movements.

At first, indeed, our submarines had it very much their own way, and they dived about with comparative impunity inside Heligoland and even nosed about in the entrances of the German rivers, one of our boats sticking on the mud of the German coast for some time. But the Germans soon decided to try and drive these intruders out of the Bight, and, as it is a comparatively small area of water, it was soon infested with every anti-submarine device.

Our boats withdrew slightly, but still the Germans found it almost impossible to get to the open sea without being reported, and still the British boats penetrated into the Bight in search of targets. This " going in," as it was called, though eagerly hoped for by submarine captains, was attended by heavy risks, as the way in led between our own minefields and those laid by the enemy. Concerning the former, their position could be stated with some certainty, but of the latter dimensions there was inevitably an element of doubt.

This reminds me of the classic true story, which has already appeared in a poem by " Klaxon," of the stoker's remark in a Harwich submarine. The boat was in dangerous waters and diving. Suddenly a loud bumping noise was heard, and everyone held his breath, as it was obviously a mine. The stoker looked up from a game of cards and remarked—

" Good old Tirpitz, another b——y dud ! "

The second great work of our submarines in the North Sea was anti-submarine work. The German submarines had two ways out of the North Sea : Dover or north-about. They had three holes into which to retire :

(*a*) Round the Skaw and through the Belt to Kiel.

(*b*) Straight into the Bight, by various secret chan-

nels, and thence to Emden, Wilhelmshaven, and the Elbe.

(*c*) Zeebrugge and Ostend.

On all lines of approaches to these places known to be used by Fritz, and at the exits of the North Sea, not to mention those in the outer seas, British submarines were to be found. The U.-boats knew that our boats were always lying in ambush for them, both on their comings in and goings out.

Though I have never, of course, done it myself, I have met and talked with many who have, and I think that stalking a submarine in another submarine must be one of the most thrilling things in war. Imagine yourself in a British submarine on the surface. Suddenly the captain raises his glasses, gazes at the horizon, then orders " Dive ! " and presses a button which rings an alarm in the boat. The Diesel engines are stopped, and as those on the bridge scramble down the conning-tower, the bows of the submarine begin to go under water. A few seconds after the captain has pulled the outer hatch down above his head, the waters close over with a swirl.

Once in the control room, the captain gives orders for the boat to be taken down to 60 feet, and then orders full speed on the electric motors. Before coming down he has decided on a rough course which he will steer to close the suspicious object. Minutes pass, the captain tells the first lieutenant for the sixth time that it might be a trawler, but he thinks it's a Fritz.

The first lieutenant, a sub or junior lieutenant, goes forward and satisfies himself for the hundredth time that both bow tubes are " standing by." The men are at their diving stations, each with his definite job, and probably they do not know what is happening—the captain has been too preoccupied to tell them—they watch his face for an indication of his thoughts.

At last the captain decides he will have another look ;

the speed of the boat is reduced to " slow " in order to minimize the feather of the periscope through the water, and the boat is brought up to 20 feet below the surface. The periscope is raised, the captain stretches himself up with it and looks.

" DOWN PERISCOPE ! Take her 40 feet."

Three miles away he has seen a fat Fritz ambling along on what must be about a south course, at a speed of approximately 10 knots. A hasty calculation, and the captain orders a fresh alteration of course.

Two or three minutes later he takes another peep.

Confound the brute ! he has altered to starboard. Can he have seen anything ? As things are it will be touch and go whether we can get into range. Such are the thoughts that run through the captain's mind as he orders his coxswain to steer a fresh course, and demands every ampere possible in the electric motors.

The submarine drives on at the furious speed, for under water, of 9 knots. The critical moment is approaching. The captain's anxiety communicates itself to the boat's crew, and, without being told to do so, a hush falls over the men and they converse in whispers.

Speed is reduced, and the torpedo tubes brought to the ready.

The periscope is raised for the last time, if fortune has been kind and our captain's calculations and estimations accurate. There is the Hun just coming on to the line of sight. Ninety degrees track angle. Everything in the garden is lovely. If only those torpedoes behave properly, the God of Battles has delivered Fritz into our hands.

A second of terrible doubt, whilst like a flash a hundred possibilities of what the second Dickey (first lieutenant) may or may not have omitted to do to the torpedoes, illuminates the captain's mind.

Too late to inquire now.

"Stand by. FIRE!"

There is a dull cough, a slight shake, and the torpedoes leave their tubes. The captain, riveted to the periscope, watches the tracks (if he is very strong-minded he lowers the periscope as soon as he has fired).

There is a splash in the sea!

"O Lor! one of the fish has broken surface, d—— the torpedo staff, d—— the *Vernon*, d—— the first lieutenant, d—— everything," mutters the captain.

But the Hun proceeds on his course; he has seen nothing. A pæan of thanksgiving swells in the captain's heart. A minute has passed. Any moment now——

The Hun swings round. He has seen the track too late to save himself.

The captain sees a flash, a mass of smoke, and when it clears—nothing. The crew hear and feel a dull detonation. Surface!

Up comes the British boat and cruises over the grave of her victim. It is important to get proof if possible. They *are* such sceptical blokes at the anti-submarine division. A live Hun is a good souvenir, a dead one a better, but failing these a bit of a Hun, or some uniform or wood from a submarine, or, at the worst, a bucket of German fuel—there will always be lots of that.

Then there comes the return to the depot, the cheering reception, the congratulations of the captain (S) and the mess, the celebration in the mess, and finally, a month or so later—

> *London Gazette.*—To be a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, Lieutenant John Smith, R.N., for service in action against submarines.

. . . . . .

That is one side of the picture. Of the other and more frequent side, when no flash rewards the waiting

eye, let us not think—it's so depressing. The marvellous thing is that any submarine ever hits another one, when the inevitable inaccuracies of the torpedo as a weapon, and the extraordinary difficulties under which an attack has to be made, are considered.

I must repeat, I have never attacked a Fritz myself, though I was in a boat once when we started to attack one. But people who have had dealings with Fritz have kindly read the above account, and tell me that they can recognize what it is supposed to be about—and *that*, from a mess-mate, is high praise indeed!

Any survey, however brief, of the work of our submarines in this war in the North Sea would be incomplete without a few words concerning the "egg-layers," or mine-laying submarines.

The Germans used this type of craft on an extensive scale, and the small "U.C." type of mine-layers, which operated from the Flanders ports, was known in the German Service as the suicide club, as their losses were terrific.

We also used submarine mine-layers, working from Harwich, and many dangerous trips, not always without loss, were undertaken by these craft.

I think the best one I know of was done by one of the mine-layers soon after I reached Harwich. The boat in question found a buoyed channel leading up to Heligoland, trusted to her luck and followed the line of buoys, eventually laying a minefield practically in the anti-submarine gate of the boom near the island. One of the most astounding features of the trip was that the boat was on the surface whilst the mines were being laid, and barely 200 yards away a German patrol boat drifted about with her crew, singing songs on the forecastle.

The captain of that boat now wears a D.S.O.

. . . . . .

Life in a submarine depot is quite different to that

in any other kind of depot, as the officers and crews of the submarines do not live in their boats when in harbour, but they have quarters in the depot ship.

Consequently the depot ship is like a floating club, and the submarines lie in serried rows alongside her. As life in a submarine on a ten-days' patrol, in even the finest weather, is not exactly a picnic, whilst in bad weather it approaches the indescribable, everything possible is done to refresh and rest the submarine crews whilst they are in harbour between trips.

Every branch of the Service produces its own special type, and the Submarine Service is no exception to this rule. The submarine officer's job is more a one-man show than any other job in the Service, and in this fact lies its attraction ; and this explains why there are always quantities of volunteers from the best type of officers.

The submarine officer holds in the hollow of his hand the lives of his crew and the safety of his boat ; so, might it be argued, does the company officer, or the lieutenant in command of a destroyer. In a sense, this is true ; but at least in the latter cases the men see where they are being led to.

In submarines they do not. Only about three of the crew can see the gauges which tell them whether they are at 3 feet or 300 feet below the surface. They may not even know if they are being hunted, or whether they are the hunter.

Suppose a submarine is cruising along on patrol, and a flight of German seaplanes swoop down along the glare of the sun's rays, as has often happened to our boats, down she goes in a crash dive. If they are near the German coast probably the seaplanes will soon have destroyers on the scene. Bombs begin to fall. What is to be done next ?

Keep the boat where she is, in the hope that they will think she will move away ? Or move away in the

hopes that they will think she has stayed where she is ? Fascinating psychological problem, but, meanwhile—more bombs fall—sudden thought, is the depth insufficient ? Do they see a long, cigar-shaped shadow under the sea ? No ! hardly possible in 150 feet. But perhaps a tank is leaking ! Is there a trail of oil meandering to the surface ?

Silence.

They seem to have gone. Is it safe to come up and have a peep, or are they sitting on the water waiting for the boat to do this very thing ? Better give them another half an hour.

The first lieutenant is told to start the gramophone—the sailors start eating.

What is this faint drumming noise that gets louder and louder until it roars overhead like an express train ? Destroyers' propellers without a doubt. All is silence again. The strains of " Daddy, don't go down the Mine To-night " die away (why do the sailors always choose such inappropriate tunes ?). It would be dangerous to move now ; probably the destroyers are lying with their engines stopped, listening on their hydrophones for the sound of the submarine's propellers.

The boat stays where she is.

Ominous faint scratching sound heard aft, gets louder and becomes a rasping sound which passes overhead and dies away for'ard.

Every one breathes again. The jumping wire which stretches from the bow to the stern over the conning-tower has successfully deflected the wire or chair sweep which the Germans are dragging along the bottom.

Question is : Do the Huns know roughly where the boat is, or don't they ?

BANG !

The boat shakes, and a few lights go out. This looks

bad ; depth charging so close as that would seem to show they do know where the boat is.

BANG !

Good ! farther away.

BANG !

Excellent ! still farther away. That first one must have been a lucky fluke.

BANG ! BANG ! BANG !

Hullo ! they seem to have got the idea there's something over there—what's the rough bearing ?—North !

Then this is her chance, and slowly the boat creeps away to the southward, to rise at nightfall and charge her electric batteries, and raise the slender mast from which runs the delicate aerial with which she speaks nightly to distant England. And some one at a roll-top desk a few minutes later receives a flimsy signal sheet on which is laconically recorded that—

" In Lat. X.y. Long. P.q. bombed by seaplanes, and subsequently attacked unsuccessfully by surface craft, considered to be destroyers."

On the bridge of the submarine R—— says to C——, " Pity Stevie wasn't doing a joy-ride with us ; he'd have made a regular *Daily Mail* yarn out of that muckodah ! "

To revert to submarine officers. To them responsibility is the breath of life. Once clear of the harbour and on their billet it's each for himself and a torpedo take the hindmost.

A submarine officer in the British Service, which differs in this respect from the U.-boat service, is also *au fait* with all the technical details of his boat. He thus has to be a bit of an oil-engine engineer, an electrical engineer, and an hydraulic engineer, besides being a navigator and a leader of men ; though it is true the last quality is inborn and can hardly be made. And yet with all these accomplishments the average

submarine officer is rather distrustful of novelties, especially if they are of the nature of scientific instruments.

I think this trait is due to the fact that submarines are such a mass of mechanism in a small space that even as an overloaded stomach will rebel against the choicest foods, so do submarine officers look with instinctive mistrust on any proposals to put more gear into the boats—" Save me from my scientific friends," is rather their cry.

When in harbour the submarine officer very sensibly, like everyone else, has as good a time as he possibly can. But the contrast between sea and harbour is so great for a submarine officer that I think he enjoys the delights of harbour, or perhaps I should say he appreciates them, more than his brother in a battleship.

After all, even in a destroyer you can get a bath at sea if you take the trouble to do so. You can also get fresh air and sunlight—too much of the former sometimes.

Also, in war-time, with the submarine officer there is an underlying feeling of, " Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow——" Such a feeling is inevitable in an admittedly dangerous Service.

CHAPTER XVII

H.M.S. *MAIDSTONE*—SUBMARINE DEPOT SHIP

On the 20th April or thereabouts I found myself on the platform of Parkestone Quay surrounded by fifteen bits of luggage. Vague recollections of previous departures for Germany from Parkestone Quay came back to me as I walked on to the quay and saw two large steamers moored alongside.

I was directed to the *Maidstone* and there found that the other ship was an overflow ship known as the *Pandora*, one of her chief claims to fame being a super-cocktail, which is known to the Submarine Service as "The Pandora."

It was about 6 p.m., and I inquired for the commander in order to report my arrival. I was directed to "The Badminton Shed," where I found the officer in question amongst a lot of ladies playing Badminton with more energy than skill.

My opinion of the *Maidstone* at once rose to great heights, as it was evident that the presence of war did not preclude the presence of the gentler influences of civilization—a state of affairs which I have always supported to the utmost.

A day or two was spent in exploring the depot, and I found that there was a third ship farther down the jetty, to wit, H.M.S. *Forth*.

Amongst other places of interest I discovered a billiard-room, a whole series of torpedo, electrical, and mining workshops and stores, a theatre, a rabbit warren of offices, a chapel, and a pub. The "pub" was the Parkestone Quay Hotel.

Later on, when I had settled down, I bought a horse, and I found stables in the establishment. In fact, it would be difficult to say what we could not find in Parkestone. I could continue for pages describing the piggeries, the duckeries, the heneries, the Petty Officers' Club, the periscope room, the wet canteen, the dry canteen, the barber's shop, etc. etc.

It was, in fact, a small town in many ways. Over all these shore establishments the commander of the depot presided as Chief Magistrate under Captain (S).

The warlike side of the depot consisted of a flotilla of " E " and " C " boats, mostly " E " boats with the first of the " L " class of boats joining up as they were finished. The bulk of the flotilla were " Es "—boats of pre-war design, but many of them war construction—excellent boats that have dived beneath all the waters from the Murman Coast to the Azores, and from Gibraltar to Constantinople.

As soon as I had looked round the depot I decided that I had better start learning my job ; as a torpedo lieutenant's business in a submarine flotilla is quite different to what it is anywhere else. My knowledge of submarines was contained in the instinctive idea, which three years in the Fleet had imbued into me, that if one saw a periscope, one rammed it on sight.

In the course of the first six months at Harwich I was able to learn quite a lot about submarines. I found that my job was really a species of staff job on the staff of the Captain (S——). The torpedo department carried out big electrical repairs beyond the capacity of the boats and supplied the boats with good torpedoes as necessary.

Every day when the weather permitted, three of the boats in harbour went outside Harwich accompanied by a destroyer, and dived in what was known as the exercising ground, firing their torpedoes at the destroyer.

It was frequently my business to go out in the destroyer as marking officer.

Sometimes one submarine submerged, fired at another one on the surface. If a torpedo behaved badly when fired for exercise we withdrew it from the boat and gave them another one.

I had immediate charge of the torpedo allocation, and used to play a game with the first lieutenants of the boats. If a torpedo ran badly, they said it was a horrible thing given to them in bad condition by my minions, whilst I said that the best torpedo in the world required a little looking after.

The game consisted in both sides endeavouring to obtain definite proof to bolster up the preliminary statements and accusations which were made from both sides as soon as the boat came in from exercising. When the pile of papers to be dealt with in the office became too nauseating, I generally accepted a standing invitation which had been extended to me to go out for a day's running in the boats.

On black days, torpedoes sank, and then I had to go out and look for them, using an abomination known as the single torpedo trawl. The sort of thing that happened which gave me a day of this amusement was as follows :

" Come out running with us to-morrow, S——? " suggested C——.

" Well, I don't know whether I can manage it," I replied. " There is a good deal going on in the depot."

" Oh, you can manage it," he answered.

" Well, what's the attraction ? " I inquired.

" I should have thought that the pleasure of a few hours with R—— and myself would have attracted you," he said ; " but since it requires other lures, I tell you what, we'll give you some special submarine soup for lunch."

I know that soup of old.

" I shall be there. What time do you shove off ? "

" 10.30 a.m. unless the mail is late, when we wait as long as we can till we're kicked out."

Next morning I proceeded outside the harbour in H.M. Submarine " E —" for the purpose of running her torpedoes for exercise.

On arrival at the exercise ground, we selected a spot free from light cruisers, destroyers, and mine-sweepers, and dived. Our first movement was " to the bottom," but after much pumping and blowing of tanks we achieved the feat known as " catching a trim," and proceeded to attack the destroyer, which goes out daily to be fired at.

All things being in order, C—— poked his periscope up, and fired a torpedo with what we hoped would prove consummate skill. We surfaced, and were somewhat upset to see the destroyer approaching us.

" Your torpedo broke surface and sank. I have buoyed the spot," was the depressing signal we received.

With our minds full of dark suspicions we consumed our submarine soup, as we jogged back to harbour. C——, as captain of the boat, suspected carelessness on the part of the first lieutenant. The first lieutenant suspected carelessness on the part of his torpedo gunner's mate, who had got the torpedo ready.

Myself, as torpedo lieutenant, blamed the boat collectively. All these were unspoken thoughts. Aloud, my hosts insinuated that the torpedo as a weapon was a wrong 'un. I, with their beautiful soup warming the cockles of my heart, told strange tales of torpedoes which had refused to run properly, although they had passed every test. I felt I could do no less.

Next day I embarked on board the trawler *John J. Boot*, to sweep for the missing lamb. We went alongside the jetty to embark what is known as the " Single Trawl." This consists of two enormous doors, or

wooden flaps, each weighing over a ton. The space between them is bridged by a jungle of wire, with quarter lines, tripping lines, head lines, and the whole finished off and rendered delightfully ponderous with a massive chain bottom line.

Skipper M'Pherson, R.N.R.,[1] in charge of H.M. ship *J. Boot* greeted me.

"Ahr ye the officer for the torpedo?"

I admitted my identity.

"Yon terrawl is an unchristian beetch ta work," he announced. "Ah've wurked her twice mysel', so I ken weel she's a verra beetch of a terrawl," he added.

We began to get the "terrawl" into the ship by sections.

M'Pherson directed operations in Scotch, with a certain number of Anglo-Saxon adjectives.

"Ah've wurked the —— twice," he shouted to the mate, who endeavoured to air his views on the best methods of slinging the doors, "so ah ken weel, ye darned argyfying hound, the precise fashion she lies."

"Aye, aye, have yer say, M'Pherson, but ye'll find I'm richt when we shoot the terrawl," retorted the mate, to the huge delight of the eight R.N. sailors I had brought with me to assist.

The engineer added to the gaiety of nations by poking his head up the engine-room hatch, and on sighting the mass of wire, he exclaimed—

"God sakes, that —— cat's cradle! We'll no' be hame the nicht," with which he retired again to the depths.

On arrival at the scene of the disaster, we shot the trawl, which, to the amazement of the whole crew, behaved quite nicely.

M'Pherson even went so far as to say she was "verra reesainable," and publicly taunted the mate by saying, "Eh, M'Tavish, what for is the terrawl no' on its side, eh, mon? Who was richt the noo, eh, mon?

[1] Fictitious.

haven't I wurked her twice mysel' ? "

The mate was reduced to muttering dark hints that it was " early day ta sing a sang aboot it."

Laboriously the *J. Boot* stemmed the tide, dragging this monstrosity of steel and wire across the bottom. Three times we sighted the trawl. That is to say, the upper deck of the trawler was covered with snake-like wires, which from moment to moment either sang like violin strings, or else writhed in deadly coils.

The mate at the winch and the skipper on the bridge cursed everybody. From the depths of the tiny little cabin under the wheel-house, where I was enjoying two most perfectly fried soles, I caught snatches of dialogues:

" What for, M'Tavish, you —— loon, ha' ye no' snatached yon wire ? "

" Na, na, na, na, yer ——. I didna say yon terripin wire, yon wee one ; aye, that's the one."

" Why the —— —— do you no' heave on your winch, mate ? "

" Losh, mon, canna ye see the terrawl is foul abaft yer gallows ? "

" Haul awa, haul awa ! "

" Can ye see a tarpedo ? "

Voice from one of my sailors : " Only thing in this 'ere sanguinary net is a blinkin' crab. 'Ere, come 'ere, 'Erbert. Ow ! the swab's bit me with 'is claw."

" All hands haul on yer wires and make her a bittock ship-shape syne we shoot the terrawl."

" Let go yer doors."

Splash, splash, and amidst parting execrations the trawl went to the bottom.

Gradually the day grew old, and as the sun turned to red and traced a track of blood across the calm sea, we rocked gently to the wash of fast sweepers, day patrols, destroyers, and all the evening traffic of a naval base hurrying back to save daylight. Overhead two sea-

planes droned west, weary from a five hours' patrol across the other side.

M'Pherson indicated the scene with the stem of his pipe.

" It's uncommon fine fer the season. There'll be fog the morn—it's a guid life the sea, when it's arl soft and smooth like a bonnie bairn. I mind me on the west coast——"

There was a jerk that threw us against the standard compass.

" The terrawl has catched," briefly announced M'Pherson.

The sailors, who were singing songs round the galley fire, rushed out and manned the wires. The winch rattled and spat steam from many leaky joints. The trawl held, and the *J. Boot* was drawn bodily over the obstruction. The winch ground on, and the huge main lifting wires stretched and vibrated with the strain. When the ship had heeled to an angle of ten degrees, the winch stopped :

" Will she do nae mair ? " demanded M'Pherson.

" She's doin' a' that's reasonable and mair," replied the mate.

" Is she open foo' ? "

" She'll bust her guts, M'Pherson," pleaded the mate.

" Open yon steam cock to the fu'. Yer a mutinous hound, M'Tavish."

The winch gave a convulsive heave, the trawl lifted perhaps a foot, then I think its bottom fell out at the same moment as both wires parted and, narrowly missing several heads, flicked viciously over the side.

M'Pherson looked long at the disturbance in the water, then turning to the engine-room voice-pipe intoned :

" Hame, Jock ; push her arl ye dare."

" I kenned weel that damned impetious fule M'Pherson would try her tu hard," said the mate to my petty

officer, who was rather scandalized to hear the first lieutenant of a ship criticizing his captain so openly.

As the *J. Boot* shuddered through the water in her efforts to make 7 knots, M'Pherson said to me :

" Leftenant, I ha' read in a buik that it was said concairning that singular unfoortoonate monarch, Charley the First, that in arl his unhappy and meeserable exeestence, nothing so became the cheel as the manner in which he left it. Ah'm of the opeenion mysel' yon terrawl is very similar."

But as was subsequently discovered, the terrawl had died game, trying to lift a small steamer.

. . . . .

Besides the torpedo work and electrical and wireless matters, it was our duty in the torpedo department to prepare the mines and load them into the submarine mine-layers. The mines were given a thorough test before they went to the loading jetty in railway trucks, where a crane lifted each mine and lowered it head downwards into the empty tubes each side of the submarine.

The mine-layers were not out for more than three days, as a rule, as their procedure was to go straight over to the other side, insinuate themselves amongst the minefields, lie on the bottom until a suitable moment arrived, having regard to the tide, then rise, lay the " eggs " and return as fast as possible.

I found all the work very interesting and the days slipped by very quickly.

I soon felt I wanted to go on a trip in a submarine and see what it was like, and it happened that B—— in E31 had given me a standing invitation to go with him whenever I cared, just before an order came for him to do a short three-day patrol at a place called X1 on the chart, which was a favourite haunt of U.-boats. I obtained permission from the captain and went out with E31 as a working guest.

Whilst out in the boat I scribbled some notes as to what went on, as has often been my amusement when enjoying new experiences. I propose quoting these notes, in the original, as illustrating the daily life and ordinary routine in a submarine at sea.

. . . . .

NOTES ON A PATROL TRIP TO XI IN E31
WRITTEN DURING THE TRIP

"*June* 1, 1918, 8 a.m.—Having victualled the ship the day previous with all things necessary, including white bread and fresh butter, which submariners alone are entitled to these hard times, and also two tins (large) of pineapple as my small share, we sailed in fine weather from Parkestone Quay; being on board—Lieutenant R. B—— in command, Lieutenant M. B——, hereinafter known as Maurice, as second hand, Lieutenant G——, R.N.R., in lieu of the proper navigator, he being stricken down by Spanish flu the night before, myself, some twenty-five sailors, also ten torpedoes.

"I created a small impression in the boat by saying that I knew I was going to bring the boat luck, and that we would see something. R. B—— sceptical, and says he never sees anything on patrol.

. . . . .

"This part, though not without humour, is unfortunately unprintable—it concerns what Alphonse Daudet calls *La petite chambre au bout du corridor*, which in a submarine is a very remarkable place.

. . . .

"An E-boat is divided into—the fore-end, which contains two tubes and four torpedoes; from this compartment three steps lead down to the ward-room and control-room.

"On the port side of the boat are the electric switchboards, and on the starboard side are two bunks, a few

drawers, and a table which slides out from under a cupboard, and this starboard side of the boat, screened off by a curtain, is the ward-room.

" At the after end of this part of the boat, about halfway between the stem and the stern, is a place called the " control-room." Here are the periscopes, hydroplane motors, etc., and the vertical ladder which leads up through a hatch to the conning-tower : from which a further ladder leads through another hatch to the top of the conning-tower, which is the fore-bridge. These two hatches are known as the ' upper and lower lids.'

" Proceeding aft down the centre of the boat, one scrambles over two beam torpedo tubes, and leaving an extraordinary little cubby hole on the right (the wireless cabinet) one enters a narrow passage between the two Diesel engines. This leads to the after-end, which contains the motors and the stern tube.

" Outside the boat are ' saddle tanks ' known as the externals ; these give her buoyancy, and when the boat is on the surface they are empty.

" Inside the pressure hull are various ' internal tanks' used for trimming the boat in a longitudinal direction and for compensating for the loss in weight due to fuel, lubricating oil, fresh water, etc.

" The electric batteries extend under the centre compartments before the engine-room.

" The methods used for shifting water from tank to tank, or passing it overboard, are either by using a pump, or else by compressed air.

" So much for the general arrangement of the boat.

" We are now (9 a.m.) proceeding in a north-easterly direction to a spot about 40 miles east of Orfordness.

" 3.30 p.m.—Arrived at our patrol billet and found extraordinarily high visibility—buoys showing up 10 to 12 miles. Dived to attack one, being under a mis-

apprehension. As soon as we had dived, examination of the chart revealed its ' buoyishness.'

" At this juncture Colonel Sperry [1] went wrong and tried to ' chuck his hand in.' Maurice and I played with the old gentleman and got him more or less right—one of the hunting contacts had jammed over.

" Lunch at 12.30 consisted of a huge pie, a super-excellent milk pudding, and pineapple chunks.

" At 1 p.m. we surfaced to communicate by wireless, but we failed to get through.

" Dived at 1.15 p.m. and resumed periscope lookout.

" The procedure at the periscope is that one of us takes his station at that instrument and very slowly walks round in a circle, turning the periscope as he goes, using one eye with the periscope in high power. Then the operator puts the periscope to 30 degrees elevation up, and sweeps rapidly round the sky for aeroplanes —this is called skyscraping—then he puts the periscope to horizontal and goes slowly round the sea, using the other eye at the periscope. We each do this for two hours, and it is a considerable strain on the eyes.

" After lunch, G—— went to the periscope, and Maurice, B——, and I slept.

" At 3.50 surfaced for wireless. The sea was wonderfully calm, and the day brilliantly fine. To the south-eastward, the guns in France were rumbling very clearly. We lengthened the spark right out and succeeded in establishing communication.

" At 4 p.m. dived—ordered tea, and renewed periscope lookout.

" 10.30 p.m.—At 6 p.m. I went to the periscope until 6.50 p.m., when we surfaced for wireless. B—— and I had just got up on the bridge, when he noticed something suspicious to the south-west. We dived at once, and proceeded at full speed under water to try and cut it off.

[1] Colonel Sperry—the Sperry gyroscopic compass.

"At the expiration of twenty minutes, nothing having been seen through the periscope, we rose again and saw nothing from the bridge.

B—— had just given the order to dive again, when a Fritz surfaced about 4 miles south-west of us, off the entrance to X1 channel. Simultaneously, to our intense annoyance, destroyers and sweepers appeared out of some haze to the north-east of us. The destroyers at once rushed towards us, and we hastily shot up recognition signals and challenged with a lamp.

" They were the leading ships of a ' beef trip ' coming back from Holland, and their arrival was most inopportune, as Fritz at once dived. He was evidently plunging about, waiting for the convoy.

" Having established our identity, we closed the convoy, which consisted of sweepers, eleven destroyers, and nine merchant ships. We passed a floating mine *en route*. We told the convoy there was a Fritz ahead of them, and then we ambled to the north-east on the surface, charging our batteries as we went along.

" The convoy made a beautiful picture, the merchant ships steaming steadily along, and the destroyers shooting about round them, leaving broad wakes and rolling washes across the glassy sea, in which the rays of the setting sun were reflected blood-red.

" Between 9 and 10 we got through a massive dinner. As musical entertainment we counted twenty-six depth charge concussions to the southward of us, so evidently Fritz is being well hotted up by the destroyers; evidently they located him or else he attacked the convoy.

" Never in my life have I eaten such enormous quantities of food, or felt so fit at sea—submarining in this weather for a day or two is all right.

" I have arranged to help with the watch-keeping from midnight until we dive, so I think I'll snatch an hour's sleep. We intend dodging about between the

north and south minefields during the night, charging batteries on one engine.

" *July* 2, 1918, 10.30.—Went up at 12.30 a.m. last night, or rather this morning, to relieve Maurice, not having been able to sleep at all in the lower bunk.

" It was an absolutely still, calm night, with a sickle moon just rising, more suited to love-making than war ! The sea was extremely phosphorescent, and the millions of small bubbles and sparkling phosphorescence from our saddle tanks gave the boat the appearance of a diamond-brooch submarine moving in a sea of liquid fire. To be practical—I wonder if it shows up at a distance.

" The bridge is very small to keep watch on, as one can walk only three steps in a fore and aft direction and nothing at all sideways. There were three of us on the bridge : B——, who dozed in a chair, a lookout, and myself.

" At 3 a.m. it began to dawn, and as we were making smoke, we stopped and trimmed down ready for instant diving, and thus lay waiting and watching, rolling to a very gentle swell.

" At 4 a.m. it was quite daylight, so, having drawn a blank, we dived to 70 feet and trimmed the boat for the day.

I then turned in and slept like a log on the camp-bed till 8.30, when I got up and relieved G—— at the periscope, whilst Maurice had his breakfast. Then I had mine, consisting of eggs and bacon (I daren't put down the number of eggs). I had previously dreamt about this dish, doubtless due to the fact that from 6 a.m. onwards, eggs and bacon were being cooked continuously within a foot of my head.

" 11 a.m.—Surface for wireless—very calm—nothing in sight. Tried to get through to Felixstowe—no luck. I cannot make out why, for radiation seems good ; probably because we are working on that very congested wave ' D.'

" Telegraphist has a temperature of 102° F., which does not help. Other cases of flu in the boat; Maurice sickening for it.

" Heard the guns in France—a continuous impressive rumble.

" 11.30 a.m.—Plunged, and resumed periscope lookout. I lay comatose till lunch, which I ate by myself; the others were at the war, a suspicious object having been sighted at 1 p.m. We lost it again, whatever it was, though we attacked it. Submerged for about an hour.

" 4–5 p.m.—At the periscope, walking round like a squirrel in its cage—bit of a lop on the sea.

" 5.30 p.m.—Tea and the Shipwash Lightship in sight. As there are mines in this direction, at six o'clock we surfaced to ventilate the boat and get away to the north-east on the surface.

" 6.30 p.m.—Plunged—I slept for an hour.

" 8 p.m.—Heavy dinner! We are now waiting for dark to surface and start charging.

" 10 p.m.—Surfaced.

" 10.4 p.m.—Crash dived.

" 10.6 p.m.—B—— has just told me that the reason for the sudden manner in which he trod on my head as I followed him up the conning-tower was that, as he put his head out of the top, he saw the conning-tower of a Fritz emerge from the sea about 800 yards away.

" It has been quite an exciting half an hour, as at the moment of writing we have come up again and are now proceeding on one engine, in the hope that he may come up to charge. All tubes are ready, as we might run into him at any moment, though it is too dark to hope for much. I am about to go up on watch.

" 11 p.m.–1 a.m.—On watch, altering course 16 points each hour; sea force 3 to 4, but a clear night.

" At 1 a.m. was relieved by G——, upon which I got into a sleeping-bag and dozed till 6.30, when I relieved

Maurice at the periscope, the boat having dived at dawn—nothing in sight.

"At 8 a.m. had breakfast with B——, after which meal we surfaced at the eastern end of X1 Channel and sighted our sweepers right ahead. Proceeded into War Channel, and passing down same arrived at Parkestone after lunch.

"B—— admitted that I had justified my claim to be a joss-piece,[1] and says he has reserved me for a trip as soon as he gets his new boat."

. . . . . .

The boat (C21) which relieved us on this job was attacked by seaplanes just off the Shipwash. They bombed her, and when she was unable to dive attacked her with machine-gun fire.

Her captain, Lieutenant Bell, and several men were shot down on the bridge. Bell fought to the last with a Lewis gun.

E51 hearing the disturbance also got mixed up in the show.

The Germans claim to have sunk C21 ; this was not correct, as she came into Harwich in tow of a destroyer that evening.

[1] Joss-piece = mascot.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE END

DAY followed day, and each brought its victory as the summer drew on and became autumn. Like Walpole, one had to read the papers carefully in case one should miss a success.

I flew up to Yarmouth in October, going up in a big Curtis boat, and coming back, after a two-days' visit to the submarine depot there, in a D.H.9, in which we were obliged to make a forced landing of a mildly exciting nature near Martlesham. We broke our propeller, which stuck into the ground. I thus achieved my desire of going over, upon, and under the sea in time of war.

On the 9th of November I went out with J. G—— in his L-boat to do her torpedo trials. They were partially successful, as one unrehearsed incident took place.

J. G—— and myself were smoking together on the bridge with the boat stopped, waiting for the first lieutenant to report that he was ready to fire another torpedo. I was looking at the bows of the boat, and could hardly believe my eyes when I suddenly saw a line of bubbles appear, and shoot away towards our attendant destroyer, which was stopped about half a mile away. One of the torpedoes had gone out of its own accord, and was streaking towards the destroyer! We waved flags, blew our whistles, signalled, and made as much commotion as we could, but long before they could do anything the torpedo bobbed up just ahead of them, with a sort of "who'd have thought it" look on its face.

On our return to harbour, J. G—— and myself prepared to go and offer explanations (if any) to Captain S—— concerning the contretemps. We found much excitement on board, as a signal had just arrived saying the Armistice had been signed. Under the circumstances, we found no explanations were wanted.

I at once saddled my horse, and in fulfilment of an ancient vow rode up into the town and ordered a lot of plain clothes.

When I got back to the ship, I found the gloomiest crowd of officers I've ever seen. The signal had been cancelled ; it was a false alarm. Perhaps the saddest soul was the fellow who had put up drinks all round, on the strength of having won the war-sweep.

But the end was at hand ; and on the 11th November, 1918, at the eleventh hour, I wrote :

" 11 a.m.—As I write these words it is over.

" I don't suppose I shall ever quite realize exactly what I do feel, and what the fact that it is all over really means.

" The past month has seen events rushing madly along the old-age path of history. It has been almost impossible to do more than follow with breathless excitement the successive stages of the collapses of Bulgaria, Turkey, and Austria-Hungary ; finally, at 5 a.m. this morning, just as I awoke with a strange feeling of unrest and remained wide-eyed till 7.30, it appears that the Armistice was signed.

" 12.15 p.m.—At 11.15 the lower deck was cleared, and the whole depot gathered in Number 3 shed, where the captain said :

" ' My lads, I can't make a speech, I'm too excited, but I have a signal here to read to you : " Admiralty to all ships. Armistice is signed ; hostilities are to be suspended forthwith. All anti-submarine measures in force till further notice. Submarines on surface not to be attacked unless hostile intentions are obvious.

Armistice to be announced at 11.00. All general methods of demonstrations to be permitted and encouraged, including bands."

" ' I now call for three cheers for the King, and one more for the Submarine Service.'

" The whole building shook.

" The band then played the National Anthem, which was sung with a fervour I've never heard equalled before.

" The band, escorted by hundreds of sailors and officers, then emerged from the shed, and the piano, surrounded by as many musicians as possible, was placed on a trolley.

" By virtue of having started a band here, I was pushed up on top of the piano, from which position I conducted the band, as, surrounded by a surging, cheering mob, we played furiously whilst the whole bandstand was slowly pulled along the railway lines through the depot.

" I got very excited, which as usual gave rise to a misleading impression, as an E.R.A. in the crowd was heard to say :

" ' He's all right, he is, but I shouldn't have liked to have paid for all the drinks he's had ! '

" As a matter of fact, he would only have had to pay for one ginger ale !

" Champagne (preserved for this day) is on tap in the mess, every ship in the harbour is blowing off her siren, and rockets and Very lights are shooting sky-high.

" A great day.

" To-night we dine the captain, with the band playing in the smoking-room.

" *Nov.* 12, 1918.—We had a great time last night, and there are a lot of fat-heads about to-day.

" The band played *à merveille*, and after dinner we danced and skylarked in the mess. I dressed B—— up as a girl, and myself as a Rear-Admiral.

" From 8.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. every syren in the harbour screamed, every bell was rung, rockets, Very lights, flares, and grenades went up in all directions beneath the waving beams of many searchlights.

" Thus ended my second life, which had lasted from 4th August, 1914 to 11th November, 1918. I hope my third life will be of a different kind, for in the course of my second life I have found someone to share the third with me !

" This book should really end here, but just as I found it suitable to write a chapter on the prelude to the war, so it seems suitable to devote a few words to the aftermath of the war, which in my case has meant the surrender of the U.-boats and the subsequent work in connection with them."

CHAPTER XIX

THE U.-BOAT SURRENDER

THE 20th November, 1918, will ever rank as an anniversary without precedent in the history of sea warfare. For upon that date the first instalment of the German submarines surrendered to the British Navy in general, and to the British Submarine Service in particular.

The surrender of these first ships of the German Navy had a double interest, firstly, in that, preceding as it did by twenty-four hours the surrender of the surface craft to the Grand Fleet, it was a test case as to the willingness of the German Navy to submit to this unprecedented humiliation; and, secondly, there was something altogether incredible in the idea that submarines would arrive at a position on the sea and surrender. Most of us felt that a surface ship might possibly be expected to surrender; but we found it extraordinarily hard to imagine that very shy bird Fritz walking into the cage.

It was decided that Harwich should be the port of surrender, and the honour of receiving these surrenders was reserved for the officers and men of the British Submarine Service.

That they have fully earned such an honour is testified by the fact that our Submarine Service has the melancholy privilege of possessing a higher percentage of casualties than any other branch of the three services. I have said this once, but I repeat it, lest one forgets.

In the fullness of time the records will show what was gained for the Empire in exchange for the long list of boats that never came back. Harwich, or to be ac-

curate, Parkeston Quay, had been the home of the 8th and 9th flotillas since August 1914. It was from here that two boats went into the Bight on patrol on 6th August, 1914 at 2 a.m., and on the night of the Armistice the depot had her boats on the observation billets across the other side. The watch had been kept for four years and a hundred days.

In order that all might share the "Fun of the Fair," and also in order to obtain the necessary personnel, submarine officers and men gathered to the *Maidstone* at Parkeston Quay from all parts of England. The messes in the depot ships were packed, and the night of the 19th was a merry one, for it is questionable if there had ever been so many submarine officers gathered together in one place before; and the cause of the gathering was enough to make the dumb sing.

In the evening a train-load of reporters and cinematograph and camera kings descended on Harwich. The commander of the depot strove manfully to put a gallon into a pint pot, and we believe that a bed for the lady reporter was found on the billiard-table.

The start was at 7 a.m., at which hour the boarding parties under Captain S——, the reporters, and camp followers, embarked on two destroyers, the *Melampus* and *Firedrake*. Both these ships had met Fritz before during the war, with in each case disastrous results to Fritz.

The Harwich forces of light cruisers and destroyers left on the evening of the 19th to meet the Huns and escort them to the place of surrender, which was at the southern end of the Sledway, or about seven miles east-north-east of Felixstowe. The appointed hour was 10 a.m., and a thick fog hung over the water as the two destroyers cautiously felt their way down harbour; but once through the boom defences it cleared somewhat, and we were at the rendezvous by 9.30 a.m. On the way out we passed close to the Cork Lightship; her

occupants were in great spirits, and one man from the rigging bellowed out :

" Out you go, you —— rascals, and bring the ——s in " : an exhortation which was seconded by cheers from the lightship's crew.

The whole time one had to pinch oneself to make sure that one was really out there to collect U.-boats and that the whole thing was not a dream. Suddenly a " British Zepp." droned out of the mist, circled round and vanished again to the northward.

At 9.55 a hull appeared, which resolved itself into the *Danae*, one of the latest light cruisers. Close behind her, and looking sadly in need of a coat of paint, came a white transport. She was flanked on either side by destroyers. This seemed promising, but where were the Fritzes ? A gap of half a mile, and then a smaller transport ambled out of the fog—more British destroyers—a " Blimp " overhead, then a startled voice broke the silence with—

" By Jove : there's a ruddy Fritz."

There was a rush to the port side of the *Firedrake*, which heeled over like a paddle steamer full of tourists at a naval review. From the north, a long line of a hull with a dome-shaped conning-tower in the centre slid across the water. No boat built in a British yard ever looked like that—the Huns had come. She was followed by five others in straggling order. One was a large new vessel (U.135) elaborately camouflaged and mounting a 6-inch gun forward.

It is impossible to describe in words the feelings of the officers and men who witnessed this amazing sight. Try and imagine what you would feel like if you were told to go to Piccadilly at 10 a.m. and see twenty man-eating tigers walk up from Hyde Park Corner and lie down in front of the Ritz to let you cut their tails off and put their leads on—and it really was so. Add to these impressions the fact that many of those present

had been hunting Fritz for over four years, in which period a man who could boast, " I have seen six Fritzes and heard them four times on my hydrophones," was accounted favoured by the gods, and you may get an insight into what British crews felt.

More boats drifted out of the fog and anchored under the guns of the British destroyers. Motor-launches came alongside the *Firedrake* and *Melampus*, to take our crews over to the Huns. Each party consisted of two or three officers and about 15 men.

Actually I was with the party that boarded U.90, and as the proceedings in each case were very similar, I shall describe what happened here.

The four officers composing our party were armed, and it may safely be said that we were prepared for any eventuality except that which actually took place.

The Hun submarine service is remarkable in many respects. It has a record of criminal brutality standing against it unequalled in the history of war.

It has been expanded from 20 to 30 boats to about 140 plus 160 or 200 (lost), in the space of four years.

During this period it has seriously troubled the British Empire—no mean feat. At the end of this period it has submitted to humiliation unparalleled in history. A strange record.

I have said that the British parties were prepared for every eventuality save one. We were not prepared to find the Huns behaving for once as gentlemen. It is right to record that during those wonderful days their behaviour has been correct in every respect. It may be through fear of the consequences attending any peevishness, it may be for some ulterior motive, that this has been so. I state the fact. In nearly every case the German officer has seemed genuinely anxious to assist in every way possible, and give as much information concerning the working of the boat as was feasible in the time at his disposal.

One officer voiced the feelings of many when, as we discussed the events of the day that evening, he remarked, " My Hun might have been trying to sell me the boat, the blighter tried to be so obliging."

To return to the story. We left the *Firedrake* in a motor-launch and went alongside a fair-sized Hun mounting two guns, one each side of the conning-tower.

K—— (our senior officer) jumped on board, followed by the Engineer Commander, an Engineer Lieutenant-Commander, and myself. The two engineer officers had come out to try and pick up as much as they could about the Hun Diesel engines during the trip in.

We were received by the German captain together with his torpedo officer and engineer.

They saluted us, which salutes were returned.

" Do you speak English ? " said K——.

" Yes, a little," replied the Hun.

" Give me your papers."

The German then produced a list of his crew and the signed terms of surrender, which he translated into English. These terms were as follows :

(1) The boat was to be in an efficient condition, with periscopes, main motors, Diesel engines, and auxiliary engines in good working order.
(2) She was to be in surface trim, with all diving tanks blown.
(3) Her torpedoes were to be on board, without their war-heads, and the torpedoes were to be clear of the tubes.
(4) Her wireless was to be complete.
(5) There were to be no explosives on board.
(6) There were to be no booby traps or infernal machines on board.

This last declaration rather stuck in his throat ; he repeated the words " no hell engines " with great conviction. This captain was a well-fed-looking individual with quite a pleasant appearance, and he was wearing

the Iron Cross of the first class. He had apparently sunk much tonnage in another boat, but had done only one trip in U.90. Curiously enough, his old boat was next ahead of us going up harbour.

K—— then informed him that he would give him instructions where to go, but that otherwise the German crew would work the boat under the supervision of our people. This surprised the Hun, who showed us his orders, which stated that he was to hand the boat over to us and then leave at once for the transport. His subordinates urged him to protest, but he was too sensible and at once agreed to do whatever we ordered.

The German crew were clustered round the after-gun, taking a detached interest in the proceedings.

Our own men, in submarine rig of white sweaters, blue trousers, white stockings, and sea-boots, looked very smart, fallen in right aft. The formalities having been concluded, we made a rapid tour of the boat and then went on to the bridge.

Various things about the boat were defective, the German explaining that he had only just returned from a thirty-five-day trip and was about to refit when ordered to bring her over. He also stated that the mutineers at Kiel had descended into the boat and looted a good deal of gear. Many of the captains spoke with much bitterness of this looting by the big ship crews, which seems to have been pretty general.

Getting under way on the Diesels, we proceeded towards Harwich, the white ensign being run up as the anchor left the ground.

A tragi-comic incident took place at this stage, for as the white ensign and final sign of surrender was displayed to the world, the torpedo and engineer officers shifted into plain clothes of a peculiarly German type. Each donned a long blue overcoat and a green felt hat ; it needed only the feathers in the latter to complete the picture of the two German tourists visiting Harwich for

the first time. At first I thought this change of garb indicated that a touch of Prussianism was imminent and that they were going to be surly, but they still appeared to consider themselves as officers of the boat, moving about directing operations amongst the crew when any work had to be done.

We proceeded into Harwich and up to the head of the harbour, past Parkeston Quay, to what the reporters now say we call " U.-boat Avenue." The ships in harbour were crowded with spectators, but a complete silence was preserved which was more impressive than cheers. On arrival at our buoy the German manœuvred his late command very skilfully on the oil engines, which in German boats are made reversible, whereas in British boats the electric motors are invariably used for manœuvring purposes.

As soon as we had secured to the buoy, an operation which in every case the Germans had to do for themselves, the German was instructed to take us round the boat in a more detailed manner. This he did ; and auxiliary machinery was started, periscopes raised and lowered, etc. etc.

At 4 p.m. a motor-launch came alongside and the Germans were ordered to gather up their personal belongings and get into her. The captain, without a sign of that emotion which he must have felt, took a last look at his boat and saluted. We returned his salute, he bowed, and then joined his crew in the motor-launch, which took them to the destroyer in which they made passage to the transport outside.

. . . . .

Similar scenes were being enacted at the other buoys, and as the sun sank in a splendour of crimson and gold, the long line of the first twenty U.-boats, harmlessly swinging round their buoys and reflecting the last rays of the sun from their conning-towers, made a picture

which will remain for ever in the minds of those who were fortunate enough to witness the scene.

Next day, nineteen more boats were added to the line. One sank or was scuttled on the way over. The super-crock of the German Submarine Service came over on this day, U.24. She was their instructional sub-marine ; her crew were very sea-sick, very unhappy, nothing worked, and she struggled exceedingly to get 6 knots.

On the third day, twenty-one came over, one more to make up for the lost lamb. On this day the weather changed from the foggy calmness of the preceding days to a day of tumbling seas, which made boarding outside a dangerous operation.

Whilst waiting for the Huns we had the misfortune to lose a man overboard from one of the tenders ; wearing sea-boots, he sank after a gallant struggle before he could be reached.

The U.-boats were boarded inside the gate, opposite Felixstowe air-station.

On their way in, one of our destroyers sank a mine, which blew up when it was hit, about 80 yards in front of the leading submarine. The crews of the next five boats bolted up on deck like rabbits on hearing the explosion.

On this day my party boarded a large U.100 class, fitted as a mine-layer. She carried about thirty-six mines in a mining-room aft, and she laid her eggs through two tunnels right aft. She was commanded by a reserve officer, who had sailed a great deal from Southampton before the war.

We had rather a long wait before they were taken off, and in the course of the somewhat lengthy conversa-tion, which is unavoidable when one is trying to find out in an hour how to work a strange submarine, the captain of this boat stated that he had been *Wagen-führer's* first lieutenant, and that he had left the boat two trips before she was lost.

This reserve officer stated that some eight months after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, he and *Wagenführer* had been within 400 yards of the *Mauretania* with all tubes ready and trained on her, but owing to the critical state of the political situation between the United States and Germany, they had not fired. On their return to Germany they had received an autographed letter from the Kaiser commending them for their discretion.

He also stated that all the reservist officers in the German Navy had stated at the beginning of submarine warfare that it was ridiculous to imagine that England could be starved out in six months, or that her merchant seamen could be terrorized, as they being reserve officers had worked with and knew the British Merchant Service. He added, " When you dig your teeth in, you hold. In my mess I was called traitor when I say that."

Amongst other incidents was a case in which two Huns refused to leave their submarine and go back to Germany, not for any heroic reason, but because they wished to remain in England and receive " work and good food."

The reservist officer whom I have mentioned felt that his nationality was going to make things difficult for him in the future. He kept on asking whereabouts in the world he might be able to get a job in the Merchant Service. He finally said :

" Do you think if I went to China or Japan I could find a job for a German ? " He was told it was unlikely.

As he left the boat he saluted and delivered himself of this little speech :

" For the future all is uncertain, thank God I am not married."

On Saturday, 23rd November, there was a respite from the pleasant task of collecting the U.-boats, but on Sunday the business was very brisk. Twenty-eight

boats underwent the great humiliation. Amongst these were two or three flying the Imperial ensign.

In the previous batches, most of them had come over without flags, though some of them had red flags on board. Whenever a German ensign could be found it was hoisted inferior to the white ensign. In one or two cases the Huns protested against this, but needless to say without any success.

Whenever one felt any undue sympathy for these individuals—and the naval officer who has not been able to get into personal contact with the Hun is liable to feel sorry for men whom we once thought worthy members of the fellowship of the sea—one only had to remember the number of women and children these men had murdered, one only had to imagine how we should have been treated if we had been obliged to take a British ship into Kiel. One's imagination in this respect was assisted by the palpable relief of all the Huns on finding that they were not going anywhere near the shore. One Hun on being told to get his ensign up, summed up the situation with the remark: "All right, sir, I put up my flag; you have the power."

Amongst the twenty-eight that came across on U.-boat Sunday were four *Deutschland* class of commercial submarines, including the name vessel of the class. They look somewhat like a floating bridge across a river.

A sailor in the *Firedrake* remarked on seeing them for the first time—"Here, Bill, here comes the Elephant and Castle."

The captain of my submarine, which was a small brand-new mine-layer, indicated one of the floating haystacks with his glasses, and when I asked him his opinion of them tersely remarked: As submarines, HOGS."

This captain was again a reservist officer and spoke fluent English. He appeared to know the entrance to

Harwich harbour very well. I remarked on this, and he volunteered this statement as to his career in the war. He said that on the outbreak of war he had joined the *Dresden*, and in her he had fought at Coronel and at the Falkland Islands. At the final destruction of the *Dresden* at Robinson Crusoe Island he had been interned in Chili, from whence he had escaped to England, presumably with a forged passport.

He then startled me by saying, with a smile, that he had lived for four weeks in England, "visiting my relatives, and moving openly," and that finally, without "great difficulty," he had got over to Germany and joined the submarine service. From certain other evidence, I am inclined to think he was speaking the truth.

Another captain who came over in this batch stated that he had landed twice in the early days of the war on islands in the Orkneys and made off with a sheep. Perhaps this piece of news will clear up some long-standing mystery in the Northern Isles.

One of the boats which comprised the twenty-eight was U.139—a big cruiser with two 5·9 guns, one each side of the conning-tower; she also carried a range finder.

This boat belonged to von Arnauld de la Periere, the most successful and famous of all U.-boat captains. A. de la Periere was in command of the German fishery gunboat on the east coast of England before the war, and was well known to many British naval officers. His fame in the German Navy is almost legendary.

I believe nothing is known to his discredit, that is to say, nothing exceptionally beastly, and he is known to have saved life on certain occasions, and he has a reputation of being a gentleman. He first made his name in a U.-boat (35, I think, was its number) in the Mediterranean. He worked on original lines, making little use of his torpedoes, but specializing with his guns,

for which he had picked gun-layers from the High Seas Fleet.

When the U.139 arrived here on Sunday, she had a periscope missing and part of her bridge smashed in ; this damage was the result of an encounter with a steamer which she had torpedoed, but the steamer in her dying struggles had managed partly to sit on the U.139.

The first lieutenant and four officers brought her over ; he said that von Arnauld de la Periere was too sad to come. All the officers and crew of this boat were evidently very proud of having served with their captain, and the discipline and *esprit de corps* were noticeably good. The interior of the boat was very nicely finished as far as the officers' quarters were concerned, and evidently von Arnauld had plenty of " pull " in the German dockyard.

From one of the *Deutschland* class, two American naval officers emerged. They had been through a remarkable experience.

On 30th September they were torpedoed in the *Ticonderoga* at a spot about half-way across the Atlantic. They had got away on a raft, and, being officers, the Huns had picked them up. They had spent some 40 days in the submarine, during which period they had experienced the unpleasant sensation of being depth-charged by some British patrols. They had also seen the crew of a Norwegian sailing-ship turned adrift in their boats 1,300 miles from land. Consider what this means in the Atlantic in October.

When these officers got back to Kiel the Armistice was just being prepared, and eventually they were told that they could go back to England in a submarine if they wished to. They jumped at the chance, and were told to go in the same boat that had picked them up. The crew of this boat then sat down and held a meeting as to whether they should give them a passage or not.

On a vote being taken, it was seen that the majority was for taking them, so they came across. The opinion of these Americans was that if a man can stand 45 days in a German submarine under war conditions he can stand anything; and, looking over the boats, I am inclined to think they are right.

On Wednesday the 27th a batch of twenty-seven boats came over.

Two notorious boats were amongst them. One was the U.9. This boat sank the *Hogue*, *Aboukir*, and *Cressy*, her commander being Otto Weddigen; she is also thought to have sunk the *Hermes*. Otto Weddigen was rammed and sunk by the *Dreadnought* when he attacked the Grand Fleet in U.29.

The other boat has a criminal record. This boat's number is U.55; she is suspected of having specialized in hospital ships. As to her commander's name, more may be heard of him anon.

The U.9 had a large Iron Cross painted on her bows, as the boat was decorated with this honour after her exploits.

Another boat has an evil-looking eye on her bow, and another has a prawn on her conning-tower. These marks are quite in accordance with the best practice of Chinese pirates, whose junks are decorated in this manner.

As regards the officers who have come over with the submarines, they have seemed to be of three types. Few of the proper captains of the big boats have come across, and when these have turned up they have appeared to feel their position keenly, and have shifted into plain clothes as soon as possible. One did this with the remark that they had all sworn an oath never again to wear a uniform which had been disgraced by the mutiny in the High Seas Fleet.

When the senior captains did not come across, their boats were usually brought over by their first lieuten-

ants, mere boys, in some cases rather nervous boys ; they were reported generally as being " willing to feed out of one's hand."

The other class of officer was usually found in the smaller boats. These vessels were commanded by " reserve " officers, elderly men who had been in the German merchant service in pre-war days. These officers did not appear to feel the humiliation as keenly as the regular officers, and their chief anxiety seemed to be to try and be friendly and find out whereabouts in the world they would be able to get a job when the war is over.

One of these officers said that the feeling over this war would last twenty-five years. He was told that the reason for this was the beastly manner in which the Germans had fought the war.

He said that he did not believe in all the reports of atrocities.

He was then asked why it was that all the world hated the Germans ? He looked away for a moment, and then said, " If I ask myself that question once, I ask it a hundred times a day."

A delightful sidelight on the absolute inability of the Hun to appreciate psychology.

As to the crews, they seemed very sharply divided into revolutionaries and royalists.

In some boats nothing could be noticed that would lead one to suppose that discipline was not perfect.

In other boats, discipline was good, but the captains had been elected by the crews and held commissions signed by the Sailors' and Soldiers' Committee.

Again, in other boats the crews paid little attention to the orders of their officers, except when it was obvious that the order would be backed up by the British officer.

In one case, as an officer was scrambling up the side of the transport, his crew in the destroyer shouted to

some Germans in the transport and, pointing to their officer, drew their fingers across their throats and made threatening remarks about him.

In about three cases the crews showed a certain amount of morale by giving three cheers for their boats as they were taken away. One boat's crew hung a wreath of evergreens on their boat before they left her.

In our destroyers they tried hard to get some soap, of which there seems to be a great shortage in the Fatherland.

A few remarks as to the boats may be of interest.

The biggest are the U.139 class. These are the cruiser submarines. They are nearly 300 feet long, and carry two big guns of 5·9-inch size.

The accommodation for the officers is good, and resembles three cabins and a saloon in a sleeping-car. The accommodation for the crew, who number about seventy, is not good.

These craft represent the latest development in ocean-going, commerce-destroying submarines, and rely chiefly on their guns, though they carry torpedoes as well. Not many of these formidable craft had been completed when the German Navy collapsed.

We next have four *Deutschland* class; originally designed as commercial vessels to carry about 1,000 tons of cargo, their ***raison d'être*** disappeared with the entry of the United States into the war. These craft were then converted into cruisers, and armed with three torpedo tubes, two 5·9 guns, and mines. These last were laid by the primitive method of rolling them over the side.

As they are compromises, they have many disadvantages; they are slow on the surface, having apparently two speeds, *i.e.* full speed and stop. Full speed is about 9 knots. They were chiefly used for long-distance work off the coasts of North and South America, as they were quite capable of a three months'

cruise. This may have been very trying for the crew, though it must be remembered that when operating in the tropics and on the ocean trade routes she would drift about on the surface waiting for shipping, and her crew, as shown by the wooden seats on the upper deck, would laze away the time in the fresh air.

The next class is the U.130 class. Most of these are mine-layers intended to lay mines overseas, as, for example, off Gibraltar, and then prey on the trade in these localities.

Slightly smaller than these, but still large boats, are the U.90 class. This is the standard ocean-going submarine which worked off the Spanish coast, up the west coast of Ireland, and in the Irish Sea. The length of their trips used to be about three to six weeks. Their armament consists of two 4-inch guns and six torpedo tubes, four forward and two in the stern. A large number of this type of craft are in the cage, but probably a larger number are at the bottom of the sea.

We have also a considerable number of U.B. boats in store ; these, though a separate type, are practically a smaller edition of the standard U. They battened on trade up the east coast of England and in the English Channel, after they had negotiated the Dover barrage, which towards the end of the war was becoming a very unpopular institution in the German Submarine Service.

The next class are the U.C. boats, of which a singularly complete collection of the latest editions is on view. These boats are small mine-layers, with twelve to sixteen mines held in vertical tubes which fill in the forepart of the boat. They have also got a small gun and three torpedo tubes, one aft, and two outside the boat on the side of the upper deck. Their work was to attack traffic in the North Sea and lay mines off the English ports.

The collection is completed by a miscellaneous crowd of antique pre-war U.-boats and similar veterans.

As far as is known at the moment of writing, the bulk of the U.-boat navy is now in the fold, though there remain perhaps twenty odd craft scattered about in neutral ports, including some over in the German harbours which are not capable of coming over. It thus appears that we must have sunk rather more than we thought, or, to be correct, than we officially claimed, as the Navy was always convinced that the casualty list stood at a higher figure than the number of proved cases.

Speaking generally, the outstanding feature of all the boats is their filthy condition. How much of this is normal and how much is due to present conditions in the German Fleet, it is difficult to say. I personally find it quite hard to go round some of the boats without being almost physically sick. The condition of these boats after a six weeks' trip, with washing water at a premium, must have been very horrid.

As regards technical fittings, the periscopes, as was expected, are excellent. The Hun has always been a cunning man at making optical instruments. The Diesel engines are also expected to prove very good. In other respects there is much of purely technical interest for our people to study.

It is obvious from many points of view that the German Submarine Service was organized on different lines from our own.

For example, in a U.-boat the captain is there to command the boat from the disciplinary point of view and to make the attack; his technical knowledge may be very poor. He merely said, "Dive the boat," and if anything went wrong it is probable that he could not correct the mistake. All the electrical machinery and the trimming of the boat was done by the engineer officer of the boat.

A lot of their gear is also inaccessible, which in a British boat would have to be accessible, because the crew would be expected to repair it themselves if it went wrong.

The German idea is apparently based on the principle that gear is placed in a boat and expected to remain efficient for a certain definite time, at the end of which period it is removed by the dockyard and fresh stuff put in.

One of the most curious impressions that one gets on going round a boat is due to the manner in which the crews walked out of them leaving bedding, books, letters, knives, spoons, forks, china, provisions, and a mass of small personal gear, all horribly dirty. We had expected to find the boats more or less stripped of their upholstery, and that each boat would be simply a hull with machinery in it. As it is the boats look as if some sudden panic had stricken their crews and they had vanished from the boat at five minutes' notice.

For the moment these 114 boats [1] lie on the surface of an English river, a monument to the British Navy and a warning to any who would challenge our sea-power. The river Stour has carried sea-raiders in the past, when the Danes and the Angles and the Saxons from the Jutland coast and the mouths of the German rivers, came across and sailed up the estuaries of England, pillaging, burning, sacking, and destroying "all that had breath."

After an interval of one thousand years this sluggish old river once more has between her banks, ships from the Elbe estuary and the bordering coasts, which in the last four years have laid a trail of blood across the seas.

In a short time the representatives of our Allies will come here and take away some of the boats; the others will proceed round the ports of Great Britain, that our people, and especially our Merchant Service, to whom

[1] Since increased (3–3–19).

all honour is due, may survey the result of the German Empire's bold bid for the supremacy of the Seven Seas.

As to their ultimate disposal, nothing is settled beyond one thing, and that is, that they will not return whence they came.

In concluding these brief and somewhat disconnected impressions of this great event, I would like to quote a telegram which has been sent to Captain S—— of this depot :

"I wish to convey to you, and to all ranks and ratings under your command, my most sincere congratulations on the splendid result which has been achieved by their constant watchfulness, skill, and bravery, and on the exemplary standard which they have set in the legitimate use of submarine warfare.—ERIC GEDDES."

It is the last line of the above message that pleases the British Submarine Service most of all.

Postscript.—Eight more boats came in a few days later, including a boat with one engine, and U.3, an ancient petrol-driven craft.

CHAPTER XX

THE HORRORS OF PEACE[1]

"If this is Peace give me War!" Strange as this may sound, I have heard quite a number of officers make the remark as they enter the mess and occupy a position in front of the ward-room stove—hallowed spot from which either to voice a grievance or burn the seat of one's trousers. It is the U.-boats that are the root of all troubles at present. When they go it will be something else, for a "grouse" is essential; but for the moment the U.-boats form an obvious peg on which to hang all our moans.

When the great surrender was completed and we got our breath back, we had miles of U.-boats lying up the river which had to be looked after, for thirty-six were to go round the British Isles, and the Americans were to take some and the French were to have others, and the Italians and the Japanese were each to have samples, so the boats had to be kept in order.

Now a submarine is like a baby, in that it cannot be left to look after itself.

The battery has to be kept charged, and the boat has to be kept free of water which leaks into her. Last, but not least, a couple of army corps of souvenir hunters had to be kept off the grass. Very ingenious gentlemen—let us not inquire as to whether the majority were in uniform or not—who floated round the U.-boat trot in every kind of craft from a paddle-steamer to a duck punt. All the work that these

[1] January, 1919.

various jobs entailed has been done by the submarine officers here, and it has kept us quite busy.

A lugubrious signal comes down from the submarine officer who is acting as Commodore Manningtree (Senior Naval Officer in charge of U.-boats).

The signal runs :

" U.C.98 is sinking fast, U.101 has taken a big angle, please send assistance."

Lieutenant Georgie G——, who has calculated on an evening off, finds himself booming up the river in his own E-boat, in order to perform the menial task of pumping out U.C.98.

On arrival there he endeavours to do it with the U.C. boat's pump, but being an indifferent German scholar he spends half an hour searching for the requisite switch. Having found it at last, he switches on current, and the pump motor goes up in a sheet of flame—it is not in repair.

Laboriously he performs the job with his own boat.

Whilst wandering round the U.C. boat he hears a ticking noise in the wireless cabinet. Is it possible ? Can the Huns have left a clock behind ? Stranger still, can the fellow who brought her in have omitted to take it away for safe custody ?

Georgie starts a minute search, half an hour passes, still that ticking noise. Awful thought ! D——! it is his own Ingersoll !

There was one day during which I was working in the U.-boats, when an incident occurred which hardly comes under the heading of this chapter. I would even propose putting it in a separate paragraph entitled the " Joys of Peace." I was in U.139, which was being handed over to the French, and I was standing at the forward end of the engine-room, not looking my best, I fear, unless visible evidence of honest toil on clothes and hands is an improvement to the appearance,

when I was amazed to see a feminine and delightful ankle descend from above into my field of vision.

Vague parallels to the angels of Mons floated through my mind, and I was debating whether to advance and grasp this vision before I woke up, when, after waving in the air, the foot found the next rung of a vertical ladder, and like the unveiling of a statue a charming lady arrived on the engine-room floor-plates.

Inwardly deploring my general appearance, I advanced "one" as the gunnery drill book says, and made polite conversation. But the hatch was to provide further startling surprises, as the next arrival turned out to be the First Sea Lord; the sight of a full admiral effectively reminding me of my exact position in the Navy List.

The lady was the Duchess of ——, who, if I may be allowed to say so, astonished and almost (but not quite) confounded me with technical inquiries anent German Diesel engines. Should these lines ever meet her eye, I wish her to know that I subsequently discovered that my guess as to the horse-power of the port engine was correct.

. . . . . .

We soon got to know the boats fairly well, but all the people who were taking them away, both our own and our Allies, had to have them explained to them as much as possible.

It is difficult to explain to a Japanese officer how something works, when you are a little uncertain yourself, and his English is limited to "Tank you" and "Ah, yes," whilst the nearest to an oriental language you know is Maltese.

However, it is being done.

And the manner in which it was done is something like this:

Japanese Officer.—"How motah work—tank you?"
Myself.—"Well, you see this . . ."

J. O.—" Tank you."
M.—" Well, you see this . . ."
J. O.—" Ah yes, tank you, how motah . . ."
M.—" This switch must . . ."
J. O.—" No ? "
M.—" Yes, this switch must . . ."
J. O.—" Tank you."
M.—" This switch UP . . . savee ? . . . comme ça."
J. O.—" AAAAAAH Tank you, tank you, tank . . ."
M.—" Oh, that's not all."
J. O.—" Ah yes . . . please . . . tank you ? "
M.—" This one must be . . ."
J. O.—" No onerstand."
M.—" Yes, yes, half a mo', you see . . ."
J. O.—" Tank you."
M.—" Thank you."
J. O.—" No more ? "
M.—" Yes, yes."
J. O.—" Tank you."
M.—" Look . . . I start motors."
J. O.—" AH yes. Tank you . . . very O-blige, tank you."
M.—" Come on board and have something ? "
J. O.—" AH yes."
M.—" Savee ? like saki."
J. O.—(Smiles.) " Ah yes, I onerstand—tank you."

With a French officer I had a somewhat different conversation.

French Officer.—" Tonnerrrrre, mon bateau a été pillé. She eez destructed I say."

Myself.—" Ah, les allemands ont fait cela, ce n'est pas nous."

F. O.—" Mais bien sur, ce n'est pas les anglais, je comprends c'est les boches qui ont fait tout ce débris. Ah ! comme je déteste ces ——, ——, ——. —— boches."

M.—" Oui, les ——, ——, —— boches."

F. O.—" Mais, monsieur parle français avec facilité."

M.—" Oui, ma mère parle très bien."

F. O.—" Ha, ha ! c'est rigolo cela, madame votre mère ne vous a pas appris toute votre vocabulaire, monsieur."

M.—" Quelques mots j'ai appris en école c'est vrai."

F. O.—" Dites-moi comment dites-vous en anglais ' Ces —— boches ' ? "

M.—" Those —— Huns."

F. O.—(Hailing his first lieutenant.) " Hé, Gaston, viens voir ce que ' zoze —— 'Uns ' ont fait dans notre bateau."

We have heard that our indefatigable representatives over in Germany have discovered another 170 U.-boats, and they are all coming here !

It is a hard life is the sailor's ! However, to-night we have a rehearsal of our Jazz band, which will enable us to forget the war, I mean the Armistice.

The instruments are :

(*a*) A piano.
(*b*) A water-can, hit with a hammer.
(*c*) A fog-horn.
(*d*) Fire-main branch pipes as horns (they require strong lungs).
(*e*) Copper lamp-shades with a poker (as rattles).
(*f*) Tin whistles.
(*g*) Pillar-box, made out of a collision-head, hit with a soup ladle.
(*h*) 10-lb. coffee-tin, worked with forks.
(*i*) Ash trays as cymbals
(*j*) Small incidentals.
(*k*) Everyone singing.
(*l*) Conductor, with Irish blackthorn.

It makes a considerable noise, and on this harmonious note I propose concluding this book.