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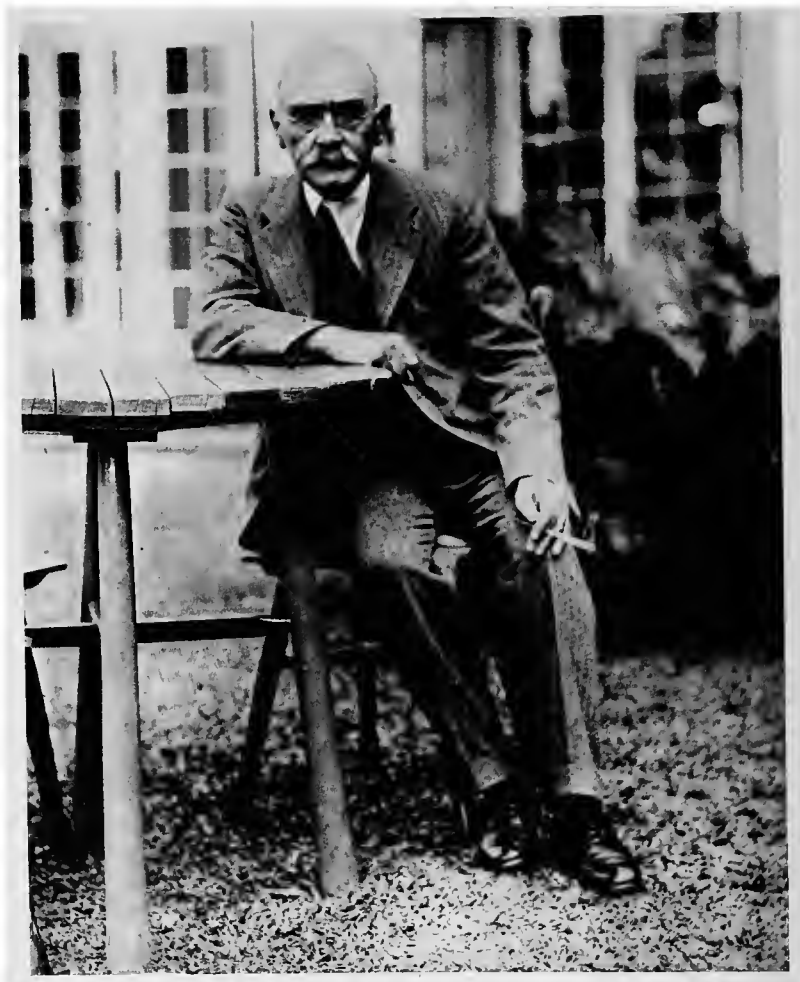
RUDYARD KIPLING

VOLUME XXXIV

WAR WRITINGS

AND

POEMS



THE WRITINGS IN PROSE AND VERSE OF
RUDYARD KIPLING

WAR WRITINGS
AND
POEMS



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SEA WARFARE

THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET
(1915)

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2000

THE AUXILIARIES

I

THE Navy is very old and very wise. Much of her wisdom is on record and available for reference; but more of it works in the unconscious blood of those who serve her. She has a thousand years of experience, and can find precedent or parallel for any situation that the force of the weather or the malice of the King's enemies may bring about.

The main principles of sea-warfare hold good throughout all ages, and, *so far as the Navy has been allowed to put out her strength*, these principles have been applied over all the seas of the world. For matters of detail the Navy, to whom all days are alike, has simply returned to the practice and resurrected the spirit of old days.

In the late French wars, a merchant sailing out of a Channel port might in a few hours find himself laid by the heels and under way for a French prison. His Majesty's ships of the Line, and even the big frigates, took little part in policing the waters for him, unless he were in convoy. The sloops, cutters, gun-brigs, and local craft of all kinds were supposed to look after that, while the Line was busy elsewhere. So the merchants passed resolutions

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against the inadequate protection afforded to the trade, and the narrow seas were full of single-ship actions; mail-packets, West Country brigs, and fat East Indiamen fighting, for their own hulls and cargo, anything that the watchful French ports sent against them; the sloops and cutters bearing a hand if they happened to be within reach.

THE OLDEST NAVY

It was a brutal age, ministered to by hard-fisted men, and we had put it a hundred decent years behind us when—it all comes back again! To-day there are no prisons for the crews of merchantmen, but they can go to the bottom by mine and torpedo even more quickly than their ancestors were run into Le Havre. The submarine takes the place of the privateer; the Line, as in the old wars, is occupied, bombarding and blockading, elsewhere, but the sea-borne traffic must continue, and that is being looked after by the lineal descendants of the crews of the long extinct cutters and sloops and gun-brigs. The hour struck, and they reappeared, to the tune of fifty thousand odd men in more than two thousand ships, of which I have seen a few hundred. Words of command may have changed a little, the tools are certainly more complex, but the spirit of the new crews who come to the old job is utterly unchanged. It is the same fierce, hard-living, heavy-handed, very cunning service out of

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which the Navy as we know it to-day was born. It is called indifferently the Trawler and Auxiliary Fleet. It is chiefly composed of fishermen, but it takes in every one who may have maritime tastes—from retired admirals to the sons of the sea-cook. It exists for the benefit of the traffic and the annoyance of the enemy. Its doings are recorded by flags stuck into charts; its casualties are buried in obscure corners of the newspapers. The Grand Fleet knows it slightly; the restless light cruisers who chaperon it from the background are more intimate; the destroyers working off unlighted coasts over unmarked shoals come, as you might say, in direct contact with it; the submarine alternately praises and—since one periscope is very like another—curses its activities; but the steady procession of traffic in home waters, liner and tramp, six every sixty minutes, blesses it altogether.

Since this most Christian war includes laying mines in the fairways of traffic, and since these mines may be laid at any time by German submarines especially built for the work, or by neutral ships, all fairways must be swept continuously day and night. When a nest of mines is reported, traffic must be hung up or deviated till it is cleared out. When traffic comes up Channel it must be examined for contraband and other things; and the examining tugs lie out in a blaze of lights to remind ships of this. Months ago, when the war was young,

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the tugs did not know what to look for specially. Now they do. All this mine-searching and reporting and sweeping, *plus* the direction and examination of the traffic, *plus* the laying of our own ever-shifting mine-fields, is part of the Trawler Fleet's work, because the Navy-as-we-knew-it is busy elsewhere. And there is always the enemy submarine with a price on her head, whom the Trawler Fleet hunts and traps with zeal and joy. Add to this, that there are boats, fishing for real fish, to be protected in their work at sea or chased off dangerous areas whither, because they are strictly forbidden to go, they naturally repair, and you will begin to get some idea of what the Trawler and Auxiliary Fleet does.

THE SHIPS AND THE MEN

Now, imagine the acreage of several dock-basins crammed, gunwale to gunwale, with brown and umber and ochre and rust-red steam-tractors, tugs, harbour-boats, and yachts once clean and respectable, now dirty and happy. Throw in fish-steamers, surprise-packets of unknown lines and indescribable junks, sampans, lorchas, catamarans, and General Service stink-pontoons filled with indescribable apparatus, manned by men no dozen of whom seem to talk the same dialect or wear the same clothes. The mustard-coloured jersey who is

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cleaning a six-pounder on a Hull boat clips his words between his teeth and would be happier in Gaelic. The whitish singlet and grey trousers held up by what is obviously his soldier brother's spare regimental belt is pure Lowestoft. The complete blue-serge-and-soot suit passing a wire down a hatch is Glasgow as far as you can hear him, which is a fair distance, because he wants something done to the other end of the wire, and the flat-faced boy who should be attending to it hails from the remoter Hebrides, and is looking at a girl on the dock-edge. The bow-legged man in the ulster and greenworsted comforter is a warm Grimsby skipper, worth several thousands. He and his crew, who are mostly his own relations, keep themselves to themselves, and save their money. The pirate with the red beard, barking over the rail at a friend with gold earrings, comes from Skye. The friend is West Country. The noticeably insignificant man with the soft and deprecating eye is skipper and part-owner of the big slashing Iceland trawler on which he droops like a flower. She is built to almost Western Ocean lines, carries a little boat-deck aft with tremendous stanchions, has a nose cocked high against ice and sweeping seas, and resembles a hawk-moth at rest. The small, sniffing man is reported to be a "holy terror at sea."

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HUNTERS AND FISHERS

The child in the Pullman-car uniform just going ashore is a wireless operator, aged nineteen. He is attached to a flagship at least 120 feet long, under an admiral aged twenty-five, who was, till the other day, third mate of a North Atlantic tramp, but who now leads a squadron of six trawlers to hunt submarines. The principle is simple enough. Its application depends on circumstances and surroundings. One class of German submarines meant for murder off the coasts may use a winding and rabbit-like track between shoals where the choice of water is limited. Their career is rarely long, but, while it lasts, moderately exciting. Others, told off for deep-sea assassinations, are attended to quite quietly and without any excitement at all. Others, again, work the inside of the North Sea, making no distinction between neutrals and Allied ships. These carry guns, and since their work keeps them a good deal on the surface, the Trawler Fleet, as we know, engages them there—the submarine firing, sinking, and rising again in unexpected quarters; the trawler firing, dodging, and trying to ram. The trawlers are strongly built, and can stand a great deal of punishment. Yet again, other German submarines hang about the skirts of fishing-fleets and fire into the brown of them. When the war was young this gave splendidly “frightful” results, but for some

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reason or other the game is not as popular as it used to be.

Lastly, there are German submarines who perish by ways so curious and inexplicable that one could almost credit the whispered idea (it must come from the Scotch skippers) that the ghosts of the women they drowned pilot them to destruction. But what form these shadows take—whether of “The Lusitania Ladies,” or humbler stewardesses and hospital nurses—and what lights or sounds the thing fancies it sees or hears before it is blotted out, no man will ever know. The main fact is that the work is being done. Whether it was necessary or politic to re-awaken by violence every sporting instinct of a sea-going people is a question which the enemy may have to consider later on.

THE AUXILIARIES

II

THE Trawlers seem to look on mines as more or less fairplay. But with the torpedo it is otherwise. A Yarmouth man lay on his hatch, his gear neatly stowed away below, and told me that another Yarmouth boat had "gone up," with all hands except one. "'Twas a submarine. Not a mine," said he. "They never gave our boys no chance. Na! She was a Yarmouth boat—we knew 'em all. They never gave the boys no chance." He was a submarine hunter, and he illustrated by means of matches placed at various angles how the blindfold business is conducted. "And then," he ended, "there's always what *he'll* do. You've got to think that out for yourself—while you're working above him—same as if 'twas fish." I should not care to be hunted for the life in shallow waters by a man who knows every bank and pothole of them, even if I had not killed his friends the week before. Being nearly all fishermen they discuss their work in terms of fish, and put in their leisure fishing overside, when they sometimes pull up ghastly souvenirs. But they all want guns. Those who have three-pounders clamour for sixes; sixes for twelves; and

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the twelve-pound aristocracy dream of four-inchers on anti-aircraft mountings for the benefit of roving Zeppelins. They will all get them in time, and I fancy it will be long ere they give them up. One West Country mate announced that "a gun is a handy thing to have aboard—always." "But in peacetime?" I said. "Wouldn't it be in the way?"

"We'm used to 'em now," was the smiling answer. "Niver go to sea again without a gun—I wouldn't—if I had my way. It keeps all hands pleased-like."

They talk about men in the Army who will never willingly go back to civil life. What of the fishermen who have tasted something sharper than salt water—and what of the young third and fourth mates who have held independent commands for nine months past? One of them said to me quite irrelevantly: "I used to be the animal that got up the trunks for the women on baggage-days in the old Bodiam Castle," and he mimicked their requests for "the large brown box," or "the black dress basket," as a freed soul might scoff at his old life in the flesh.

"A COMMON SWEEPER"

My sponsor and chaperon in this Elizabethan world of eighteenth-century seamen was an A.B. who had gone down in the *Landrail*, assisted at the Heligoland fight, seen the *Blücher* sink and the

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bombs dropped on our boats when we tried to save the drowning ("Whereby," as he said, "those Germans died gottstrafin' their own country because *we* didn't wait to be strafed"), and has now found more peaceful days in an Office ashore. He led me across many decks from craft to craft to study the various appliances that they specialise in. Almost our last was what a North Country trawler called a "common sweeper," that is to say, a mine-sweeper. She was at tea in her shirt-sleeves, and she protested loudly that there was "nothing in sweeping." "'See that wire rope?" she said. "Well, it leads through that lead to the ship which you're sweepin' *with*. She makes her end fast and you make yourn. Then you sweep together at whichever depth you've agreed upon between you, by means of that arrangement there which regulates the depth. They give you a glass sort o' thing for keepin' your distance from the other ship, but *that's* not wanted if you know each other. Well, then, you sweep, as the sayin' is. There's nothin' *in* it. You sweep till this wire rope fouls the bloomin' mines. Then you go on till they appear on the surface, so to say, and then you explodes them by means of shootin' at 'em with that rifle in the galley there. There's nothin' in sweepin' more than that."

"And if you hit a mine?" I asked.

"You go up—but you hadn't ought to hit 'em, if you're careful. The thing is to get hold of the

THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET

first mine all right, and then you go on to the next, and so on, in a way o' speakin'."

"And you can fish, too, 'tween times," said a voice from the next boat. A man leaned over and returned a borrowed mug. They talked about fishing—notably that once they caught some red mullet, which the "common sweeper" and his neighbour both agreed was "not natural in those waters." As for mere sweeping, it bored them profoundly to talk about it. I only learned later as part of the natural history of mines, that if you rake the trinitrotoluol by hand out of a German mine you develop eruptions and skin-poisoning. But on the authority of two experts, there is nothing in sweeping. Nothing whatever!

A BLOCK IN THE TRAFFIC

Now imagine, not a pistol-shot from these crowded quays, a little Office hung round with charts that are pencilled and noted over various shoals and soundings. There is a movable list of the boats at work, with quaint and domestic names. Outside the window lies the packed harbour—outside that again the line of traffic up and down—a stately cinema-show of six ships to the hour. For the moment the film sticks. A boat—probably a "common sweeper"—reports an obstruction in a traffic lane a few miles away. She has found and exploded one mine.

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The Office heard the dull boom of it before the wireless report came in. In all likelihood there is a nest of them there. It is possible that a submarine may have got in last night between certain shoals and laid them out. The shoals are being shepherded in case she is hidden anywhere, but the boundaries of the newly discovered mine-area must be fixed and the traffic deviated. There is a tramp outside with tugs in attendance. She has hit something and is leaking badly. Where shall she go? The Office gives her her destination—the harbour is too full for her to settle down here. She swings off between the faithful tugs. Down coast some one asks by wireless if they shall hold up their traffic. It is exactly like a signaller “offering” a train to the next block. “Yes,” the Office replies. “Wait a while. If it’s what we think, there will be a little delay. If it isn’t what we think, there will be a little longer delay.” Meantime, sweepers are nosing round the suspected area—“looking for cuckoos’ eggs,” as a voice suggests; and a patrol-boat lathers her way down coast to catch and stop anything that may be on the move, for skippers are sometimes rather careless. Words begin to drop out of the air into the chart-hung Office. “Six and a half cables south, fifteen east” of something or other. “Mark it well, and tell them to work up from there,” is the order. “An other mine exploded!” “Yes, and we heard that too,” says the Office.

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“What about the submarine?” “*Elizabeth Huggins* reports . . .”

Elizabeth's scandal must be fairly high flavoured, for a torpedo-boat of immoral aspect slings herself out of harbour and hastens to share it. If *Elizabeth* has not spoken the truth, there may be words between the parties. For the present a pencilled suggestion seems to cover the case, together with a demand, as far as one can make out, for “more common sweepers.” They will be forthcoming very shortly. Those at work have got the run of the mines now, and are busily howking them up. A trawler-skipper wishes to speak to the Office. “They” have ordered him out, but his boiler, most of it, is on the quay at the present time, and “ye’ll remember, it’s the same wi’ my foremast an’ port rigging, sir.” The Office does not precisely remember, but if boiler and foremast are on the quay the rest of the ship had better stay alongside. The skipper falls away relieved. (He scraped a tramp a few nights ago in a bit of a sea.) There is a little mutter of gunfire somewhere across the grey water where a fleet is at work. A monitor as broad as she is long comes back from wherever the trouble is, slips through the harbour mouth, all wreathed with signals, is received by two motherly lighters, and, to all appearance, goes to sleep between them. The Office does not even look up; for that is not in their department. They have found a trawler to replace

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the boilerless one. Her name is slid into the rack. The immoral torpedo-boat flounces back to her moorings. Evidently what *Elizabeth Huggins* said was not evidence. The messages and replies begin again as the day closes.

THE NIGHT PATROL

Return now to the inner harbour. At twilight there was a stir among the packed craft like the separation of dried tea-leaves in water. The swing-bridge across the basin shut against us. A boat shot out of the jam, took the narrow exit at a fair seven knots and rounded in the outer harbour with all the pomp of a flagship, which was exactly what she was. Others followed, breaking away from every quarter in silence. Boat after boat fell into line—gear stowed away, spars and buoys in order on their clean decks, guns cast loose and ready, wheel-house windows darkened, and everything in order for a day or a week or a month out. There was no word anywhere. The interrupted foot-traffic stared at them as they slid past below. A woman beside me waved her hand to a man on one of them, and I saw his face light as he waved back. The boat where they had demonstrated for me with matches was the last. Her skipper hadn't thought it worth while to tell me that he was going that evening. Then the line straightened up and stood out to sea.

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“You never said this was going to happen,” I said reproachfully to my A.B.

“No more I did,” said he. “It’s the night-patrol going out. Fact is, I’m so used to the bloomin’ evolution that it never struck me to mention it as you might say.”

Next morning I was at service in a man-of-war, and even as we came to the prayer that the Navy might “be a safeguard to such as pass upon the sea on their lawful occasions,” I saw the long procession of traffic resuming up and down the Channel—six ships to the hour. It has been hung up for a bit, they said.

SUBMARINES

I

THE chief business of the Trawler Fleet is to attend to the traffic. The submarine in her sphere attends to the enemy. Like the destroyer, the submarine has created its own type of officer and man—with language and traditions apart from the rest of the Service, and yet at heart unchangingly of the Service. Their business is to run monstrous risks from earth, air, and water, in what, to be of any use, must be the coldest of cold blood.

The commander's is more a one-man job, as the crew's is more team-work, than any other employment afloat. That is why the relations between submarine officers and men are what they are. They play hourly for each other's lives with Death the Umpire always at their elbow on tiptoe to give them "out."

There is a stretch of water, once dear to amateur yachtsmen, now given over to scouts, submarines, destroyers, and, of course, contingents of trawlers. We were waiting the return of some boats which were due to report. A couple surged up the still harbour in the afternoon light and tied up beside their sisters. There climbed out of them three or four high-booted, sunken-eyed pirates clad in sweat-

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ers, under jackets that a stoker of the last generation would have disowned. This was their first chance to compare notes at close hand. Together they lamented the loss of a Zeppelin—"a perfect mug of a Zepp," who had come down very low and offered one of them a sitting shot. "But what *can* you do with our guns? I gave him what I had, and then he started bombing."

"I know he did," another said. "I heard him. That's what brought me down to you. I thought he had you that last time."

"No, I was forty foot under when he hove out the big un. What happened to *you*?"

"My steering-gear jammed just after I went down, and I had to go round in circles till I got it straightened out. But *wasn't* he a mug!"

"Was he the brute with the patch on his port side?" a sister-boat demanded.

"No! This fellow had just been hatched. He was almost sitting on the water, heaving bombs over."

"And my blasted steering-gear went and chose *then* to go wrong," the other commander mourned. "I thought his last little egg was going to get me!"

Half an hour later, I was formally introduced to three or four quite strange, quite immaculate officers, freshly shaved, and a little tired about the eyes, whom I thought I had met before.

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LABOUR AND REFRESHMENT

Meantime (it was on the hour of evening drinks) one of the boats was still unaccounted for. No one talked of her. They rather discussed motor-cars and Admiralty constructors, but—it felt like that queer twilight watch at the front when the homing aeroplanes drop in. Presently a signaller entered: “V 42 outside, sir; wants to know which channel she shall use.” “Oh, thank you. Tell her to take so-and-so.” . . . Mine, I remember, was vermouth and bitters, and later on V 42 himself found a soft chair and joined the committee of instruction. Those next for duty, as well as those in training, wished to hear what was going on, and who had shifted what to where, and how certain arrangements had worked. They were told in language not to be found in any printable book. Questions and answers were alike Hebrew to one listener, but he gathered that every boat carried a second in command—a strong, persevering youth, who seemed responsible for everything that went wrong, from a motor cylinder to a torpedo. Then somebody touched on the mercantile marine and its habits.

Said one philosopher: “They can’t be expected to take any more risks than they do. I wouldn’t, if I was a skipper. I’d loose off at any blessed periscope I saw.”

“That’s all very fine. You wait till you’ve had

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a patriotic tramp trying to strafe you at your own back-door," said another.

Some one told a tale of a man with a voice, notable even in a Service where men are not trained to whisper. He was coming back, empty-handed, dirty, tired, and best left alone. From the peace of the German side he had entered our hectic home-waters, where the usual tramp shelled, and by miraculous luck, crumpled his periscope. Another man might have dived, but Boanerges kept on rising. Majestic and wrathful he rose personally through his main hatch, and at 2000 yards (have I said it was a still day?) addressed the tramp. Even at that distance she gathered it was a Naval officer with a grievance, and by the time he ran alongside she was in a state of coma, but managed to stammer: "Well, sir, at least you'll admit that our shooting was pretty good."

"And that," said my informant, "put the lid on!" Boanerges went down lest he should be tempted to murder; and the tramp affirms she heard him rumbling beneath her, like an inverted thunder-storm, for fifteen minutes.

"All those tramps ought to be disarmed, and *we* ought to have all their guns," said a voice out of a corner.

"What? Still worrying over your 'mug'?" some one replied.

"He *was* a mug!" went on the man of one idea.

SEA WARFARE

"If I'd had a couple of twelves even, I could have strafed him proper. I don't know whether I shall mutiny, or desert, or write to the First Sea Lord about it."

"Strafe all Admiralty constructors to begin with. I could build a better boat with a 4-inch lathe and a sardine-tin than ——," the speaker named her by letter and number.

"That's pure jealousy," her commander explained to the company. "Ever since I installed—ahem!—my patent electric wash-basin he's been intriguin' to get her. Why? We know he doesn't wash. He'd only use the basin to keep beer in."

UNDERWATER WORKS

However often one meets it, as in this war one meets it at every turn, one never gets used to the Holy Spirit of Man at his job. The "common sweeper," growling over his mug of tea that there was "nothing in sweepin'," and these idly chaffing men, new shaved and attired, from the gates of Death which had let them through for the fiftieth time, were all of the same fabric—incomprehensible, I should imagine, to the enemy. And the stuff held good throughout all the world—from the Dardanelles to the Baltic, where only a little while ago another batch of submarines had slipped in and begun to be busy. I had spent some of the afternoon in looking through reports of submarine work in the

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Sea of Marmora. They read like the diary of energetic weasels in an overcrowded chicken-run, and the results for each boat were tabulated something like a cricket score. There were no maiden overs. One came across jewels of price set in the flat official phraseology. For example, one man who was describing some steps he was taking to remedy certain defects interjected casually: "At this point I had to go under for a little, as a man in a boat was trying to grab my periscope with his hand." No reference before or after to the said man or his fate. Again: "Came across a dhow with a Turkish skipper. He seemed so miserable that I let him go." And elsewhere in those waters, a submarine overhauled a steamer full of Turkish passengers, some of whom, arguing on their allies' lines, promptly leaped overboard. Our boat fished them out and returned them, for she was not killing civilians. In another affair, which included several ships (now at the bottom) and one submarine, the commander relaxes enough to note that: "The men behaved very well under direct and flanking fire from rifles at about fifteen yards." This was *not*, I believe, the submarine that fought the Turkish cavalry on the beach. And in addition to matters much more marvellous than any I have hinted at, the reports deal with repairs and shifts and contrivances carried through in the face of dangers that read like the last delirium of romance. One boat went down the

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Straits and found herself rather canted over to one side. A mine and chain had jammed under her forward diving-plane. So far as I made out, she shook it off by standing on her head and jerking backwards; or it may have been, for the thing has occurred more than once, she merely rose as much as she could, when she could, and then "released it by hand," as the official phrase goes.

FOUR NIGHTMARES

And who, a few months ago, could have invented, or having invented, would have dared to print such a nightmare as this: There was a boat in the North Sea who ran into a net and was caught by the nose. She rose, still entangled, meaning to cut the thing away on the surface. But a Zeppelin in waiting saw and bombed her, and she had to go down again at once—but not too wildly or she would get herself more wrapped up than ever. She went down, and by slow working and weaving and wriggling, guided only by guesses at the meaning of each scrape and grind of the net on her blind forehead, at last she drew clear. Then she sat on the bottom and thought. The question was whether she should go back at once and warn her confederates against the trap, or wait till the destroyers which she knew the Zeppelin would have signalled for should come out to finish her still entangled, as they would suppose, in the net. It was a simple calculation of compara-

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tive speeds and positions, and when it was worked out she decided to try for the double event. Within a few minutes of the time she had allowed for them, she heard the twitter of four destroyers' screws quartering above her; rose; got her shot in; saw one destroyer crumple; hung round till another took the wreck in tow; said good-bye to the spare brace (she was at the end of her supplies), and reached the rendezvous in time to turn her friends.

And since we are dealing in nightmares, here are two more—one genuine, the other, mercifully, false. There was a boat not only at, but *in* the mouth of a river—well home in German territory. She was spotted, and went under, her commander perfectly aware that there was not more than five feet of water over her conning-tower, so that even a torpedo-boat, let alone a destroyer, would hit it if she came over. But nothing hit anything. The search was conducted on scientific principles while they sat on the silt and suffered. Then the commander heard the rasp of a wire trawl sweeping over his hull. It was not a nice sound, but there happened to be a couple of gramophones aboard, and he turned them both on to drown it. And in due time that boat got home with everybody's hair of just the same colour as when they had started!

The other nightmare arose out of silence and imagination. A boat had gone to bed on the bottom in a spot where she might reasonably expect to

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be looked for, but it was a convenient jumping-off, or up, place for the work in hand. About the bad hour of 2.30 A.M. the commander was waked by one of his men, who whispered to him: "They've got the chains on us, sir!" Whether it was pure nightmare, an hallucination of long wakefulness, something relaxing and releasing in that packed box of machinery, or the disgusting reality, the commander could not tell, but it had all the makings of panic in it. So the Lord and long training put it into his head to reply! "Have they? Well, we shan't be coming up till nine o'clock this morning. We'll see about it then. Turn out that light, please."

He did not sleep, but the dreamer and the others did, and when morning came and he gave the order to rise, and she rose unhampered, and he saw the grey, smeared seas from above once again, he said it was a very refreshing sight.

Lastly, which is on all fours with the gamble of the chase, a man was coming home rather bored after an uneventful trip. It was necessary for him to sit on the bottom for awhile, and there he played patience. Of a sudden it struck him, as a vow and an omen, that if he worked out the next game correctly he would go up and strafe something. The cards fell all in order. He went up at once and found himself alongside a German, whom, as he had promised and prophesied to himself, he

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destroyed. She was a mine-layer, and needed only a jar to dissipate like a cracked electric-light bulb. He was somewhat impressed by the contrast between the single-handed game fifty feet below, the ascent, the attack, the amazing result, and when he descended again, his cards just as he had left them.

SUBMARINES

II

I WAS honoured by a glimpse into this veiled life in a boat which was merely practising between trips. Submarines are like cats. They never tell "who they were with last night," and they sleep as much as they can. If you board a submarine off duty you generally see a perspective of fore-shortened fattish men laid all along. The men say that except at certain times it is rather an easy life, with relaxed regulations about smoking, calculated to make a man put on flesh. One requires well-padded nerves. Many of the men do not appear on deck throughout the whole trip. After all, why should they if they don't want to? They know that they are responsible in their department for their comrades' lives as their comrades are responsible for theirs. What's the use of flapping about? Better lay in some magazines and cigarettes.

When we set forth there had been some trouble in the fairway, and a mined neutral, whose misfortune all bore with exemplary calm, was careened on a near-by shoal.

"Suppose there are more mines knocking about?" I suggested.

"We'll hope there aren't," was the soothing reply.

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"Mines are all Joss. You either hit 'em or you don't. And if you do, they don't always go off. They scrape alongside."

"What's the etiquette then?"

"Shut off both propellers and hope."

We were dodging various craft down the harbour when a squadron of trawlers came out on our beam, at that extravagant rate of speed which unlimited Government coal always leads to. They were led by an ugly, upstanding, black-sided buccaneer with twelve-pounders.

"Ah! That's the King of the Trawlers. Isn't he carrying dog, too! Give him room!" one said.

We were all in the narrowed harbour mouth together.

"There's my youngest daughter. Take a look at her!" some one hummed as a punctilious navy cap slid by on a very near bridge.

"We'll fall in behind him. They're going over to the neutral. Then they'll sweep. By the bye, did you hear about one of the passengers in the neutral yesterday? He was taken off, of course, by a destroyer, and the only thing he said was: 'Twenty-five time I 'ave insured, but not *this* time. . . . 'Ang it!"

The trawlers lunged ahead toward the forlorn neutral. Our destroyer nipped past us with that high-shouldered, terrier-like pouncing action of the newer boats, and went ahead. A tramp in ballast,

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her propeller half out of water, threshed along through the sallow haze.

"Lord! What a shot!" somebody said enviously. The men on the little deck looked across at the slow-moving silhouette. One of them, a cigarette behind his ear, smiled at a companion.

Then we went down—not as they go when they are pressed (the record, I believe, is 50 feet in 50 seconds from top to bottom), but genteelly, to an orchestra of appropriate sounds, roarings, and blowings, and after the orders, which come from the commander alone, utter silence and peace.

"There's the bottom. We bumped at fifty—fifty-two," he said.

"I didn't feel it."

"We'll try again. Watch the gauge, and you'll see it flick a little."

THE PRACTICE OF THE ART

It may have been so, but I was more interested in the faces, and above all the eyes, all down the length of her. It was to them, of course, the simplest of manœuvres. They dropped into gear as no machine could; but the training of years and the experience of the year leaped up behind those steady eyes under the electrics in the shadow of the tall motors, between the pipes and the curved hull, or glued to their special gauges. One forgot the bodies altogether—but one will never forget the eyes or

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the ennobled faces. One man I remember in particular. On deck his was no more than a grave, rather striking countenance, cast in the unmistakable petty officer's mould. Below, as I saw him in profile handling a vital control, he looked like the Doge of Venice, the Prior of some sternly-ruled monastic order, an old-time Pope—anything that signifies trained and stored intellectual power utterly and ascetically devoted to some vast impersonal end. And so with a much younger man, who changed into such a monk as Frank Dicksee used to draw. Only a couple of torpedo-men, not being in gear for the moment, read an illustrated paper. Their time did not come till we went up and got to business, which meant firing at our destroyer, and, I think, keeping out of the light of a friend's torpedoes.

The attack and everything connected with it is solely the commander's affair. He is the only one who gets any fun at all—since he is the eye, the brain, and the hand of the whole—this single figure at the periscope. The second in command heaves sighs, and prays that the dummy torpedo (there is less trouble about the live ones) will go off all right, or he'll be told about it. The others wait and follow the quick run of orders. It is, if not a convention, a fairly established custom that the commander shall inferentially give his world some idea of what is going on. At least, I only heard of one man who says nothing whatever, and doesn't even

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wriggle his shoulders when he is on the sight. The others soliloquise, etc., according to their temperament; and the periscope is as revealing as golf.

Submarines nowadays are expected to look out for themselves more than at the old practices, when the destroyers walked circumspectly. We dived and circulated under water for a while, and then rose for a sight—something like this: “Up a little—up! Up still! Where the deuce has he got to—Ah! (Half a dozen orders as to helm and depth of descent, and a pause broken by a drumming noise somewhere above, which increases and passes away.) That’s better! Up again! (This refers to the periscope.) Yes. Ah! No, we *don’t* think! All right! Keep her *down*, damn it! Umm! That ought to be nineteen knots. . . . Dirty trick! He’s changing speed. No, he isn’t. *He’s* all right. Ready forward there! (A valve sputters and drips, the torpedo-men crouch over their tubes and nod to themselves. *Their* faces have changed now.) He hasn’t spotted us yet. We’ll ju-ust—(more helm and depth orders, but specially helm)—’Wish we were working a beam-tube. Ne’er mind! Up! (A last string of orders.) Six hundred, and he doesn’t see us! Fire!”

The dummy left; the second in command cocked one ear and looked relieved. Up we rose; the wet air and spray spattered through the hatch; the destroyer swung off to retrieve the dummy.

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“Careless brutes destroyers are,” said one officer. “That fellow nearly walked over us just now. Did you notice?”

The commander was playing his game out over again—stroke by stroke. “With a beam-tube I’d ha’ strafed him amidships,” he concluded.

“Why didn’t you then?” I asked.

There were loads of shiny reasons, which reminded me that we were at war and cleared for action, and that the interlude had been merely play. A companion rose alongside and wanted to know whether we had seen anything of her dummy.

“No. But we heard it,” was the short answer.

I was rather annoyed, because I had seen that particular daughter of destruction on the stocks only a short time ago, and here she was grown up and talking about her missing children!

In the harbour again, one found more submarines, all patterns and makes and sizes, with rumours of yet more and larger to follow. Naturally their men say that we are only at the beginning of the submarine. We shall have them presently for all purposes.

THE MAN AND THE WORK

Now here is a mystery of the Service.

A man gets a boat which for two years becomes his very self—

His morning hope, his evening dream,
His joy throughout the day.

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With him is a second in command, an engineer, and some others. They prove each other's souls habitually every few days, by the direct test of peril, till they act, think, and endure as a unit, in and with the boat. That commander is transferred to another boat. He tries to take with him if he can, which he can't, as many of his other selves as possible. He is pitched into a new type twice the size of the old one, with three times as many gadgets, an unexplored temperament and unknown leanings. After his first trip he comes back clamouring for the head of her constructor, of his own second in command, his engineer, his cox, and a few other ratings. They for their part wish him dead on the beach, because, last commission with So-and-so, nothing ever went wrong anywhere. A fortnight later you can remind the commander of what he said, and he will deny every word of it. She's not, he says, so very vile—things considered—barring her five-ton torpedo-derricks, the abominations of her wireless, and the tropical temperature of her beer-lockers. All of which signifies that the new boat has found her soul, and her commander would not change her for battle-cruisers. Therefore, that he may remember he is the Service and not a branch of it, he is after certain seasons shifted to a battle-cruiser, where he lives in a blaze of admirals and aiguillettes, responsible for vast decks and crypt-like flats, a student of extended above-water tactics,

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thinking in tens of thousands of yards instead of his modest but deadly three to twelve hundred.

And the man who takes his place straightway forgets that he ever looked down on great rollers from a sixty-foot bridge under the whole breadth of heaven, but crawls and climbs and dives through conning-towers with those same waves wet in his neck, and when the cruisers pass him, tearing the deep open in half a gale, thanks God he is not as they are, and goes to bed beneath their distracted keels.

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EXPERT OPINIONS

“But submarine work is cold-blooded business.”

(This was at a little session in a green-curtained “wardroom” cum owner’s cabin.)

“Then there’s no truth in the yarn that you can feel when the torpedo’s going to get home?” I asked.

“Not a word. You sometimes see it get home, or miss, as the case may be. Of course, it’s never your fault if it misses. It’s all your second-in-command.”

“That’s true, too,” said the second. “I catch it all around. That’s what I am here for.”

“And what about the third man?” There was one aboard at the time.

“He generally comes from a smaller boat, to pick

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up real work—if he can suppress his intellect and doesn't talk 'last commission.' ”

The third hand promptly denied the possession of any intellect, and was quite dumb about his last boat.

“And the men?”

“They train on, too. They train each other. Yes, one gets to know 'em about as well as they get to know us. Up topside, a man can take you in—take himself in—for months; for half a commission, p'rhaps. Down below he can't. It's all in cold blood—not like at the front, where they have something exciting all the time.”

“Then bumping mines isn't exciting?”

“Not one little bit. You can't bump back at 'em. Even with a Zepp——”

“Oh, now and then,” one interrupted, and they laughed as they explained.

“Yes, that was rather funny. One of our boats came up slap underneath a low Zepp. 'Looked for the sky, you know, and couldn't see anything except this fat, shining belly almost on top of 'em. Luckily, it wasn't the Zepp's stingin' end. So our boat went to windward and kept just awash. There was a bit of sea, and the Zepp had to work against the wind. (They don't like that.) Our boat sent a man to the gun. He was pretty well drowned, of course, but he hung on, choking and spitting, and held his breath, and got in shots where he could.

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This Zepp was strafing bombs about for all she was worth, and—who was it?—Macartney, I think, potting at her between dives; and naturally all hands wanted to look at the performance, so about half the North Sea flopped down below and—oh, they had a Charlie Chaplin time of it! Well, somehow, Macartney managed to rip the Zepp a bit, and she went to leeward with a list on her. We saw her a fortnight later with a patch on her port side. Oh, if Fritz only fought clean, this wouldn't be half a bad show. But Fritz can't fight clean."

"And *we* can't do what he does—even if we were allowed to," one said.

"No, we can't. 'Tisn't done. We have to fish Fritz out of the water, dry him, and give him cocktails, and send him to Donnington Hall."

"And what does Fritz do?" I asked.

"He sputters and clicks and bows. He has all the correct motions, you know; but, of course, when he's your prisoner you can't tell him what he really is."

"And do you suppose Fritz understands any of it?" I went on.

"No. Or he wouldn't have lusitaniaed. This war was his first chance of making his name, and he chucked it all away for the sake of showin' off as a foul Gottstrafer."

And they talked of that hour of the night when submarines come to the top like mermaids to get

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and give information; of boats whose business it is to fire as much and to splash about as aggressively as possible; and of other boats who avoid any sort of display—dumb boats watching and relieving watch, with their periscope just showing like a crocodile's eye, at the back of islands and the mouths of channels where something may some day move out in procession to its doom.

PATROLS

I

ON the edge of the North Sea sits an Admiral in charge of a stretch of coast without lights or marks, along which the traffic moves much as usual. In front of him there is nothing but the east wind, the enemy, and some few of our ships. Behind him there are towns, with M.P.'s attached, who a little while ago didn't see the reason for certain lighting orders. When a Zeppelin or two came, they saw. Left and right of him are enormous docks, with vast crowded sheds, miles of stone-faced quay-edges, loaded with all manner of supplies and crowded with mixed shipping.

In this exalted world one met Staff-Captains, Staff-Commanders, Staff-Lieutenants, and Secretaries, with Paymasters so senior that they almost ranked with Admirals. There were Warrant Officers, too, who long ago gave up splashing about decks barefoot, and now check and issue stores to the ravenous, untruthful fleets. Said one of these, guarding a collection of desirable things, to a cross between a sick-bay attendant and a junior writer (but he was really an expert burglar), "*No!* An' you can tell Mr. So-and-so, with my compliments, that the storekeeper's gone away—right away—

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with the key of these stores in his pocket. Understand me? In his trousers pocket."

He snorted at my next question.

"*Do* I know any destroyer-lootenants?" said he. "This coast's rank with 'em! Destroyer-lootenants are born stealing. It's a mercy they's too busy to practise forgery, or I'd be in gaol. Engineer-Commanders? Engineer-Lootenants? They're worse! . . . Look here! If my own mother was to come to me beggin' brass screws for her own coffin, I'd—I'd think twice before I'd oblige the old lady. War's war, I grant you that; but what I've got to contend with is crime."

I referred to him a case of conscience in which every one concerned acted exactly as he should, and it nearly ended in murder. During a lengthy action, the working of a gun was hampered by some empty cartridge-cases which the lieutenant in charge made signs (no man could hear his neighbour speak just then) should be hove overboard. Upon which the gunner rushed forward and made other signs that they were "on charge," and must be tallied and accounted for. He, too, was trained in a strict school. Upon which the lieutenant, but that he was busy, would have slain the gunner for refusing orders in action. Afterwards he wanted him shot by court-martial. But every one was voiceless by then, and could only mouth and croak at each other, till somebody laughed, and the pedantic gunner was spared.

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“Well, that’s what you might fairly call a naval crux,” said my friend among the stores. “The Lieutenant was right. ’Mustn’t refuse orders in action. The Gunner was right. Empty cases *are* on charge. No one ought to chuck ’em away that way, but . . . Damn it, they were *all* of ’em right! It ought to ha’ been a marine. Then they could have killed him and preserved discipline at the same time.”

A LITTLE THEORY

The problem of this coast resolves itself into keeping touch with the enemy’s movements; in preparing matters to trap and hinder him when he moves, and in so entertaining him that he shall not have time to draw clear before a blow descends on him from another quarter. There are then three lines of defence: the outer, the inner, and the home waters. The traffic and fishing are always with us.

The blackboard idea of it is always to have stronger forces more immediately available everywhere than those the enemy can send. x German submarines draw a English destroyers. Then x calls $x + y$ to deal with a , who, in turn, calls up b , a scout, and possibly a^2 , with a fair chance that, if $x + y + z$ (a Zeppelin) carry on, they will run into $a^2 + b^2 + c$ cruisers. At this point, the equation generally stops; if it continued, it would end mathematically in the whole of the German Fleet

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coming out. Then another factor which we may call the Grand Fleet would come from another place. To change the comparisons: the Grand Fleet is the "strong left" ready to give the knock-out blow on the point of the chin when the head is thrown up. The other fleets and other arrangements threaten the enemy's solar plexus and stomach. Somewhere in relation to the Grand Fleet lies the "blockading" cordon which examines neutral traffic. It could be drawn as tight as a Turkish bowstring, but for reasons which we may arrive at after the war, it does not seem to have been so drawn up to date.

The enemy lies behind his mines, and ours, raids our coasts when he sees a chance, and kills seagoing civilians at sight or guess, with intent to terrify. Most sailor-men are mixed up with a woman or two; a fair percentage of them have seen men drown. They can realise what it is when women go down choking in horrible tangles and heavings of draperies. To say that the enemy has cut himself from the fellowship of all who use the seas is rather understating the case. As a man observed thoughtfully: "You can't look at any water now without seeing 'Lusitania' sprawlin' all across it. And just think of those words, 'North-German Lloyd,' 'Hamburg-Amerika' and such things, in the time to come. They simply mustn't be."

He was an elderly trawler, respectable as they

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make them, who, after many years of fishing, had discovered his real vocation. "I never thought I'd like killin' men," he reflected. "Never seemed to be any o' my dooty. But it is—and I do!"

A great deal of the East Coast work concerns mine-fields—ours and the enemy's—both of which shift as occasion requires. We search for and root out the enemy's mines; they do the like by us. It is a perpetual game of finding, springing, and laying traps on the least as well as the most likely run-aways that ships use—such sea snaring and wiring as the world never dreamt of. We are hampered in this, because our Navy respects neutrals; and spends a great deal of its time in making their path safe for them. The enemy does not. He blows them up, because that cows and impresses them, and so adds to his prestige.

DEATH AND THE DESTROYER

The easiest way of finding a mine-field is to steam into it, on the edge of night for choice, with a steep sea running, for that brings the bows down like a chopper on the detonator-horns. Some boats have enjoyed this experience and still live. There was one destroyer (and there may have been others since) who came through twenty-four hours of highly-compressed life. She had an idea that there was a mine-field somewhere about, and left her companions behind while she explored. The weather

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was dead calm, and she walked delicately. She saw one Scandinavian steamer blow up a couple of miles away, rescued the skipper and some hands; saw another neutral, which she could not reach till all was over, skied in another direction; and, between her life-saving efforts and her natural curiosity, got herself as thoroughly mixed up with the field as a camel among tent-ropes. A destroyer's bows are very fine, and her sides are very straight. This causes her to cleave the wave with the minimum of disturbance, and this boat had no desire to cleave anything else. None the less, from time to time, she heard a mine grate, or tinkle, or jar (I could not arrive at the precise note it strikes, but they say it is unpleasant) on her plates. Sometimes she would be free of them for a long while, and began to hope she was clear. At other times they were numerous, but when at last she seemed to have worried out of the danger zone, lieutenant and sub together left the bridge for a cup of tea. ("In those days we took mines very seriously, you know.") As they were in act to drink, they heard the hateful sound again just outside the wardroom. Both put their cups down with extreme care, little fingers extended ("We felt as if they might blow up, too"), and tip-toed on deck, where they met the foc'sle also on tip-toe. They pulled themselves together, and asked severely what the foc'sle thought it was doing. "Beg pardon, sir, but there's another of those blight-

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ers tap-tapping alongside, our end." They all waited and listened to their common coffin being nailed by Death himself. But the things bumped away. At this point they thought it only decent to invite the rescued skipper, warm and blanketed in one of their bunks, to step up and do any further perishing in the open.

"No, thank you," said he. "Last time I was blown up in my bunk, too. That was all right. So I think, now, too, I stay in my bunk here. It is cold upstairs."

Somehow or other they got out of the mess after all. "Yes, we used to take mines awfully seriously in those days. One comfort is, Fritz'll take them seriously when he comes out. Fritz don't like mines."

"Who does?" I wanted to know.

"If you'd been here a little while ago, you'd seen a Commander comin' in with a big 'un slung under his counter. He brought the beastly thing in to analyse. The rest of his squadron followed at two-knot intervals, and everything in harbour that had steam up scattered."

THE ADMIRABLE COMMANDER

Presently I had the honour to meet a Lieutenant-Commander-Admiral who had retired from the service, but, like others, had turned out again at the first flash of the guns, and now commands—he who

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had great ships erupting at his least signal—a squadron of trawlers for the protection of the Dogger Bank Fleet. At present prices—let alone the chance of the paying submarine—men would fish in much warmer places. His flagship was once a multi-millionaire's private yacht. In her mixture of stark, carpetless, curtainless, carbolised present, with voluptuously curved, broad-decked, easy-stairwayed past, she might be Queen Guinevere in the convent at Amesbury. And her Lieutenant-Commander, most careful to pay all due compliments to Admirals who were midshipmen when *he* was a Commander, leads a congregation of very hard men indeed. They do precisely what he tells them to, and with him go through strange experiences, because they love him and because his language is volcanic and wonderful—what you might call Popocatapocalyptic. I saw the Old Navy making ready to lead out the New under a grey sky and a falling glass—the wisdom and cunning of the old man backed up by the passion and power of the younger breed, and the discipline which had been his soul for half a century binding them all.

“What'll he do *this* time?” I asked of one who might know.

“He'll cruise between Two and Three East; but if you'll tell me what he *won't* do, it 'ud be more to the point! He's mine-hunting, I expect, just now.”

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WASTED MATERIAL

Here is a digression suggested by the sight of a man I had known in other scenes, despatch-riding round a fleet in a petrol-launch. There are many of his type, yachtsmen of sorts accustomed to take chances, who do not hold masters' certificates and cannot be given sea-going commands. Like my friend, they do general utility work—often in their own boats. This is a waste of good material. Nobody wants amateur navigators—the traffic lanes are none too wide as it is. But these gentlemen ought to be distributed among the Trawler Fleet as strictly combatant officers. A trawler skipper may be an excellent seaman, but slow with a submarine shelling and diving, or in cutting out enemy trawlers. The young ones who can master Q.F. gun work in a very short time would—though there might be friction, a court-martial or two, and probably losses at first—pay for their keep. Even a hundred or so of amateurs, more or less controlled by their squadron commanders, would make a happy beginning, and I am sure they would all be extremely grateful.

PATROLS

II

THE great basins were crammed with craft of kinds never known before on any Navy List. Some were as they were born, others had been converted, and a multitude have been designed for special cases. The Navy prepares against all contingencies by land, sea, and air. It was a relief to meet a batch of comprehensible destroyers and to drop again into the little mouse-trap wardrooms, which are as large-hearted as all Our oceans. The men one used to know as destroyer-lieutenants ("born stealing") are serious Commanders and Captains to-day, but their sons, Lieutenants in command and Lieutenant-Commanders, do follow them. The sea in peace is a hard life; war only sketches an extra line or two round the young mouths. The routine of ships always ready for action is so part of the blood now that no one notices anything except the absence of formality and of the "crimes" of peace. What Warrant Officers used to say at length is cut down to a grunt. What the sailor-man did not know and expected to have told him, does not exist. He has done it all too often at sea and ashore.

I watched a little party working under a leading hand at a job which, eighteen months ago, would

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have required a Gunner in charge. It was comic to see his orders trying to overtake the execution of them. Ratings coming aboard carried themselves with a (to me) new swing—not swank, but consciousness of adequacy. The high, dark foc'sles which, thank goodness, are only washed twice a week, received them and their bags, and they turned to on the instant as a man picks up his life at home. Like the submarine crew, they come to be a breed apart—double-jointed, extra-toed, with brazen bowels and no sort of nerves.

It is the same in the engine-room, when the ships come in for their regular looking-over. Those who love them, which you would never guess from the language, know exactly what they need, and get it without fuss. Everything that steams has her individual peculiarity, and the great thing is, at overhaul, to keep to it and not develop a new one. If, for example, through some trick of her screws not synchronising, a destroyer always casts to port when she goes astern, do not let any zealous soul try to make her run true, or you will have to learn her helm all over again. And it is vital that you should know exactly what your ship is going to do three seconds before she does it. Similarly with men. If any one, from Lieutenant-Commander to stoker, changes his personal trick or habit—even the manner in which he clutches his chin or caresses his nose at a crisis—the matter must be carefully con-

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sidered in this world where each is trustee for his neighbour's life and, vastly more important, the corporate honour.

"What are the destroyers doing just now?" I asked.

"Oh—running about—much the same as usual."

The Navy hasn't the least objection to telling one everything that it is doing. Unfortunately, it speaks its own language, which is incomprehensible to the civilian. But you will find it all in "The Channel Pilot" and "The Riddle of the Sands."

It is a foul coast, hairy with currents and rips, and mottled with shoals and rocks. Practically the same men hold on here in the same ships, with much the same crews, for months and months. A most senior officer told me that they were "good boys"—on reflection, "quite good boys"—but neither he nor the flags on his chart explained how they managed their lightless, unmarked navigations through black night, blinding rain, and the crazy, rebounding North Sea gales. They themselves ascribe it to Joss that they have not piled up their ships a hundred times.

"I expect it must be because we're always dodging about over the same ground. One gets to smell it. We've bumped pretty hard, of course, but we haven't expended much up to date. You never know your luck on patrol, though."

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Personally, though they have been true friends to me, I loathe destroyers, and all the raw, racking, ricochetting life that goes with them—the smell of the wet “lammies” and damp wardroom cushions; the galley-chimney smoking out the bridge; the obstacle-strewn deck; and the pervading beastliness of oil, grit, and greasy iron. Even at moorings they shiver and sidle like half-backed horses. At sea they will neither rise up and fly clear like the hydroplanes, nor dive and be done with it like the submarines, but imitate the vices of both. A scientist of the lower deck describes them as: “Half switch-back, half water-chute, and Hell continuous.” Their only merit, from a landsman’s point of view, is that they can crumple themselves up from stem to bridge and (I have seen it) still get home. But one does not breathe these compliments to their commanders. Other destroyers may be—they will point them out to you—poisonous bags of tricks, but their own command—never! Is she high-bowed? That is the only type which over-rides the seas instead of smothering. Is she low? Low bows glide through the water where those collier-nosed brutes smash it open. Is she mucked up with submarine-catchers? They rather improve her trim. No other ship has them. Have they been denied to her? Thank Heaven, *we* go to sea without a fish-curing plant on

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deck. Does she roll, even for her class? She is drier than Dreadnoughts. Is she permanently and infernally wet? Stiff, sir—stiff: the first requisite of a gun-platform.

“SERVICE AS REQUISITE”

Thus the Cæsars and their fortunes put out to sea with their subs and their sad-eyed engineers, and their long-suffering signallers—I do not even know the technical name of the sin which causes a man to be born a destroyer-signaller in this life—and the little yellow shells stuck all about where they can be easiest reached. The rest of their acts is written for the information of the proper authorities. It reads like a page of Todhunter. But the masters of merchantships could tell more of eyeless shapes, barely outlined on the foam of their own arrest, who shout orders through the thick gloom alongside. The strayed and anxious neutral knows them when their searchlights pin him across the deep, or their syrens answer the last yelp of his as steam goes out of his torpedoed boilers. They stand by to catch and soothe him in his pyjamas at the gangway, collect his scattered lifeboats, and see a warm drink into him before they turn to hunt the slayer. The drifters, punching and reeling up and down their ten-mile line of traps; the outer trawlers, drawing the very teeth of Death with water-sodden fingers, are grateful for their low, guarded signals; and

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when the Zeppelin's revealing star-shell cracks darkness open above him, the answering crack of the invisible destroyers' guns comforts the busy minelayers. Big cruisers talk to them, too; and, what is more, they talk back to the cruisers. Sometimes they draw fire—pinkish spurts of light—a long way off, where Fritz is trying to coax the mover a minefield he has just laid; or they steal on Fritz in the midst of his job, and the horizon rings with barking, which the inevitable neutral who saw it all reports as "a heavy fleet action in the North Sea." The sea after dark can be as alive as the woods of summer nights. Everything is exactly where you don't expect it, and the shyest creatures are the farthest away from their holes. Things boom overhead like bitterns, or scutter alongside like hares, or arise dripping and hissing from below like otters. It is the destroyer's business to find out what their business may be through all the long night, and to help or hinder accordingly. Dawn sees them pitchpoling insanely between head-seas, or hanging on to bridges that sweep like scythes from one forlorn horizon to the other. A homeward-bound submarine chooses this hour to rise, very ostentatiously, and signals by hand to a lieutenant in command. (They were the same term at Dartmouth, and same first ship.)

"What's he sayin'? Secure that gun, will you? 'Can't hear oneself speak.'" The gun is a bit noisy

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on its mountings, but that isn't the reason for the destroyer-lieutenant's short temper.

"'Says he's goin' down, sir," the signaller replies. What the submarine had spelt out, and everybody knows it, was: "Cannot approve of this extremely frightful weather. Am going to bye-bye."

"Well!" snaps the lieutenant to his signaller, "what are you grinning at?" The submarine has hung on to ask if the destroyer will "kiss her and whisper good-night." A breaking sea smacks her tower in the middle of the insult. She closes like an oyster, but—just too late. *Habet!* There must be a quarter of a ton of water somewhere down below, on its way to her ticklish batteries.

"What a wag!" says the signaller, dreamily. "Well, 'e can't say 'e didn't get 'is little kiss."

The lieutenant in command smiles. The sea is a beast, but a just beast.

RACIAL UNTRUTHS

This is trivial enough, but what would you have? If Admirals will not strike the proper attitudes, nor Lieutenants emit the appropriate sentiments, one is forced back on the truth, which is that the men at the heart of the great matters in our Empire are, mostly, of an even simplicity. From the advertising point of view they are stupid, but the breed has always been stupid in this department. It may be due, as our enemies assert, to our racial snobbery,

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or, as others hold, to a certain God-given lack of imagination which saves us from being over-concerned at the effects of our appearances on others. Either way, it deceives the enemies' people more than any calculated lie. When you come to think of it, though the English are the worst paper-work and *viva voce* liars in the world, they have been rigorously trained since their early youth to live and act lies for the comfort of the society in which they move, and so for their own comfort. The result in this war is interesting.

It is no lie that at the present moment we hold all the seas in the hollow of our hands. For that reason we shuffle over them shame-faced and apologetic, making arrangements here and flagrant compromises there, in order to give substance to the lie that we have dropped fortuitously into this high seat and are looking round the world for some one to resign it to. Nor is it any lie that, had we used the Navy's bare fist instead of its gloved hand from the beginning, we could in all likelihood have shortened the war. That being so, we elected to dab and peck at and half-strangle the enemy, to let him go and choke him again. It is no lie that we continue on our inexplicable path animated, we will try to believe till other proof is given, by a cloudy idea of alleviating or mitigating something for somebody—not ourselves. [Here, of course, is where our racial snobbery comes in, which makes the German gibber.

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I cannot understand why he has not accused us to our Allies of having secret commercial understandings with him.] For that reason, we shall finish the German eagle as the merciful lady killed the chicken. It took her the whole afternoon, and then, you will remember, the carcass had to be thrown away.

Meantime, there is a large and unlovely water, inhabited by plain men in severe boats, who endure cold, exposure, wet, and monotony almost as heavy as their responsibilities. Charge them with heroism—but that needs heroism, indeed! Accuse them of patriotism, they become ribald. Examine into the records of the miraculous work they have done and are doing. They will assist you, but with perfect sincerity they will make as light of the valour and forethought shown as of the ends they have gained for mankind. The Service takes all work for granted. It knew long ago that certain things would have to be done, and it did its best to be ready for them. When it disappeared over the skyline for manœuvres it was practising—always practising; trying its men and stuff and throwing out what could not take the strain. That is why, when war came, only a few names had to be changed, and those chiefly for the sake of the body, not of the spirit. And the Seniors who hold the key to our plans and know what will be done if things happen, and what lines wear thin in the many chains, they

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are of one fibre and speech with the Juniors and the lower deck and all the rest who come out of the undemonstrative households ashore. "Here is the situation as it exists now," say the Seniors. "This is what we do to meet it. Look and count and measure and judge for yourself, and then you will know."

It is a safe offer. The civilian only sees that the sea is a vast place, divided between wisdom and chance. He only knows that the uttermost oceans have been swept clear, and the trade-routes purged, one by one, even as our armies were being convoyed along them; that there was no island nor key left unsearched on any waters that might hide an enemy's craft between the Arctic Circle and the Horn. He only knows that less than a day's run to the eastward of where he stands, the enemy's fleets have been held for a year and four months, in order that civilisation may go about its business on all our waters.

TALES OF "THE TRADE"

(1916)

"THE TRADE"

*They bear, in place of classic names,
Letters and numbers on their skin.
They play their grisly blindfold games
In little boxes made of tin.
Sometimes they stalk the Zeppelin,
Sometimes they learn where mines are laid
Or where the Baltic ice is thin.
That is the custom of "The Trade."*

*Few prize-courts sit upon their claims.
They seldom tow their targets in.
They follow certain secret aims
Down under, far from strife or din.
When they are ready to begin
No flag is flown, no fuss is made
More than the shearing of a pin.
That is the custom of "The Trade."*

*The Scout's quadruple funnel flames
A mark from Sweden to the Swin,
The Cruiser's thundrous screw proclaims
Her comings out and goings in:
But only whiffs of paraffin
Or creamy rings that fizz and fade
Show where the one-eyed Death has been.
That is the custom of "The Trade."*

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*Their feats, their fortunes and their fames
Are hidden from their nearest kin;
No eager public backs or blames,
No journal prints the yarns they spin
(The Censor would not let it in!)
When they return from run or raid.
Unheard they work, unseen they win.
That is the custom of "The Trade."*

I

SOME WORK IN THE BALTIC

NO ONE knows how the title of "The Trade" came to be applied to the Submarine Service. Some say that the cruisers invented it because they pretend that submarine officers look like unwashed chauffeurs. Others think it sprang forth by itself, which means that it was coined by the Lower Deck, where they always have the proper names for things. Whatever the truth, the Submarine Service is now "the Trade"; and if you ask them why, they will answer: "What else could you call it? The Trade's 'the trade,' of course."

It is a close corporation; yet it recruits its men and officers from every class that uses the sea and engines, as well as from many classes that never expected to deal with either. It takes them; they disappear for a while and return changed to their very souls, for the Trade lives in a world without precedents, of which no generation has had any previous experience—a world still being made and enlarged daily. It creates and settles its own problems as it goes along, and if it cannot help itself no one else can. So the Trade lives in the dark and thinks out inconceivable and impossible things which it afterwards puts into practice.

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It keeps books, too, as honest traders should. They are almost as bald as ledgers, and are written up, hour by hour, on a little sliding table that pulls out from beneath the commander's bunk. In due time they go to my Lords of the Admiralty, who presently circulate a few carefully watered extracts for the confidential information of the junior officers of the Trade, that these may see what things are done and how. The juniors read but laugh. They have heard the stories, with all the flaming detail and much of the language, either from a chief actor while they perched deferentially on the edge of a mess-room fender, or from his subordinate, in which case they were not so deferential, or from some returned member of the crew present on the occasion, who, between half-shut teeth at the wheel, jerks out what really happened. There is very little going on in the Trade that the Trade does not know within a reasonable time. But the outside world must wait until my Lords of the Admiralty release the records. Some of them have been released now.

SUBMARINE AND ICE-BREAKER

Let us take, almost at random, an episode in the life of H.M. Submarine E 9. It is true that she was commanded by Commander Max Horton, but the utter impersonality of the tale makes it as though the boat herself spoke. (Also, never hav-

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ing met or seen any of the gentlemen concerned in the matter, the writer can be impersonal too.) Some time ago, E 9 was in the Baltic, in the deeps of winter, where she used to be taken to her hunting grounds by an ice-breaker. Obviously a submarine cannot use her sensitive nose to smash heavy ice with, so the broad-beamed pushing chaperone comes along to see her clear of the thick harbour and shore ice. In the open sea apparently she is left to her own devices. In company of the ice-breaker, then, E 9 "proceeded" (neither in the Senior nor the Junior Service does any one officially "go" anywhere) to a "certain position."

Here—it is not stated in the book, but the Trade knows every aching, single detail of what is left out—she spent a certain time in testing arrangements and apparatus, which may or may not work properly when immersed in a mixture of block-ice and dirty ice-cream in a temperature well towards zero. This is a pleasant job, made the more delightful by the knowledge that if you slip off the superstructure the deadly Baltic chill will stop your heart long before even your heavy clothes can drown you. Hence (and this is not in the book either) the remark of the highly trained sailor-man in these latitudes who, on being told by his superior officer in the execution of his duty to go to Hell, did insubordinately and enviously reply: "D'you think I'd be here if I could?" Whereby he caused the

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entire personnel, beginning with the Commander, to say "Amen," or words to that effect. E 9 evidently made things work.

Next day she reports: "As circumstances were favourable decided to attempt to bag a destroyer." Her "certain position" must have been near a well-used destroyer-run, for shortly afterwards she sees three of them, but too far off to attack, and later, as the light is failing, a fourth destroyer towards which she manœuvres. "Depth-keeping," she notes, "very difficult owing to heavy swell." An observation balloon on a gusty day is almost as stable as a submarine "pumping" in a heavy swell, and since the Baltic is shallow, the submarine runs the chance of being let down with a whack on the bottom. None the less, E 9 works her way to within 600 yards of the quarry; fires and waits just long enough to be sure that her torpedo is running straight, and that the destroyer is holding her course. Then she "dips to avoid detection." The rest is deadly simple: "At the correct moment after firing, 45 to 50 seconds, heard the unmistakable noise of torpedo detonating." Four minutes later she rose and "found destroyer had disappeared." Then, for reasons probably connected with other destroyers, who, too, may have heard that unmistakable sound, she goes to bed below in the chill dark till it is time to turn homewards. When she rose she met storm from the north and logged it accordingly. "Spray froze as it

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struck, and bridge became a mass of ice. Experienced considerable difficulty in keeping the conning-tower hatch free from ice. Found it necessary to keep a man continuously employed on this work. Bridge screen immovable, ice six inches thick on it. Telegraphs frozen." In this state she forges ahead till midnight, and any one who pleases can imagine the thoughts of the continuous employee scraping and hammering round the hatch, as well as the delight of his friends below when the ice-slush splattered down the conning-tower. At last she considered it "advisable to free the boat of ice, so went below."

"AS REQUISITE"

In the Senior Service the two words "as requisite" cover everything that need not be talked about. E 9 next day "proceeded as requisite" through a series of snowstorms and recurring deposits of ice on the bridge till she got in touch with her friend the ice-breaker; and in her company ploughed and rooted her way back to the work we know. There is nothing to show that it was a near thing for E 9, but somehow one has the idea that the ice-breaker did not arrive any too soon for E 9's comfort and progress. (But what happens in the Baltic when the ice-breaker does not arrive?)

That was in winter. In summer quite the other way, E 9 had to go to bed by day very often under

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the long-lasting northern light when the Baltic is as smooth as a carpet, and one cannot get within a mile and a half of anything with eyes in its head without being put down. There was one time when E 9, evidently on information received, took up "a certain position" and reported the sea "glassy." She had to suffer in silence, while three heavily laden German ships went by; for an attack would have given away her position. Her reward came next day, when she sighted (the words run like Marryat's) "enemy squadron coming up fast from eastward, proceeding inshore of us." They were two heavy battleships with an escort of destroyers, and E 9 turned to attack. She does not say how she crept up in that smooth sea within a quarter of a mile of the leading ship, "a three-funnel ship, of either the Deutschland or Braunschweig class," but she managed it, and fired both bow torpedoes at her.

"No. 1 torpedo was seen and heard to strike her just before foremost funnel: smoke and *débris* appeared to go as high as masthead." That much E 9 saw before one of the guardian destroyers ran at her. "So," says she, "observing her I took my periscope off the battleship." This was excusable, as the destroyer was coming up with intent to kill and E 9 had to flood her tanks and get down quickly. Even so, the destroyer only just missed her, and she struck bottom in 43 feet. "But," says E 9,

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who, if she could not see, kept her ears open, "at the correct interval (the 45 or 50 seconds mentioned in the previous case) the second torpedo was heard to explode, though not actually seen." E 9 came up twenty minutes later to make sure. The destroyer was waiting for her a couple of hundred yards away, and again E 9 dipped for the life, but "just had time to see one large vessel approximately four or five miles away."

Putting courage aside, think for a moment of the mere drill of it all—that last dive for that attack on the chosen battleship; the eye at the periscope watching "No. 1 torpedo" get home; the rush of the vengeful destroyer; the instant orders for flooding everything; the swift descent which had to be arranged for with full knowledge of the shallow sea-floors waiting below, and a guess at the course that might be taken by the seeking bows above, for assuming a destroyer to draw 10 feet and a submarine on the bottom to stand 25 feet to the top of her conning-tower, there is not much clearance in 43 feet salt water, specially if the boat jumps when she touches bottom. And through all these and half a hundred other simultaneous considerations, imagine the trained minds below, counting, as only torpedo-men can count, the run of the merciless seconds that should tell when that second shot arrived. Then "at the correct interval" as laid down in the table of distances, the boom and the jar of

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No. 2 torpedo, the relief, the exhaled breath and untightened lips; the impatient waiting for a second peep, and when that had been taken and the eye at the periscope had reported *one* little nigger-boy in place of two on the waters, perhaps cigarettes, etc., while the destroyer sickled about at a venture overhead.

Certainly they give men rewards for doing such things, but what reward can there be in any gift of Kings or peoples to match the enduring satisfaction of having done them, not alone, but with and through and by trusty and proven companions?

DEFEATED BY DARKNESS

E 1, also a Baltic boat, her Commander F. N. Laurence, had her experiences too. She went out one summer day and late—too late—in the evening sighted three transports. The first she hit. While she was arranging for the second, the third inconsiderately tried to ram her before her sights were on. So it was necessary to go down at once and waste whole minutes of the precious scanting light. When she rose, the stricken ship was sinking and shortly afterwards blew up. The other two were patrolling near by. It would have been a fair chance in daylight, but the darkness defeated her and she had to give up the attack.

It was E 1 who during thick weather came across a squadron of battle-cruisers and got in on a flank-

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ing ship—probably the *Moltke*. The destroyers were very much on the alert, and she had to dive at once to avoid one who only missed her by a few feet. Then the fog shut down and stopped further developments. Thus do time and chance come to every man.

The Trade has many stories, too, of watching patrols when a boat must see chance after chance go by under her nose and write—merely write—what she has seen. Naturally they do not appear in any accessible records. Nor, which is a pity, do the authorities release the records of glorious failures, when everything goes wrong; when torpedoes break surface and squatter like ducks; or arrive full square with a clang and burst of white water and—fail to explode; when the devil is in charge of all the motors, and clutches develop play that would scare a shore-going mechanic bald; when batteries begin to give off death instead of power, and atop of all, ice or wreckage of the strewn seas racks and wrenches the hull till the whole leaking bag of tricks limps home on six missing cylinders and one ditto propeller, *plus* the indomitable will of the red-eyed husky scarecrows in charge.

There might be worse things in this world for decent people to read than such records.

II

BUSINESS IN THE SEA OF MARMARA

THIS war is like an iceberg. We, the public, only see an eighth of it above water. The rest is out of sight and, as with the berg, one guesses its extent by great blocks that break off and shoot up to the surface from some underlying out-running spur a quarter of a mile away. So with this war sudden tales come to light which reveal unsuspected activities in unexpected quarters. One takes it for granted such things are always going on somewhere, but the actual emergence of the record is always astonishing.

Once upon a time, there were certain E type boats who worked the Sea of Marmara with thoroughness and humanity; for the two, in English hands, are compatible. The road to their hunting-grounds was strewn with peril, the waters they inhabited were full of eyes that gave them no rest, and what they lost or expended in wear and tear of the chase could not be made good till they had run the gauntlet to their base again. The full tale of their improvisations and "makee-does" will probably never come to light, though fragments can be picked up at intervals in the proper places as the

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men concerned come and go. The Admiralty gives only the bones, but those are not so dry, of the boat's official story.

When E 14, Commander E. Courtney-Boyle, went to her work in the Sea of Marmara, she, like her sister, "proceeded" on her gas-engine up the Dardanelles; and a gas-engine by night between steep cliffs has been described by the Lower-deck as a "full brass band in a railway cutting." So a fort picked her up with a searchlight and missed her with artillery. She dived under the minefield that guarded the Straits, and when she rose at dawn in the narrowest part of the channel, which is about one mile and a half across, all the forts fired at her. The water, too, was thick with steamboat patrols, out of which E 14 selected a Turkish gunboat and gave her a torpedo. She had just time to see the great column of water shoot as high as the gunboat's mast when she had to dip again as "the men in a small steamboat were leaning over trying to catch hold of the top of my periscope."

"SIX HOURS OF BLIND DEATH"

This sentence, which might have come out of a French exercise book, is all Lieutenant-Commander Courtney-Boyle sees fit to tell, and that officer will never understand why one taxpayer at least demands his arrest after the war till he shall have given the full tale. Did he sight the shadowy un-

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derline of the small steamboat green through the deadlights? Or did she suddenly swim into his vision from behind, and obscure, without warning, his periscope with a single brown clutching hand? Was she alone, or one of a mob of splashing, shouting small craft? He may well have been too busy to note, for there were patrols all around him, a minefield of curious design and undefined area somewhere in front, and steam trawlers vigorously sweeping for him astern and ahead. And when E 14 had burrowed and bumped and scraped through six hours of blind death, she found the Sea of Marmara crawling with craft, and was kept down almost continuously and grew hot and stuffy in consequence. Nor could she charge her batteries in peace, so at the end of another hectic, hunted day of starting them up and breaking off and diving—which is bad for the temper—she decided to quit those infested waters near the coast and charge up somewhere off the traffic routes.

This accomplished, after a long, hot run, which did the motors no good, she went back to her beat, where she picked up three destroyers convoying a couple of troopships. But it was a glassy calm and the destroyers “came for me.” She got off a long-range torpedo at one transport, and ducked before she could judge results. She apologises for this on the grounds that one of her periscopes had been damaged—not, as one would expect, by the gen-

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tleman leaning out of the little steamboat, but by some casual shot—calibre not specified—the day before. "And so," says E 14, "I could not risk my remaining one being bent." However, she heard a thud, and the depth-gauges—those great clock-hands on the white-faced circles—"flicked," which is another sign of dreadful certainty down under. When she rose again she saw a destroyer convoying one burning transport to the nearest beach. That afternoon she met a sister-boat (now gone to Valhalla), who told her that she was almost out of torpedoes, and they arranged a rendezvous for next day, but "before we could communicate we had to dive, and I did not see her again." There must be many such meetings in the Trade, under all skies—boat rising beside boat at the point agreed upon for interchange of news and materials; the talk shouted aloud with the speakers' eyes always on the horizon and all hands standing by to dive, even in the middle of a sentence.

ANNOYING PATROL SHIPS

E 14 kept to her job, on the edge of the procession of traffic. Patrol vessels annoyed her to such an extent that "as I had not seen any transports lately I decided to sink a patrol-ship as they were always firing on me." So she torpedoed a thing that looked like a mine-layer, and must have been something of that kidney, for it sank in less

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than a minute. A tramp-steamer lumbering across the dead flat sea was thoughtfully headed back to Constantinople by firing rifles ahead of her. "Under fire the whole day," E 14 observes philosophically. The nature of her work made this inevitable. She was all among the patrols, which kept her down a good deal and made her draw on her batteries, and when she rose to charge, watchers ashore burned oil-flares on the beach or made smokes among the hills according to the light. In either case there would be a general rush of patrolling craft of all kinds, from steam launches to gunboats. Nobody loves the Trade, though E 14 did several things which made her popular. She let off a string of very surprised dhows (they were empty) in charge of a tug which promptly fled back to Constantinople; stopped a couple of steamers full of refugees, also bound for Constantinople, who were "very pleased at being allowed to proceed" instead of being lusi-taniaed as they had expected. Another refugee-boat, fleeing from goodness knows what horror, she chased into Rodosto Harbour, where, though she could not see any troops, "they opened a heavy rifle fire on us, hitting the boat several times. So I went away and chased two more small tramps who returned towards Constantinople."

Transports, of course, were fair game, and in spite of the necessity she was under of not risking

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her remaining eye, E 14 got a big one in a night of wind and made another hurriedly beach itself, which then opened fire on her, assisted by the local population. "Returned fire and proceeded," says E 14. The diversion of returning fire is one much appreciated by the lower-deck as furnishing a pleasant break in what otherwise might be a monotonous and odoriferous task. There is no drill laid down for this evolution, but etiquette and custom prescribe that on going up the hatch you shall not too energetically prod the next man ahead with the muzzle of your rifle. Likewise, when descending in quick time before the hatch closes, you are requested not to jump directly on the head of the next below. Otherwise you act "as requisite" on your own initiative.

When she had used up all her torpedoes E 14 prepared to go home by the way she had come—there was no other—and was chased towards Gallipoli by a mixed pack composed of a gunboat, a torpedo-boat, and a tug. "They shepherded me to Gallipoli, one each side of me and one astern, evidently expecting me to be caught by the nets there." She walked very delicately for the next eight hours or so, all down the Straits, underrunning the strong tides, ducking down when the fire from the forts got too hot, verifying her position and the position of the minefield, but always taking notes of

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every ship in sight, till towards teatime she saw our Navy off the entrance and "rose to the surface abeam of a French battleship who gave us a rousing cheer." She had been away, as nearly as possible, three weeks, and a kind destroyer escorted her to the base, where we will leave her for the moment while we consider the performance of E 11 (Lieutenant-Commander M. E. Nasmith) in the same waters at about the same season.

E 11 "proceeded" in the usual way, to the usual accompaniments of hostile destroyers, up the Straits, and meets the usual difficulties about charging-up when she gets through. Her wireless naturally takes this opportunity to give trouble, and E 11 is left, deaf and dumb, somewhere in the middle of the Sea of Marmara, diving to avoid hostile destroyers in the intervals of trying to come at the fault in her aerial. (Yet it is noteworthy that the language of the Trade, though technical, is no more emphatic or incandescent than that of top-side ships.)

Then she goes towards Constantinople, finds a Turkish torpedo-gunboat off the port, sinks her, has her periscope smashed by a six-pounder, retires, fits a new top on the periscope, and at 10.30 A.M.—they must have needed it—pipes "All hands to bathe." Much refreshed, she gets her wireless linked up at last, and is able to tell the authorities where she is and what she is after.

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MR. SILAS Q. SWING

At this point—it was off Rodosto—enter a small steamer which does not halt when requested, and so is fired at with "several rounds" from a rifle. The crew, on being told to abandon her, tumble into their boats with such haste that they capsize two out of three. "Fortunately," says E 11, "they are able to pick up everybody." You can imagine to yourself the confusion alongside, the raffle of odds and ends floating out of the boats, and the general parti-coloured hurrah's-nest all over the bright broken water. What you cannot imagine is this: "An American gentleman then appeared on the upper deck who informed us that his name was Silas Q. Swing, of the *Chicago Sun*, and that he was pleased to make our acquaintance. He then informed us that the steamer was proceeding to Chanak and he wasn't sure if there were any stores aboard." If anything could astonish the Trade at this late date, one would almost fancy that the apparition of Silas Q. Swing ("very happy to meet you, gentlemen") might have started a rivet or two on E 11's placid skin. But she never even quivered. She kept a lieutenant of the name of D'Oyley Hughes, an expert in demolition parties; and he went aboard the tramp and reported any quantity of stores—a six-inch gun, for instance, lashed across the top of the forehatch (Silas Q. Swing must have

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been an unobservant journalist), a six-inch gun-mounting in the forehold, pedestals for twelve-pounders thrown in as dunnage, the afterhold full of six-inch projectiles, and a scattering of other commodities. They put the demolition charge well in among the six-inch stuff, and she took it all to the bottom in a few minutes, after being touched off.

“Simultaneously with the sinking of the vessel,” the E 11 goes on, “smoke was observed to the eastward.” It was a steamer who had seen the explosion and was running for Rodosto. E 11 chased her till she tied up to Rodosto pier, and then torpedoed her where she lay—a heavily laden store-ship piled high with packing-cases. The water was shallow here, and though E 11 bumped along the bottom, which does not make for steadiness of aim, she was forced to show a good deal of her only periscope, and had it dented, but not damaged by rifle-fire from the beach. As she moved out of Rodosto Bay she saw a paddle-boat loaded with barbed wire, which stopped on the hail, but “as we ranged alongside her, attempted to ram us, but failed owing to our superior speed.” Then she ran for the beach “very skilfully,” keeping her stern to E 11 till she drove ashore beneath some cliffs. The demolition-squad were just getting to work when “a party of horsemen appeared on the cliffs above and opened a hot fire on the conning tower.” E 11 got out, but

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owing to the shoal water it was some time before she could get under enough to fire a torpedo. The stern of a stranded paddle-boat is no great target and the thing exploded on the beach. Then she "recharged batteries and proceeded slowly on the surface towards Constantinople." All this between the ordinary office hours of 10 A.M. and 4 P.M.

Her next day's work opens, as no pallid writer of fiction dare begin, thus: "Having dived unobserved into Constantinople, observed, etc." Her observations were rather hampered by cross-tides, mud, and currents, as well as the vagaries of one of her own torpedoes which turned upside down and ran about promiscuously. It hit something at last, and so did another shot that she fired, but the waters by Constantinople Arsenal are not healthy to linger in after one has scared up the whole sea-front, so "turned to go out." Matters were a little better below, and E 11 in her perilous passage might have been a lady of the harem tied up in a sack and thrown into the Bosphorus. She grounded heavily; she bounced up 30 feet, was headed down again by a manœuvre easier to shudder over than to describe, and when she came to rest on the bottom found herself being swivelled right round the compass. They watched the compass with much interest. "It was concluded, therefore, that the vessel [E 11 is one of of the few who speaks of herself as a "vessel" as well as a "boat"] was resting on the shoal under the Lean-

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der Tower, and was being turned round by the current." So they corrected her, started the motors, and "bumped gently down into 85 feet of water" with no more knowledge than the lady in the sack where the next bump would land them.

THE PREENING PERCH

And the following day was spent "resting in the centre of the Sea of Marmara." That was their favourite preening perch between operations, because it gave them a chance to tidy the boat and bathe, and they were a cleanly people both in their methods and their persons. When they boarded a craft and found nothing of consequence they "parted with many expressions of good will," and E 11 "had a good wash." She gives her reasons at length; for going in and out of Constantinople and the Straits is all in the day's work, but going dirty, you understand, is serious. She had "of late noticed the atmosphere in the boat becoming very oppressive, the reason doubtless being that there was a quantity of dirty linen aboard, and also the scarcity of fresh water necessitated a limit being placed on the frequency of personal washing." Hence the centre of the Sea of Marmara; all hands playing overside and as much laundry work as time and the Service allowed. One of the reasons, by the way, why we shall be good friends with the Turk again is that he has many of our ideas about decency.

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In due time E 11 went back to her base. She had discovered a way of using unspent torpedoes twice over, which surprised the enemy, and she had as nearly as possible been cut down by a ship which she thought was running away from her. Instead of which (she made the discovery at three thousand yards, both craft all out) the stranger steamed straight at her. "The enemy then witnessed a somewhat spectacular dive at full speed from the surface to 20 feet in as many seconds. He then really did turn tail and was seen no more." Going through the Straits she observed an empty troopship at anchor, but reserved her torpedoes in the hope of picking up some battleship lower down. Not finding these in the Narrows, she nosed her way back and sank the trooper, "afterwards continuing journey down the Straits." Off Kilid Bahr something happened; she got out of trim and had to be fully flooded before she could be brought to her required depth. It might have been whirlpools under water, or—other things. (They tell a story of a boat which once went mad in these very waters, and for no reason ascertainable from within plunged to depths that contractors do not allow for; rocketed up again like a swordfish, and would doubtless have so continued till she died, had not something she had fouled dropped off and let her recover her composure.)

An hour later: "Heard a noise similar to ground-

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ing. Knowing this to be impossible in the water in which the boat then was, I came up to 20 feet to investigate, and observed a large mine preceding the periscope at a distance of about 20 feet, which was apparently hung up by its moorings to the port hydroplane." Hydroplanes are the fins at bow and stern which regulate a submarine's diving. A mine weighs anything from hundredweights to half-tons. Sometimes it explodes if you merely think about it; at others you can batter it like an empty sardine-tin and it submits meekly; but at no time is it meant to wear on a hydroplane. They dared not come up to unhitch it, "owing to the batteries ashore," so they pushed the dim shape ahead of them till they got outside Kum Kale. They then went full astern, and emptied the after-tanks, which brought the bows down, and in this posture rose to the surface, when "the rush of water from the screws together with the sternway gathered allowed the mine to fall clear of the vessel."

Now a fool, said Dr. Johnson, would have tried to describe that.

III

RAVAGES AND REPAIRS

BEFORE we pick up the further adventures of H.M. Submarine E 14 and her partner E 11, here is what you might call a cutting-out affair in the Sea of Marmara which E 12 (Lieutenant-Commander K. M. Bruce) put through quite on the old lines.

E 12's main motors gave trouble from the first, and she seems to have been a cripple for most of that trip. She sighted two small steamers, one towing two, and the other three, sailing vessels; making seven keels in all. She stopped the first steamer, noticed she carried a lot of stores, and, moreover, that her crew—she had no boats—were all on deck in life-belts. Not seeing any gun, E 12 ran up alongside and told the first lieutenant to board. The steamer then threw a bomb at E 12, which struck, but luckily did not explode, and opened fire on the boarding-party with rifles and a concealed 1-in. gun. E 12 answered with her six-pounder, and also with rifles. The two sailing ships in tow, very properly, tried to foul E 12's propellers and "also opened fire with rifles."

It was as Orientally mixed a fight as a man could wish: The first lieutenant and the boarding-party

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engaged on the steamer, E 12 foul of the steamer, and being fouled by the sailing ships; the six-pounder methodically perforating the steamer from bow to stern; the steamer's 1-in. gun and the rifles from the sailing ships raking everything and everybody else; E 12's coxswain on the conning-tower passing up ammunition; and E 12's one workable motor developing "slight defects" at, of course, the moment when power to manœuvre was vital.

The account is almost as difficult to disentangle as the actual mess must have been. At any rate, the six-pounder caused an explosion in the steamer's ammunition, whereby the steamer sank in a quarter of an hour, giving time—and a hot time it must have been—for E 12 to get clear of her and to sink the two sailing ships. She then chased the second steamer, who slipped her three tows and ran for the shore. E 12 knocked her about a good deal with gun-fire as she fled, saw her drive on the beach well alight, and then, since the beach opened fire with a gun at 1500 yards, went away to retinker her motors and write up her log. She approved of her first lieutenant's behaviour "under very trying circumstances" (this probably refers to the explosion of the ammunition by the six-pounder which, doubtless, jarred the boarding-party) and of the cox who acted as ammunition-hoist; and of the gun's crew, who "all did very well" under rifle and small-gun

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fire "at a range of about ten yards." But she never says what she really said about her motors.

A BRAWL AT A PIER

Now we will take E 14 on various work, either alone or as flagship of a squadron composed of herself and Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith's boat, E 11. Hers was a busy midsummer, and she came to be intimate with all sorts of craft—such as the two-funnelled gunboat off Sar Kioi, who "fired at us, and missed as usual"; hospital ships going back and forth unmolested to Constantinople; "the gunboat which fired at me on Sunday," and other old friends, afloat and ashore.

When the crew of the Turkish brigantine full of stores got into their boats by request, and then "all stood up and cursed us," E 14 did not lose her temper, even though it was too rough to lie alongside the abandoned ship. She told Acting Lieutenant R. W. Lawrence, of the Royal Naval Reserve, to swim off to her, which he did, and after a "cursory search"—Who can be expected to Sherlock Holmes for hours with nothing on?—set fire to her "with the aid of her own matches and paraffin oil."

Then E 14 had a brawl with a steamer with a yellow funnel, blue top and black band, lying at a pier among dhows. The shore took a hand in the game with small guns and rifles, and, as E 14 manœuvred about the roadstead "as requisite" there

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was a sudden unaccountable explosion which strained her very badly. "I think," she muses, "I must have caught the moorings of a mine with my tail as I was turning, and exploded it. It is possible that it might have been a big shell bursting over us, but I think this unlikely, as we were 30 feet at the time." She is always a philosophical boat, anxious to arrive at the reason of facts, and when the game is against her she admits it freely.

There was nondescript craft of a few hundred tons, who "at a distance did not look very warlike," but when chased suddenly played a couple of six-pounders and "got off two dozen rounds at us before we were under. Some of them were only about 20 yards off." And when a wily steamer, after sidling along the shore, lay up in front of a town she became "indistinguishable from the houses," and so was safe because we do not löwestrafe open towns.

Sailing dhows full of grain had to be destroyed. At one rendezvous, while waiting for E 11, E 14 dealt with three such cases and then "towed the crews inshore and gave them biscuits, beef, and rum and water, as they were rather wet." Passenger steamers were allowed to proceed, because they were "full of people of both sexes," which is an un-kultured way of doing business.

Here is another instance of our insular type of mind. An empty dhow is passed which E 14 was going to leave alone, but it occurs to her that the

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boat looks "rather deserted," and she fancies she sees two heads in the water. So she goes back half a mile, picks up a couple of badly exhausted men, frightened out of their wits, gives them food and drink, and puts them aboard their property. Crews that jump overboard have to be picked up, even if, as happened in one case, there are twenty of them and one of them is a German bank manager taking a quantity of money to the Chanak Bank. Hospital ships are carefully looked over as they come and go, and are left to their own devices; but they are rather a nuisance because they force E 14 and others to dive for them when engaged in stalking warrantable game. There were a good many hospital ships, and as far as we can make out they all played fair. E 11 boarded one and "reported everything satisfactory.

STRANGE MESSMATES

A layman cannot tell from the reports which of the duties demanded the most work—whether the continuous clearing out of transports, dhows, and sailing ships, generally found close to the well-gunned and attentive beach, or the equally continuous attacks on armed vessels of every kind. Whatever else might be going on, there was always the problem how to arrange for the crews of sunk ships. If a dhow has no small boats, and you cannot find one handy, you have to take the crew aboard, where

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they are horribly in the way, and add to the oppressiveness of the atmosphere—like “the nine people, including two very old men,” whom E 14 made honorary members of her mess for several hours till she could put them ashore after dark. Oddly enough she “could not get anything out of them.” Imagine nine bewildered Moslems suddenly decanted into the reeking clamorous bowels of a fabric obviously built by Shaitan himself, and surrounded by—but our people are people of the Book and not dog-eating Kaffirs, and I will wager a great deal that that little company went ashore in better heart and stomach than when they were passed down the conning-tower hatch.

Then there were queer amphibious battles with troops who had to be shelled as they marched towards Gallipoli along the coast roads. E 14 went out with E 11 on this job, early one morning, each boat taking her chosen section of landscape. Thrice E 14 rose to fire, thinking she saw the dust of feet, but “each time it turned out to be bullocks.” When the shelling was ended “I think the troops marching along that road must have been delayed and a good many killed.” The Turks got up a field-gun in the course of the afternoon—your true believer never hurries—which out-ranged both boats, and they left accordingly.

The next day she changed billets with E 11, who had the luck to pick up and put down a battle-

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ship close to Gallipoli. It turned out to be the *Barbarossa*. Meantime E 14 got a 5000-ton supply ship, and later had to burn a sailing ship loaded with 200 bales of leaf and cut tobacco—Turkish tobacco! Small wonder that E 11 "came alongside that afternoon and remained for an hour"—probably making cigarettes.

REFITTING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

Then E 14 went back to her base. She had a hellish time among the Dardanelles nets; was, of course, fired at by the forts, just missed a torpedo from the beach, scraped a mine, and when she had time to take stock found electric mine-wires twisted round her propellers and all her hull scraped and scored with wire marks. But that, again, was only in the day's work. The point she insisted upon was that she had been for seventy days in the Sea of Marmara with no securer base for refit than the centre of the same, and during all that while she had not had "any engine-room defect which has not been put right by the engine-room staff of the boat." The commander and the third officer went sick for a while; the first lieutenant got gastro-enteritis and was in bed (if you could see that bed!) "for the remainder of our stay in the Sea of Marmara," but "this boat has never been out of running order." The credit is ascribed to "the excellence of my chief engine-room artificer, James Hollier Hague, O.N.

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227715," whose name is duly submitted to the authorities "for your consideration for advancement to the rank of warrant officer."

Seventy days of every conceivable sort of risk, within and without, in a boat which is all engine-room, except where she is sick-bay; twelve thousand miles covered since last overhaul and "never out of running order"—thanks to Mr. Hague. Such artists as he are the kind of engine-room artificers that commanders intrigue to get hold of—each for his own boat—and when the tales are told in the Trade, their names, like Abou Ben Adhem's, lead all the rest.

I do not know the exact line of demarcation between engine-room and gunnery repairs, but I imagine it is faint and fluid. E 11, for example, while she was helping E 14 to shell a beached steamer, smashed half her gun-mounting, "the gun-layer being thrown overboard, and the gun nearly following him." However, the mischief was repaired in the next twenty-four hours, which, considering the very limited deck space of a submarine, means that all hands must have been moderately busy. One hopes that they had not to dive often during the job.

But worse is to come. E 12 (Commander D. Stocks) carried an externally mounted gun which, while she was diving up the Dardanelles on business, got hung up in the wires and stays of a net. She saw them through the conning-tower scuttles

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at a depth of 80 ft.—one wire hawser round the gun, another round the conning-tower, and so on. There was a continuous crackling of small explosions overhead which she thought were charges aimed at her by the guard-boats who watch the nets. She considered her position for a while, backed, got up steam, barged ahead, and shore through the whole affair in one wild surge. Imagine the roof of a navigable cottage after it has snapped telegraph lines with its chimney, and you will get a small idea of what happens to the hull of a submarine when she uses her gun to break wire hawsers with.

TROUBLE WITH A GUN

E 2 was a wet, strained, and uncomfortable boat for the rest of her cruise. She sank steamers, burned dhows; was worried by torpedo-boats and hunted by Hun planes; hit bottom freely and frequently; silenced forts that fired at her from lonely beaches; warned villages who might have joined in the game that they had better keep to farming; shelled railway lines and stations; would have shelled a pier, but found there was a hospital built at one end of it, "so could not bombard"; came upon dhows crowded with "female refugees" which she "allowed to proceed," and was presented with fowls in return; but through it all her chief preoccupation was that racked and strained gun and mounting. When there was nothing else doing she reports sourly that

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she "worked on gun." As a philosopher of the lower deck put it: "'Tisn't what you blanky *do* that matters, it's what you blanky *have* to do." In other words, worry, not work, kills.

E 2's gun did its best to knock the heart out of them all. She had to shift the wretched thing twice; once because the bolts that held it down were smashed (the wire hawser must have pretty well pulled it off its seat), and again because the hull beneath it leaked on pressure. She went down to make sure of it. But she drilled and tapped and adjusted, till in a short time the gun worked again and killed steamers as it should. Meanwhile, the whole boat leaked. All the plates under the old gun-position forward leaked; she leaked aft through damaged hydroplane guards, and on her way home they had to keep the water down by hand pumps while she was diving through the nets. Where she did not leak outside she leaked internally, tank leaking into tank, so that the petrol got into the main fresh-water supply and the men had to be put on allowance. The last pint was served out when she was in the narrowest part of the Narrows, a place where one's mouth may well go dry of a sudden.

Here for the moment the records end. I have been at some pains not to pick and choose among them. So far from doctoring or heightening any of the incidents, I have rather understated them; but I

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hope I have made it clear that through all the haste and fury of these multiplied actions, when life and death and destruction turned on the twitch of a finger, not one life of any non-combatant was wittingly taken. They were carefully picked up or picked out, taken below, transferred to boats, and despatched or personally conducted in the intervals of business to the safe, unexploding beach. Sometimes they part from their chaperones "with many expressions of good will," at others they seem greatly relieved and rather surprised at not being knocked on the head after the custom of their Allies. But the boats with a hundred things on their minds no more take credit for their humanity than their commanders explain the feats for which they won their respective decorations.

DESTROYERS AT JUTLAND
(1916)

“HAVE you news of my boy Jack?”

Not this tide.

“When d’you think that he’ll come back?”

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Has any one else had word of him?”

Not this tide.

For what is sunk will hardly swim,

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?”

None this tide,

Nor any tide,

Except he didn’t shame his kind

Not even with that wind blowing and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,

This tide,

And every tide,

Because he was the son you bore,

And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!

I

STORIES OF THE BATTLE

CRIPPLE AND PARALYTIC

THERE was much destroyer-work in the Battle of Jutland. The actual battle field may not have been more than twenty thousand square miles, but the incidental patrols, from first to last, must have covered many times that area. Doubtless the next generation will comb out every detail of it. All we need remember is there were many squadrons of battleships and cruisers engaged over the face of the North Sea, and that they were accompanied in their dread comings and goings by multitudes of destroyers, who attacked the enemy both by day and by night from the afternoon of May 31 to the morning of June 1, 1916. We are too close to the gigantic canvas to take in the meaning of the picture; our children stepping backward through the years may get the true perspective and proportions.

To recapitulate what every one knows.

The German fleet came out of its North Sea ports, scouting ships ahead; then destroyers, cruisers, battle-cruisers, and, last, the main battle fleet in the rear. It moved north, parallel with the coast

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of stolen Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland. Our fleets were already out; the main battle fleet (Admiral Jellicoe) sweeping down from the north, and our battle-cruiser fleet (Admiral Beatty) feeling for the enemy. Our scouts came in contact with the enemy on the afternoon of May 31 about 100 miles off the Jutland coast, steering north-west. They satisfied themselves he was in strength, and reported accordingly to our battle-cruiser fleet, which engaged the enemy's battle-cruisers at about half-past three o'clock. The enemy steered south-east to rejoin their own fleet, which was coming up from that quarter. We fought him on a parallel course as he ran for more than an hour.

Then his battle-fleet came in sight, and Beatty's fleet went about and steered north-west in order to retire on our battle-fleet, which was hurrying down from the north. We returned fighting very much over the same waters as we had used in our slant south. The enemy up till now had lain to the eastward of us, whereby he had the advantage in that thick weather of seeing our hulls clear against the afternoon light, while he himself worked in the mists. We then steered a little to the north-west bearing him off towards the east till at six o'clock Beatty had headed the enemy's leading ships and our main battle-fleet came in sight from the north. The enemy broke back in a loop, first eastward, then south, then south-west as our fleet edged him

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off from the land, and our main battle-fleet, coming up behind them, followed in their wake. Thus for a while we had the enemy to westward of us, where he made a better mark; but the day was closing and the weather thickened, and the enemy wanted to get away. At a quarter past eight the enemy, still heading south-west, was covered by his destroyers in a great screen of grey smoke, and he got away.

NIGHT AND MORNING

As darkness fell, our fleets lay between the enemy and his home ports. During the night our heavy ships, keeping well clear of possible mine-fields, swept down south to south and west of the Horns Reef, so that they might pick him up in the morning. When morning came our main fleet could find no trace of the enemy to the southward, but our destroyer-flotillas further north had been very busy with enemy ships, apparently running for the Horns Reef Channel. It looks, then, as if when we lost sight of the enemy in the smoke screen and the darkness he had changed course and broken for home astern our main fleets. And whether that was a sound manœuvre or otherwise, he and the still flows of the North Sea alone can tell.

But how is a layman to give any coherent account of an affair where a whole country's coast-line was background to battle covering geograph-

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ical degrees? The records give an impression of ilimitable grey waters, nicked on their uncertain horizons with the smudge and blur of ships sparkling with fury against ships hidden under the curve of the world. One sees these distances maddeningly obscured by walking mists and weak fogs, or wiped out by layers of funnel and gun smoke, and realises how, at the pace the ships were going, anything might be stumbled upon in the haze or charge out of it when it lifted. One comprehends, too, how the far-off glare of a great vessel afire might be reported as a local fire on a near-by enemy, or *vice versa*; how a silhouette caught, for an instant, in a shaft of pale light let down from the low sky might be fatally difficult to identify till too late. But add to all these inevitable confusions and misreckonings of time, shape, and distance, charges at every angle of squadrons through and across other squadrons; sudden shifts of the centres of the fights, and even swifter restorations; wheelings, sweepings, and regroupments such as accompany the passage across space of colliding universes. Then blanket the whole inferno with the darkness of night at full speed, and—see what you can make of it.

THREE DESTROYERS

A little time after the action began to heat up between our battle-cruisers and the enemy's, eight or ten of our destroyers opened the ball for their

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branch of the service by breaking up the attack of an enemy light cruiser and fifteen destroyers. Of these they accounted for at least two destroyers—some think more—and drove the others back on their battle-cruisers. This scattered that fight a good deal over the sea. Three of our destroyers held on for the enemy's battle-fleet, who came down on them at ranges which eventually grew less than 3000 yards. Our people ought to have been lifted off the seas bodily, but they managed to fire a couple of torpedoes apiece while the range was diminishing. They had no illusions. Says one of the three, speaking of her second shot, which she loosed at fairly close range, "This torpedo was fired because it was considered very unlikely that the ship would escape disablement before another opportunity offered." But still they lived—three destroyers against all a battle-cruiser fleet's quick-firers, as well as the fire of a batch of enemy destroyers at 600 yards. And they were thankful for small mercies. "The position being favourable," a third torpedo was fired from each while they yet floated.

At 2500 yards, one destroyer was hit somewhere in the vitals and swerved badly across her next astern, who "was obliged to alter course to avoid a collision, thereby failing to fire a fourth torpedo." Then that next astern "observed signal for destroyers' recall," and went back to report to her flotilla

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captain—alone. Of her two companions, one was “badly hit and remained stopped between the lines.” The other “remained stopped, but was afloat when last seen.” Ships that “remain stopped” are liable to be rammed or sunk by methodical gun-fire. That was, perhaps, fifty minutes’ work put in before there was any really vicious “edge” to the action, and it did not steady the nerves of the enemy battle-cruisers any more than another attack made by another detachment of ours.

“What does one do when one passes a ship that ‘remains stopped’?” I asked of a youth who had had experience.

“Nothing special. They cheer, and you cheer back. One doesn’t think about it till afterwards. You see, it may be your luck in another minute.”

LUCK

There were many other torpedo attacks in all parts of the battle that misty afternoon, including a quaint episode of an enemy light cruiser who “looked as if she were trying” to torpedo one of our battle-cruisers while the latter was particularly engaged. A destroyer of ours, returning from a special job which required delicacy, was picking her way back at 30 knots through batches of enemy battle-cruisers and light cruisers with the idea of attaching herself to the nearest destroyer-flotilla and making herself useful. It occurred to her that as

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she "was in a most advantageous position for repelling enemy's destroyers endeavouring to attack, she could not do better than to remain on the 'engaged bow' of our battle-cruiser." So she remained and considered things.

There was an enemy battle-cruiser squadron in the offing; with several enemy light cruisers ahead of that squadron, and the weather was thickish and deceptive. She sighted the enemy light cruiser, "class uncertain," only a few thousand yards away, and "decided to attack her in order to frustrate her firing torpedoes at our Battle Fleet." (This in case the authorities should think that light cruiser wished to buy rubber.) So she fell upon the light cruiser with every gun she had, at between two and four thousand yards, and secured a number of hits, just the same as at target practice. While thus occupied she sighted out of the mist a squadron of enemy battle-cruisers that had worried her earlier in the afternoon. Leaving the light cruiser, she closed to what she considered a reasonable distance of the newcomers, and let them have, as she thought, both her torpedoes. She possessed an active Acting Sub-Lieutenant, who, though officers of that rank think otherwise, is not very far removed from an ordinary midshipman of the type one sees in tow of relatives at the Army and Navy Stores. He sat astride one of the tubes to make quite sure things were in order, and fired when the sights came on.

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But, at that very moment, a big shell hit the destroyer on the side and there was a tremendous escape of steam. Believing—since she had seen one torpedo leave the tube before the smash came—believing that both her tubes had been fired, the destroyer turned away “at greatly reduced speed” (the shell reduced it), and passed, quite reasonably close, the light cruiser whom she had been hammering so faithfully till the larger game appeared. Meantime, the Sub-Lieutenant was exploring what damage had been done by the big shell. He discovered that only *one* of the two torpedoes had left the tubes, and “observing enemy light cruiser beam on and apparently temporarily stopped,” he fired the providential remainder at her, and it hit her below the conning-tower and well and truly exploded, as was witnessed by the Sub-Lieutenant himself, the Commander, a leading signalman, and several other ratings. Luck continued to hold! The Acting Sub-Lieutenant further reported that “we still had three torpedoes left and at the same time drew my attention to enemy’s line of battleships.” They rather looked as if they were coming down with intent to assault. So the Sub-Lieutenant fired the rest of the torpedoes, which at least started off correctly from the shell-shaken tubes, and must have crossed the enemy’s line. When torpedoes turn up among a squadron, they upset the steering and distract the attention of all concerned. Then the destroyer

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judged it time to take stock of her injuries. Among other minor defects she could neither steam, steer, nor signal.

TOWING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

Mark how virtue is rewarded! Another of our destroyers an hour or so previously had been knocked clean out of action, before she had done anything, by a big shell which gutted a boiler-room and started an oil fire. (That is the drawback to oil.) She crawled out between the battleships till she "reached an area of comparative calm" and repaired damage. She says: "The fire having been dealt with it was found a mat kept the stokehold dry. My only trouble now being lack of speed, I looked round for useful employment, and saw a destroyer in great difficulties, so closed her." That destroyer was our paralytic friend of the intermittent torpedo-tubes, and a grateful ship she was when her crippled sister (but still good for a few knots) offered her a tow, "under very trying conditions with large enemy ships approaching." So the two set off together, Cripple and Paralytic, with heavy shells falling round them, as sociable as a couple of lame hounds. Cripple worked up to 12 knots, and the weather grew vile, and the tow parted. Paralytic, by this time, had raised steam in a boiler or two, and made shift to get along slowly on her own, Cripple hirpling beside her, till Paralytic

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could not make any more headway in that rising sea, and Cripple had to tow her once more. Once more the tow parted. So they tied Paralytic up rudely and effectively with a cable round her after bollards and gun (presumably because of strained forward bulkheads) and hauled her stern-first, through heavy seas, at continually reduced speeds, doubtful of their position, unable to sound because of the seas, and much pestered by a wind which backed without warning, till, at last, they made land, and turned into the hospital appointed for brave wounded ships. Everybody speaks well of Cripple. Her name crops up in several reports, with such compliments as the men of the sea use when they see good work. She herself speaks well of her Lieutenant, who, as executive officer, "took charge of the fire and towing arrangements in a very creditable manner," and also of Tom Battye and Thomas Kerr, engine-room artificer and stoker petty officer, who "were in the stokehold at the time of the shell striking, and performed cool and prompt decisive action, although both suffering from shock and slight injuries."

USEFUL EMPLOYMENT

Have you ever noticed that men who do Homeric deeds often describe them in Homeric language? The sentence "I looked round for useful employment" is worthy of Ulysses when "there was an evil

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sound at the ships of men who perished and of the ships themselves broken at the same time.”

Roughly, very roughly, speaking, our destroyers enjoyed three phases of “prompt decisive action”—the first, a period of daylight attacks (from 4 to 6 P.M.) such as the one I have just described, while the battle was young and the light fairly good on the afternoon of May 31; the second, towards dark, when the light had lessened and the enemy were more uneasy, and, I think, in more scattered formation; the third, when darkness had fallen, and the destroyers had been strung out astern with orders to help the enemy home, which they did all night as opportunity offered. One cannot say whether the day or the night work was the more desperate. From private advices, the young gentlemen concerned seem to have functioned with efficiency either way. As one of them said: “After a bit, you see, we were all pretty much on our own, and you could really find out what your ship could do.”

I will tell you later of a piece of night work not without merit.

II

THE NIGHT HUNT

RAMMING AN ENEMY CRUISER

As I SAID, we will confine ourselves to something quite sane and simple which does not involve more than half-a-dozen different reports.

When the German fleet ran for home, on the night of May 31, it seems to have scattered—"starred," I believe, is the word for the evolution—in a general *sauve qui peut*, while the Devil, livelily represented by our destroyers, took the hindmost. Our flotillas were strung out far and wide on this job. One man compared it to hounds hunting half a hundred separate foxes.

I take the adventures of several couples of destroyers who, on the night of May 31, were nosing along somewhere towards the Schleswig-Holstein coast, ready to chop any Hun-stuff coming back to earth by that particular road. The leader of one line was Gehenna, and the next two ships astern of her were Eblis and Shaitan, in the order given. There were others, of course, but with the exception of one Goblin they don't come violently into this tale. There had been a good deal of promiscuous

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firing that evening, and actions were going on all round. Towards midnight our destroyers were overtaken by several three- and four-funnel German ships (cruisers they thought) hurrying home. At this stage of the game anybody might have been anybody—pursuer or pursued. The Germans took no chances, but switched on their searchlights and opened fire on Gehenna. Her acting sub-lieutenant reports: "A salvo hit us forward. I opened fire with the after-guns. A shell then struck us in a steam-pipe, and I could see nothing but steam. But both starboard torpedo-tubes were fired."

Eblis, Gehenna's next astern, at once fired a torpedo at the second ship in the German line, a four-funnelled cruiser, and hit her between the second funnel and the mainmast, when "she appeared to catch fire fore and aft simultaneously, heeled right over to starboard, and undoubtedly sank." Eblis loosed off a second torpedo and turned aside to reload, firing at the same time to distract the enemy's attention from Gehenna, who was now ablaze fore and aft. Gehenna's acting sub-lieutenant (the only executive officer who survived) says that by the time the steam from the broken pipe cleared he found Gehenna stopped, nearly everybody amidships killed or wounded, the cartridge-boxes round the guns exploding one after the other as the fires took hold, and the enemy not to be seen. Three minutes or less did all that damage. Eblis had

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nearly finished reloading when a shot struck the davit that was swinging her last torpedo into the tube and wounded all hands concerned. Thereupon she dropped torpedo work, fired at an enemy searchlight which winked and went out, and was closing in to help Gehenna when she found herself under the noses of a couple of enemy cruisers. "The nearer one," he says, "altered course to ram me apparently." The Senior Service writes in curiously lawyer-like fashion, but there is no denying that they act quite directly. "I therefore put my helm hard aport and the two ships met and rammed each other, port bow to port bow." There could have been no time to think and, for Eblis's commander on the bridge, none to gather information. But he had observant subordinates, and he writes—and I would humbly suggest that the words be made the ship's motto for evermore—he writes, "Those aft noted" that the enemy cruiser had certain marks on her funnel and certain arrangements of derricks on each side which, quite apart from the evidence she left behind her, betrayed her class. Eblis and she met. Says Eblis: "I consider I must have considerably damaged this cruiser, as 20 feet of her side plating was left in my foc'sle." Twenty feet of ragged rivet-slinging steel, razoring and reaping about in the dark on a foc'sle that had collapsed like a concertina! It was very fair plating too. There were side-scuttle holes in it—what we passengers

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would call portholes. But it might have been better, for Eblis reports sorrowfully, "by the thickness of the coats of paint (duly given in 32nds of the inch) she would not appear to have been a very new ship."

A FUGITIVE ON FIRE

New or old, the enemy had done her best. She had completely demolished Eblis's bridge and searchlight platform, brought down the mast and the fore-funnel, ruined the whaler and the dinghy, split the foc'sle open above water from the stem to the galley which is abaft the bridge, and below water had opened it up from the stem to the second bulkhead. She had further ripped off Eblis's skin-plating for an amazing number of yards on one side of her, and had fired a couple of large-calibre shells into Eblis at point-blank range, narrowly missing her vitals. Even so, Eblis is as impartial as a prize-court. She reports that the second shot, a trifle of eight inches, "may have been fired at a different time or just after colliding." But the night was yet young, and "just after getting clear of this cruiser an enemy battle-cruiser grazed past our stern at high speed" and again the judgmentic mind—"I think she must have intended to ram us." She was a large three-funnelled thing, her centre funnel shot away and "lights were flickering under her foc'sle as if she was on fire forward." Fancy the

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vision of her, hurtling out of the dark, red-lighted from within, and fleeing on like a man with his throat cut!

[As an interlude, all enemy cruisers that night were not keen on ramming. They wanted to get home. A man I know who was on another part of the drive saw a covey bolt through our destroyers; and had just settled himself for a shot at one of them when the night threw up a second bird coming down full speed on his other beam. He had bare time to jink between the two as they whizzed past. One switched on her searchlight and fired a whole salvo at him point blank. The heavy stuff went between his funnels. She must have sighted along her own beam of light, which was about a thousand yards.

“How did you feel?” I asked.

“I was rather sick. It was my best chance all that night, and I had to miss it or be cut in two.”

“What happened to the cruisers?”

“Oh, they went on, and I heard 'em being attended to by some of our fellows. They didn't know what they were doing, or they couldn't have missed me sitting, the way they did.”]

THE CONFIDENTIAL BOOKS

After all that Eblis picked herself up, and discovered that she was still alive, with a dog's chance of getting to port. But she did not bank on it.

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That grand slam had wrecked the bridge, pinning the commander under the wreckage. By the time he had extricated himself he "considered it advisable to throw overboard the steel chest and dispatch-box of confidential and secret books." These are never allowed to fall into strange hands, and their proper disposal is the last step but one in the ritual of the burial service of His Majesty's ships at sea. Gehenna, afire and sinking, out somewhere in the dark, was going through it on her own account. This is her Acting Sub-Lieutenant's report: "The confidential books were got up. The First Lieutenant gave the order: 'Every man aft,' and the confidential books were thrown overboard. The ship soon afterwards heeled over to starboard and the bows went under. The First Lieutenant gave the order: 'Everybody for themselves.' The ship sank in about a minute, the stern going straight up into the air."

But it was not written in the Book of Fate that stripped and battered Eblis should die that night as Gehenna died. After the burial of the books it was found that the several fires on her were manageable, that she "was not making water aft of the damage," which meant two-thirds of her were, more or less, in commission, and, best of all, that three boilers were usable in spite of the cruiser's shells. So she "shaped course and speed to make the least water and the most progress towards land." On the way

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back the wind shifted eight points without warning—it was this shift, if you remember, that so embarrassed Cripple and Paralytic on their homeward crawl—and, what with one thing and another, Eblis was unable to make port till the scandalously late hour of noon on June 2, “the mutual ramming having occurred about 11.40 P.M. on May 31.” She says, this time without any legal reservation whatever, “I cannot speak too highly of the courage, discipline, and devotion of the officers and ship’s company.”

Her recommendations are a Compendium of Godly Deeds for the Use of Mariners. They cover pretty much all that man may be expected to do. There was, as there always is, a first lieutenant who, while his commander was being extricated from the bridge wreckage, took charge of affairs and steered the ship first from the engine-room, or what remained of it, and later from aft, and otherwise manœuvred as requisite, among doubtful bulkheads. In his leisure he “improvised means of signalling,” and if there be not one joyous story behind that smooth sentence I am a Hun!

THE ART OF IMPROVISING

They all improvised like the masters of craft they were. The chief engine-room artificer, after he had helped to put out fires, improvised stops to the gaps which were left by the carrying away of

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the forward funnel and mast. He got and kept up steam "to a much higher point than would have appeared at all possible," and when the sea rose, as it always does if you are in trouble, he "improvised pumping and drainage arrangements, thus allowing the ship to steam at a good speed on the whole." There could not have been more than 40 feet of hole.

The surgeon—a probationer—performed an amputation single-handed in the wreckage by the bridge, and by his "wonderful skill, resource, and unceasing care and devotion undoubtedly saved the lives of the many seriously wounded men." That no horror might be lacking, there was "a short circuit among the bridge wreckage for a considerable time." The searchlight and wireless were tangled up together, and the electricity leaked into everything.

There were also three wise men who saved the ship whose names must not be forgotten. They were Chief Engine-room Artificer Lee, Stoker Petty Officer Gardiner, and Stoker Elvins. When the funnel carried away it was touch and go whether the foremost boiler would not explode. These three "put on respirators and kept the fans going till all fumes, etc., were cleared away." To each man, you will observe, his own particular Hell which he entered of his own particular initiative.

Lastly, there were the two remaining Quarter-

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masters—mutinous dogs, both of 'em—one wounded in the right hand and the other in the left, who took the wheel between them all the way home, thus improvising one complete Navy-pattern Quartermaster, and “refused to be relieved during the whole thirty-six hours before the ship returned to port.” So Eblis passes out of the picture with “never a moan or complaint from a single wounded man, and in spite of the rough weather of June 1st they all remained cheery.” They had one Hun cruiser, torpedoed, to their credit, and strong evidence abroad that they had knocked the end out of another.

But Gehenna went down, and those of her crew who remained hung on to the rafts that destroyers carry till they were picked up about the dawn by Shaitan, third in the line, who, at that hour, was in no shape to give much help. Here is Shaitan's tale. She saw the unknown cruisers overtake the flotilla, saw their leader switch on searchlights and open fire as she drew abreast of Gehenna, and at once fired a torpedo at the third German ship. Shaitan could not see Eblis, her next ahead, for, as we know, Eblis after firing her torpedoes had hauled off to reload. When the enemy switched his searchlights off Shaitan hauled out too. It is not wholesome for destroyers to keep on the same course within a thousand yards of big enemy cruisers.

She picked up a destroyer of another division, Goblin, who for the moment had not been caught

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by the enemy's searchlights and had profited by this decent obscurity to fire a torpedo at the hindmost of the cruisers. Almost as Shaitan took station behind Goblin the latter was lighted up by a large ship and heavily fired at. The enemy fled, but she left Goblin out of control, with a grisly list of casualties, and her helm jammed. Goblin swerved, returned, and swerved again; Shaitan astern tried to clear her, and the two fell aboard each other, Goblin's bows deep in Shaitan's fore-bridge. While they hung thus, locked, an unknown destroyer rammed Shaitan aft, cutting off several feet of her stern and leaving her rudder jammed hard over. As complete a mess as the Personal Devil himself could have devised, and all due to the merest accident of a few panicky salvos. Presently the two ships worked clear in a smother of steam and oil, and went their several ways. Quite a while after she had parted from Shaitan, Goblin discovered several of Shaitan's people, some of them wounded, on her own foc'sle, where they had been pitched by the collision. Goblin, working her way homeward on such boilers as remained, carried on a one-gun fight at a few cables' distance with some enemy destroyers, who, not knowing what state she was in, sheered off after a few rounds. Shaitan, holed forward and opened up aft, came across the survivors from Gehenna clinging to their raft, and took them aboard. Then some of our destroyers—they were

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thick on the sea that night—tried to tow her stern-first, for Goblin had cut her up badly forward. But, since Shaitan lacked any stern, and her rudder was jammed hard across where the stern should have been, the hawsers parted, and, after leave asked of lawful authority, across all that waste of waters, they sank Shaitan by gun-fire, having first taken all the proper steps about the confidential books. Yet Shaitan had had her little crumb of comfort ere the end. While she lay crippled she saw quite close to her a German cruiser that was trailing homeward in the dawn gradually heel over and sink.

This completes my version of the various accounts of the four destroyers directly concerned for a few hours, on one minute section of one wing of our battle. Other ships witnessed other aspects of the agony and duly noted them as they went about their business. One of our battleships, for instance, made out by the glare of burning Gehenna that the supposed cruiser that Eblis torpedoed was a German battleship of a certain class. So Gehenna did not die in vain, and we may take it that the discovery did not unduly depress Eblis's wounded in hospital.

ASKING FOR TROUBLE

The rest of the flotilla that the four destroyers belonged to had their own adventures later. One of them, chasing or being chased, saw Goblin out

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of control just before Goblin and Shaitan locked, and narrowly escaped adding herself to that triple collision. Another loosed a couple of torpedoes at the enemy ships who were attacking Gehenna, which, perhaps, accounts for the anxiety of the enemy to break away from that hornets' nest as soon as possible. Half a dozen or so of them ran into four German battleships, which they set about torpedoing at ranges varying from half a mile to a mile and a half. It was asking for trouble and they got it; but they got in return at least one big ship, and the same observant battleship of ours who identified Eblis's bird reported *three* satisfactory explosions in half an hour, followed by a glare that lit up all the sky. One of the flotilla, closing on what she thought was the smoke of a sister in difficulties, found herself well in among the four battleships. "It was too late to get away," she says, so she attacked, fired her torpedo, was caught up in the glare of a couple of searchlights, and pounded to pieces in five minutes, not even her rafts being left. She went down with her colours flying, having fought to the last available gun.

Another destroyer who had borne a hand in Gehenna's trouble had her try at the four battleships and got in a torpedo at 800 yards. She saw it explode and the ship take a heavy list. "Then I was chased," which is not surprising. She picked up a friend who could only do 20 knots. They sighted

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several Hun destroyers who fled from them; then dropped on to four Hun destroyers all together, who made great parade of commencing action, but soon afterwards "thought better of it, and turned away." So you see, in that flotilla alone there was every variety of fight, from the ordered attacks of squadrons under control, to single ship affairs, every turn of which depended on the second's decision of the men concerned; endurance to the hopeless end; bluff and cunning; reckless advance and red-hot flight; clear vision and as much of blank bewilderment as the Senior Service permits its children to indulge in. That is not much. When a destroyer who has been dodging enemy torpedoes and gun-fire in the dark realises about midnight that she is "following a strange British flotilla, having lost sight of my own," she "decides to remain with them," and shares their fortunes and whatever language is going.

If lost hounds could speak when they cast up next day, after an unchecked night among the wild life of the dark, they would talk much as our destroyers do.

*The doorkeepers of Zion,
They do not always stand
In helmet and whole armour,
With halberds in their hand;
But, being sure of Zion,
And all her mysteries,
They rest awhile in Zion,
Sit down and smile in Zion;
Ay, even jest in Zion,
In Zion, at their ease.*

*The gatekeepers of Baal,
They dare not sit or lean,
But fume and fret and posture
And foam and curse between;
For being bound to Baal,
Whose sacrifice is vain,
Their rest is scant with Baal,
They glare and pant for Baal,
They mouth and rant for Baal,
For Baal in their pain.*

*But we will go to Zion,
By choice and not through dread,
With these our present comrades
And those our present dead;
And, being free of Zion
In both her fellowships,
Sit down and sup in Zion—
Stand up and drink in Zion
Whatever cup in Zion
Is offered to our lips!*

III

THE MEANING OF "JOSS"

A YOUNG OFFICER'S LETTER

As ONE digs deeper into the records, one sees the various temperaments of men revealing themselves through all the formal wording. One commander may be an expert in torpedo-work, whose first care is how and where his shots went, and whether, under all circumstances of pace, light, and angle, the best had been achieved. Destroyers do not carry unlimited stocks of torpedoes. It rests with commanders whether they shall spend with a free hand at first or save for night-work ahead—risk a possible while he is yet afloat, or hang on coldly for a certainty. So in the old whaling days did the harpioneer bring up or back off his boat till some shift of the great fish's bulk gave him sure opening at the deep-seated life.

And then comes the question of private judgment. "I thought so-and-so would happen. Therefore, I did thus and thus." Things may or may not turn out as anticipated, but that is merely another of the million chances of the sea. Take a case in point. A flotilla of our destroyers sighted six (there

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had been eight the previous afternoon) German battleships of Kingly and Imperial caste very early in the morning of the 1st June, and duly attacked. At first our people ran parallel to the enemy, then, as far as one can make out, headed them and swept round sharp to the left, firing torpedoes from their port or left-hand tubes. Between them they hit a battleship, which went up in flame and *débris*. But one of the flotilla had not turned with the rest. She had anticipated that the attack would be made on another quarter, and, for certain technical reasons, she was not ready. When she was, she turned, and single-handed—the rest of the flotilla having finished and gone on—carried out two attacks on the five remaining battleships. She got one of them amidships, causing a terrific explosion and flame above the masthead, which signifies that the magazine has been touched off. She counted the battleships when the smoke had cleared, and there were but four of them. She herself was not hit, though shots fell close. She went her way, and, seeing nothing of her sisters, picked up another flotilla and stayed with it till the end. Do I make clear the maze of blind hazard and wary judgment in which our men of the sea must move?

SAVED BY A SMOKE SCREEN

Some of the original flotilla were chased and headed about by cruisers after their attack on the

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six battleships, and a single shell from battleship or cruiser reduced one of them to such a condition that she was brought home by her sub-lieutenant and a midshipman. Her captain, first lieutenant, gunner, torpedo coxswain, and both signalmen were either killed or wounded; the bridge, with charts, instruments, and signalling gear went; all torpedoes were expended; a gun was out of action, and the usual cordite fires developed. Luckily, the engines were workable. She escaped under cover of a smoke-screen, which is an unbearably filthy outpouring of the densest smoke, made by increasing the proportion of oil to air in the furnace-feed. It rolls forth from the funnels looking solid enough to sit upon, spreads in a searchlight-proof pat of impenetrable beastliness, and in still weather hangs for hours. But it saved that ship.

It is curious to note the subdued tone of a boy's report when by some accident or slaughter he is raised to command. There are certain formalities which every ship must comply with on entering certain ports. No fully-striped commander would trouble to detail them any more than he would the aspect of his Club porter. The young 'un puts it all down, as who should say: "I rang the bell, wiped my feet on the mat, and asked if they were at home." He is most careful of the port proprieties, and since he will be sub. again to-morrow, and all his equals will tell him exactly how he ought to

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have handled her, he almost apologises for the steps he took—deeds which ashore might be called cool or daring.

The Senior Service does not gush. There are certain formulae appropriate to every occasion. One of our destroyers, who was knocked out early in the day and lay helpless, was sighted by several of her companions. One of them reported her to the authorities, but, being busy at the time, said he did not think himself justified in hampering himself with a disabled ship in the middle of an action. It was not as if she was sinking either. She was only holed forward and aft, with a bad hit in the engine-room, and her steering-gear knocked out. In this posture she cheered the passing ships, and set about repairing her hurts with good heart and a smiling countenance. She managed to get under some sort of way at midnight, and next day was taken in tow by a friend. She says officially, "his assistance was invaluable, as I had no oil left and met heavy weather."

What actually happened was much less formal. Fleet destroyers, as a rule, do not worry about navigation. They take their orders from the flagship, and range out and return, on signal, like sheep-dogs whose fixed point is their shepherd. Consequently, when they break loose on their own they may fetch up rather doubtful of their whereabouts—as this injured one did. After she had been so kindly taken

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in tow, she inquired of her friend ("Message captain to captain")—"Have you any notion where we are?" The friend replied, "I have not, but I will find out." So the friend waited on the sun with the necessary implements, which luckily had not been smashed, and in due time made: "Our observed position at this hour is thus and thus." The tow, irreverently, "Is it? 'Didn't know you were a navigator." The friend, with hauteur, "Yes; it's rather a hobby of mine." The tow: "Had no idea it was as bad as all that; but I'm afraid I'll have to trust you this time. Go ahead, and be quick about it." They reached a port, correctly enough, but to this hour the tow, having studied with the friend at a place called Dartmouth, insists that it was pure Joss.

CONCERNING JOSS

And Joss, which is luck, fortune, destiny, the irony of Fate or Nemesis, is the greatest of all the Battle-gods that move on the waters. As I will show you later, knowledge of gunnery and a delicate instinct for what is in the enemy's minds may enable a destroyer to thread her way, slowing, speeding, and twisting between the heavy salvoes of opposing fleets. As the dank-smelling waterspouts rise and break, she judges where the next grove of them will sprout. If her judgment is correct, she may enter it in her report as a little feather in her cap. But it is Joss when the stray 12-inch shell,

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hurled by a giant at some giant ten miles away, falls on her from Heaven and wipes out her and her profound calculations. This was seen to happen to a Hun destroyer in mid-attack. While she was being laboriously dealt with by a 4-inch gun something immense took her, and—she was not.

Joss it is, too, when the cruiser's 8-inch shot, that should have raked out your innards from the forward boiler to the ward-room stove, deflects miraculously, like a twig dragged through deep water, and, almost returning on its track, skips off unbursten and leaves you reprieved by the breadth of a nail from three deaths in one. Later, a single splinter, no more, may cut your oil-supply pipes as dreadfully and completely as a broken wind-screen in a collision cuts the surprised motorist's throat. Then you must lie useless, fighting oil-fires while the precious fuel gutters away till you have to ask leave to escape while there are yet a few tons left. One ship who was once bled white by such a piece of Joss, suggested it would be better that oil-pipes should be led along certain lines which she sketched. As if that would make any difference to Joss when he wants to show what he can do!

Our sea-people, who have worked with him for a thousand wettish years, have acquired something of Joss's large toleration and humour. He causes ships in thick weather, or under strain, to mistake friends for enemies. At such times, if your heart is

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full of highly organised hate, you strafe frightfully and efficiently till one of you perishes, and the survivor reports wonders which are duly wirelessly all over the world. But if you worship Joss, you reflect, you put two and two together in a casual insular way, and arrive—sometimes both parties arrive—at instinctive conclusions which avoid trouble.

AN AFFAIR IN THE NORTH SEA

Witness this tale. It does not concern the Jutland fight, but another little affair which took place a while ago in the North Sea. It was understood that a certain type of cruiser of ours would *not* be taking part in a certain show. Therefore, if anyone saw cruisers very like them he might blaze at them with a clear conscience, for they would be Hun-boats. And one of our destroyers—thick weather as usual—spied the silhouettes of cruisers exactly like our own stealing across the haze. Said the Commander to his Sub., with an inflection neither period, exclamation, nor interrogation-mark can render—“That—is—them.”

Said the sub. in precisely the same tone—“That is them, sir.” “As my Sub.,” said the Commander, “your observation is strictly in accord with the traditions of the Service. Now, as man to man, what *are* they?” “We-el,” said the Sub., “since you put it that way, I’m d——d if I’d fire.” And they didn’t, and they were quite right. The destroyer

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had been off on another job, and Joss had jammed the latest wireless orders to her at the last moment. But Joss had also put it into the hearts of the boys to save themselves and others.

I hold no brief for the Hun, but honestly I think he has not lied as much about the Jutland fight as people believe, and that when he protests he sank a ship, he *did* very completely sink a ship. I am the more confirmed in this belief by a still small voice among the Jutland reports, musing aloud over an account of an unaccountable outlying brawl witnessed by one of our destroyers. The voice suggests that what the destroyer saw was one German ship being sunk by another. Amen!

Our destroyers saw a good deal that night on the face of the waters. Some of them who were working in "areas of comparative calm" submit charts of their tangled courses, all studded with notes along the zigzag—something like this:

8 P.M.—*Heard explosion to the N.W.* (A neat arrow-head points that way.) Half an inch farther along, a short change of course, and the word *Hit* explains the meaning of—"Sighted enemy cruiser engaged with destroyers." Another twist follows. "9.30 P.M.—*Passed wreckage. Engaged enemy destroyers port beam opposite courses.*" A long straight line without incident, then a tangle, and—*Picked up survivors of So-and-So.* A stretch over to some ship that they were transferred to, a fresh

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departure, and another brush with "*Single destroyer on parallel course. Hit. 0.7 A.M.—Passed bows enemy cruiser sticking up. 0.18.—Joined flotilla for attack on battleship squadron.*" So it runs on—one little ship in a few short hours passing through more wonders of peril and accident than all the old fleets ever dreamed.

A "CHILD'S" LETTER

In years to come naval experts will collate all those diagrams, and furiously argue over them. A lot of the destroyer work was inevitably as mixed as bombing down a trench, as the scuffle of a polo match, or as the hot heaving heart of a football scrum. It is difficult to realise when one considers the size of the sea, that it is that very size and absence of boundary which helps the confusion. To give an idea, here is a letter (it has been quoted before, I believe, but it is good enough to repeat many times), from a nineteen-year-old child to his friend aged seventeen (and minus one leg), in a hospital:

"I'm so awfully sorry you weren't in it. It was rather terrible, but a wonderful experience, and I wouldn't have missed it for anything, but, by Jove, it isn't a thing one wants to make a habit of.

"I must say it is very different from what I expected. I expected to be excited, but was not a bit. It's hard to express what we did feel like, but you know the sort of feeling one has when one goes in to

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bat at cricket, and rather a lot depends upon your doing well, and you are waiting for the first ball. Well, it's very much the same as that. Do you know what I mean? A sort of tense feeling, not quite knowing what to expect. One does not feel the slightest bit frightened, and the idea that there's a chance of you and your ship being scuppered does not enter one's head. There are too many other things to think about."

Follows the usual "No ship like our ship" talkee, and a note of where she was at the time.

"Then they ordered us to attack, so we bustled off full bore. Being navigator, also having control of all the guns, I was on the bridge all the time, and remained for twelve hours without leaving it at all. When we got fairly close I sighted a good-looking Hun destroyer, which I thought I'd like to strafe. You know, it's awful fun to know that you can blaze off at a real ship, and do as much damage as you like. Well, I'd just got their range on the guns, and we'd just fired one round, when some more of our destroyers coming from the opposite direction got between us and the enemy and completely blanketed us, so we had to stop, which was rather rot. Shortly afterwards they recalled us, so we bustled back again. How any destroyer got out of it is perfectly wonderful.

"Literally there were hundreds of progs (shells falling) all round us, from a 15-inch to a 4-inch,

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and you know what a big splash a 15-inch bursting in the water does make. We got washed through by the spray. Just as we were getting back, a whole salvo of big shells fell just in front of us and short of our big ships. The skipper and I did rapid calculations as to how long it would take them to reload, fire again, time of flight, etc., as we had to go right through the spot. We came to the conclusion that, as they were short a bit, they would probably go up a bit, and (they?) didn't, but luckily they altered deflection, and the next fell right astern of us. Anyhow, we managed to come out of that row without the ship or a man on board being touched.

WHAT THE BIG SHIPS STAND

“It's extraordinary the amount of knocking about the big ships can stand. One saw them hit, and they seemed to be one mass of flame and smoke, and you think they're gone, but when the smoke clears away they are apparently none the worse and still firing away. But to see a ship blow up is a terrible and wonderful sight; an enormous volume of flame and smoke almost 200 feet high and great pieces of metal, etc., blown sky-high, and then when the smoke clears not a sign of the ship. We saw one other extraordinary sight. Of course, you know the North Sea is very shallow. We came across a Hun cruiser absolutely on end, his stern on the bottom and his bow sticking up about 30 feet in the water;

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and a little farther on a destroyer in precisely the same position.

“I couldn’t be certain, but I rather think I saw your old ship crashing along and blazing away, but I expect you have heard from some of your pals. But the night was far and away the worst time of all. It was pitch dark, and, of course, absolutely no lights, and the firing seems so much more at night, as you could see the flashes lighting up the sky, and it seemed to make much more noise, and you could see ships on fire and blowing up. Of course *we* showed absolutely no lights. One expected to be surprised any moment, and eventually we were. We suddenly found ourselves within 1000 yards of two or three big Hun cruisers. They switched on their searchlights and started firing like nothing on earth. Then they put their searchlights on us, but for some extraordinary reason did not fire on us. As, of course, we were going full speed we lost them in a moment, but I must say, that I, and I think everybody else, thought that that was the end, but one does not feel afraid or panicky. I think I felt rather cooler then than at any other time. I asked lots of people afterwards what they felt like, and they all said the same thing. It all happens in a few seconds; one hasn’t time to think; but never in all my life have I been so thankful to see daylight again—and I don’t think I ever want to see another night like that—it’s such an awful

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strain. One does not notice it at the time, but it's the reaction afterwards.

"I never noticed I was tired till I got back to harbour, and then we all turned in and absolutely slept like logs. We were seventy-two hours with little or no sleep. The skipper was perfectly wonderful. He never left the bridge for a minute for twenty-four hours, and was on the bridge or in the chart-house the whole time we were out (the chart-house is an airy dog-kennel that opens off the bridge) and I've never seen anybody so cool and unruffled. He stood there smoking his pipe as if nothing out of the ordinary were happening.

"One quite forgot all about time. I was relieved at 4 A.M., and on looking at my watch found I had been up there nearly twelve hours, and then discovered I was rather hungry. The skipper and I had some cheese and biscuits, ham sandwiches, and water on the bridge, and then I went down and brewed some cocoa and ship's biscuit."

*Not in the thick of the fight,
Not in the press of the odds,
Do the heroes come to their height
Or we know the demi-gods.*

*That stands over till peace.
We can only perceive
Men returned from the seas,
Very grateful for leave.*

*They grant us sudden days
Snatched from their business of war.
We are too close to appraise
What manner of men they are.*

*And whether their names go down
With age-kept victories,
Or whether they battle and drown
Unreckoned is hid from our eyes.*

*They are too near to be great,
But our children shall understand
When and how our fate
Was changed, and by whose hand.*

*Our children shall measure their worth.
We are content to be blind,
For we know that we walk on a new-born earth
With the saviours of mankind.*

IV

THE MINDS OF MEN

HOW IT IS DONE

WHAT mystery is there like the mystery of the other man's job—or what world so cut off as that which he enters when he goes to it? The eminent surgeon is altogether such an one as ourselves, even till his hand falls on the knob of the theatre door. After that, in the silence, among the ether fumes, no man except his acolytes, and they won't tell, has ever seen his face. So with the unconsidered curate. Yet, before the war, he had more experience of the business and detail of death than any of the people who contemned him. His face also, as he stands his bedside-watches—that countenance with which he shall justify himself to his Maker—none have ever looked upon. Even the ditcher is a priest of mysteries at the high moment when he lays out in his mind his levels and the fall of the water that he alone can draw off clearly. But catch any of these men five minutes after they have left their altars, and you will find the doors are shut.

Chance sent me almost immediately after the Jutland fight a Lieutenant of one of the destroyers

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engaged. Among other matters, I asked him if there was any particular noise.

"Well, I haven't been in the trenches, of course," he replied, "but I don't think there could have been much more noise than there was."

This bears out a report of a destroyer who could not be certain whether an enemy battleship had blown up or not, saying that, in that particular corner, it would have been impossible to identify anything less than the explosion of a whole magazine.

"It wasn't exactly noise," he reflected. "Noise is what you take in from outside. This was *inside* you. It seemed to lift you right out of everything."

"And how did the light affect one?" I asked, trying to work out a theory that noise and light produced beyond known endurance form an unknown anaesthetic and stimulant, comparable to, but infinitely more potent than, the soothing effect of the smoke-pall of ancient battles.

"The lights were rather curious," was the answer. "I don't know that one noticed searchlights particularly, unless they meant business; but when a lot of big guns loosed off together, the whole sea was lit up and you could see our destroyers running about like cockroaches on a tin soup-plate."

"Then is black the best colour for our destroyers? Some commanders seem to think we ought to use grey."

"Blessed if I know," said young Dante. "Every-

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thing shows black in that light. Then it all goes out again with a bang. Trying for the eyes if you are spotting.”

SHIP DOGS

“And how did the dogs take it?” I pursued. There are several destroyers more or less owned by pet dogs, who start life as the chance-found property of a stoker, and end in supreme command of the bridge.

“Most of ’em didn’t like it a bit. They went below one time, and wanted to be loved. They knew it wasn’t ordinary practice.”

“What did Arabella do?” I had heard a good deal of Arabella.

“Oh, Arabella’s *quite* different. Her job has always been to look after her master’s pyjamas—folded up at the head of the bunk, you know. She found out pretty soon the bridge was no place for a lady, so she hopped downstairs and got in. You know how she makes three little jumps to it—first, on to the chair; then on the flap-table, and then up on the pillow. When the show was over, there she was as usual.”

“Was she glad to see her master?”

“*Ra-ather*. Arabella was the bold, gay lady-dog *then!*”

Now Arabella is between nine and eleven and a half inches long.

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“Does the Hun run to pets at all?”

“I shouldn’t say so. He’s an unsympathetic felon—the Hun. But he might cherish a dachshund or so. We never picked up any ship’s pets off him, and I’m sure we should if there had been.”

That I believed as implicitly as the tale of a destroyer attack some months ago, the object of which was to flush Zeppelins. It succeeded, for the flotilla was attacked by several. Right in the middle of the flurry, a destroyer asked permission to stop and lower dinghy to pick up ship’s dog which had fallen overboard. Permission was granted, and the dog was duly rescued. “Lord knows what the Hun made of it,” said my informant. “He was rumbling round, dropping bombs; and the dinghy was digging out for all she was worth, and the Dog-Fiend was swimming for Dunkirk. It must have looked rather mad from above. But they saved the Dog-Fiend, and then everybody swore he was a German spy in disguise.”

THE FIGHT

“And—about this Jutland fight?” I hinted, not for the first time.

“Oh, that was just a fight. There was more of it than any other fight, I suppose, but I expect all modern naval actions must be pretty much the same.”

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"But what does one *do*—how does one feel?" I insisted, though I knew it was hopeless.

"One does one's job. Things are happening all the time. A man may be right under your nose one minute—serving a gun or something—and the next minute he isn't there."

"And one notices that at the time?"

"Yes. But there's no time to keep *on* noticing it. You've got to carry on somehow or other, or your show stops. I tell you what one *does* notice, though. If one goes below for anything, or has to pass through a flat somewhere, and one sees the old wardroom clock ticking, or a photograph pinned up, or anything of that sort, one notices *that*. Oh yes, and there was another thing—the way a ship seemed to blow up if you were far off her. You'd see a glare, then a blaze, and then the smoke—miles high, lifting quite slowly. Then you'd get the row and the jar of it—just like bumping over submarines. Then, a long while after p'raps, you run through a regular rain of bits of burnt paper coming down on the decks—like showers of volcanic ash, you know." The door of the operating-room seemed just about to open, but it shut again.

"And the Huns' gunnery?"

"That was various. Sometimes they began quite well, and went to pieces after they'd been strafed a little; but sometimes they picked up again. There was one Hun-boat that got no end of a hammering,

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and it seemed to do her gunnery good. She improved tremendously till we sank her. I expect we'd knocked out some scientific Hun in the controls, and he'd been succeeded by a man who knew how."

It used to be "Fritz" last year when they spoke of the enemy. Now it is Hun or, as I have heard, "Yahun," being a superlative of Yahoo. In the Napoleonic wars we called the Frenchmen too many names for any one of them to endure; but this is the age of standardisation.

"And what about our Lower Deck?" I continued.

"They? Oh, they carried on as usual. It takes a lot to impress the Lower Deck when they're busy." And he mentioned several little things that confirmed this. They had a great deal to do, and they did it serenely because they had been trained to carry on under all conditions without panicking. What they did in the way of running repairs was even more wonderful, if that be possible, than their normal routine.

The Lower Deck nowadays is full of strange fish with unlooked-for accomplishments, as in the recorded case of two simple seamen of a destroyer who, when need was sorest, came to the front as trained experts in first-aid.

"And now—what about the actual Hun losses at Jutland?" I ventured.

"You've seen the list, haven't you?"

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“Yes, but it occurred to me—that they might have been a shade under-estimated, and I thought perhaps——”

A perfectly plain asbestos fire-curtain descended in front of the already locked door. It was none of his business to dispute the drive. If there were any discrepancies between estimate and results, one might be sure that the enemy knew about them, which was the chief thing that mattered.

It was, said he, Joss that the light was so bad at the hour of the last round-up when our main fleet had come down from the north and shovelled the Hun round on his tracks. *Per contra*, had it been any other kind of weather, the odds were the Hun would not have ventured so far. As it was, the Hun's fleet had come out and gone back again, none the better for air and exercise. We must be thankful for what we had managed to pick up. But talking of picking up, there was an instance of almost unparalleled Joss which had stuck in his memory. A soldier-man, related to one of the officers in one of our ships that was put down, had got five days' leave from the trenches which he spent with his relative aboard, and thus dropped in for the whole performance. He had been employed in helping to spot, and had lived up a mast till the ship sank, when he stepped off into the water and swam about till he was fished out and put ashore. By that time, the tale goes, his engine-room-dried khaki

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had shrunk half-way up his legs and arms, in which costume he reported himself to the War Office, and pleaded for one little day's extension of leave to make himself decent. "Not a bit of it," said the War Office. "If you choose to spend your leave playing with sailor-men and getting wet all over, that's *your* concern. You will return to duty by to-night's boat." (This may be a libel on the W.O., but it sounds very like them.) "And he had to," said the boy, "but I expect he spent the next week at Headquarters telling fat generals all about the fight."

"And, of course, the Admiralty gave *you* all lots of leave?"

"Us? Yes, heaps. We had nothing to do except clean down and oil up, and be ready to go to sea again in a few hours."

That little fact was brought out at the end of almost every destroyer's report. "Having returned to base at such and such a time, I took in oil, etc., and reported ready for sea at — o'clock." When you think of the amount of work a ship needs even after peace manœuvres, you can realise what has to be done on the heels of an action. And, as there is nothing like housework for the troubled soul of a woman, so a general clean-up is good for sailors. I had this from a petty officer who had also passed through deep waters. "If you've seen your best friend go from alongside you, and your own officer, and your own boat's crew with him, and things of

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that kind, a man's best comfort is small variegated jobs which he is damned for continuous."

THE SILENT NAVY

Presently my friend of the destroyer went back to his stark, desolate life, where feelings do not count, and the fact of his being cold, wet, sea-sick, sleepless, or dog-tired had no bearing whatever on his business, which was to turn out at any hour in any weather and do or endure, decently, according to ritual, what that hour and that weather demanded. It is hard to reach the kernel of Navy minds. The unbribable seas and mechanisms they work on and through have given them the simplicity of elements and machines. The habit of dealing with swift accident, a life of closest and strictest association with their own caste as well as contact with all kinds of men all earth over, have added an immense cunning to those qualities; and that they are from early youth cut out of all feelings that may come between them and their ends, makes them more incomprehensible than Jesuits, even to their own people. What, then, must they be to the enemy?

Here is a Service which prowls forth and achieves, at the lowest, something of a victory. How far-reaching a one only the war's end will reveal. It returns in gloomy silence, broken by the occasional hoot of the long-shore loafer, after issuing

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a bulletin which though it may enlighten the professional mind does not exhilarate the layman. Meantime the enemy triumphs, wirelessly, far and wide. A few frigid and perfunctory-seeming contradictions are put forward against his resounding claims; a Naval expert or two is heard talking "off"; the rest is silence. Anon, the enemy, after a prodigious amount of explanation which not even the neutrals seem to take any interest in, revises his claims, and, very modestly, enlarges his losses. Still no sign. After weeks there appears a document giving our version of the affair, which is as colourless, detached, and scrupulously impartial as the findings of a prize-court. It opines that the list of enemy losses which it submits "give the minimum in regard to numbers though it is possibly not entirely accurate in regard to the particular class of vessel, especially those that were sunk during the night attacks." Here the matter rests and remains—just like our blockade. There is an insolence about it all that makes one gasp.

Yet that insolence springs naturally and unconsciously as an oath, out of the same spirit that caused the destroyer to pick up the dog. The reports themselves, and tenfold more the stories not in the reports, are charged with it, but no words by any outsider can reproduce just that professional tone and touch. A man writing home after the fight points out that the great consolation for not

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having cleaned up the enemy altogether was that “anyhow those East Coast devils”—a fellow-squadron, if you please, which up till Jutland had had most of the fighting—“were not there. They missed that show. We were as cock-ahoop as a girl who had been to a dance that her sister has missed.”

This was one of the figures in that dance:

“A little British destroyer, her midships rent by a great shell meant for a battle-cruiser; exuding steam from every pore; able to go ahead but not to steer; unable to get out of anybody’s way, likely to be rammed by any one of a dozen ships; her syren whimpering: ‘Let me through! Make way!’; her crew fallen in aft dressed in life-belts ready for her final plunge, and cheering wildly as it might have been an enthusiastic crowd when the King passes.”

Let us close on that note. We have been compassed about so long and so blindingly by wonders and miracles; so overwhelmed by revelations of the spirit of men in the basest and most high; that we have neither time to keep tally of these furious days, nor mind to discern upon which hour of them our world’s fate hung.

THE NEUTRAL

*Brethren, how shall it fare with me
When the war is laid aside,
If it be proven that I am he
For whom a world has died?*

*If it be proven that all my good,
And the greater good I will make,
Were purchased me by a multitude
Who suffered for my sake?*

*That I was delivered by mere mankind
Vowed to one sacrifice,
And not, as I hold them, battle-blind,
But dying with opened eyes?*

*That they did not ask me to draw the sword
When they stood to endure their lot,
That they only looked to me for a word,
And I answered I knew them not?*

*If it be found, when the battle clears,
Their death has set me free,
Then how shall I live with myself through the years
Which they have bought for me?*

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*Brethren, how must it fare with me,
Or how am I justified,
If it be proven that I am he
For whom mankind has died;
If it be proven that I am he
Who being questioned denied?*

FRANCE AT WAR

FRANCE¹

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

*Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul,
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,
Terrible with strength that draws from her tireless
soil,
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of men's
mind,
First to follow truth and last to leave old truths
behind—
France beloved of every soul that loves its fellow-
kind.*

Ere our birth (rememberest thou?) side by side we
lay
Fretting in the womb of Rome to begin the fray.
Ere men knew our tongues apart, our one taste was
known—
Each must mould the other's fate as he wrought his
own.
To this end we stirred mankind till all earth was
ours,
Till our world-end strifes began wayside thrones
and powers,
Puppets that we made or broke to bar the other's
path—
Necessary, outpost folk, hirelings of our wrath.

¹First published June 24, 1913. Copyright, 1913, by Rudyard Kipling.

FRANCE AT WAR

To this end we stormed the seas, tack for tack, and
burst
Through the doorways of new worlds, doubtful
which was first.
Hand on hilt (rememberest thou?), ready for the
blow,
Sure whatever else we met we should meet our foe.
Spurred or balked at ev'ry stride by the other's
strength,
So we rode the ages down and every ocean's length;
Where did you refrain from us or we refrain from
you?
Ask the wave that has not watched war between us
two.
Others held us for a while, but with weaker charms,
These we quitted at the call for each other's arms.
Eager toward the known delight, equally we strove,
Each the other's mystery, terror, need, and love.
To each other's open court with our proofs we came,
Where could we find honour else or men to test the
claim?
From each other's throat we wrenched valour's last
reward,
That extorted word of praise gasped 'twixt lunge
and guard.
In each other's cup we poured mingled blood and
tears,
Brutal joys, unmeasured hopes, intolerable fears,
All that soiled or salted life for a thousand years.

FRANCE

Proved beyond the need of proof, matched in every
clime,

O companion, we have lived greatly through all
time:

Yoked in knowledge and remorse now we come to
rest,

Laughing at old villainies that time has turned to
jest,

Pardoning old necessity no pardon can efface—
That undying sin we shared in Rouen market-place.
Now we watch the new years shape, wondering if
they hold

Fiercer lighting in their hearts than we launched
of old.

Now we hear new voices rise, question, boast or gird,
As we raged (rememberest thou?) when our crowds
were stirred.

Now we count new keels afloat, and new hosts on
land,

Massed liked ours (rememberest thou?) when our
strokes were planned.

We were schooled for dear life sake, to know each
other's blade:

What can blood and iron make more than we have
made?

We have learned by keenest use to know each
other's mind:

What shall blood and iron loose that we cannot
bind?

FRANCE AT WAR

We who swept each other's coast, sacked each other's
home,
Since the sword of Brennus clashed on the scales at
Rome,
Listen, court and close again, wheeling girth to
girth,
In the strained and bloodless guard set for peace
on earth.

*Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the
Gaul,
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,
Terrible with strength renewed from a tireless soil,
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of men's
mind,
First to face the truth and last to leave old truths
behind,
France beloved of every soul that loves or serves
its kind.*

I

ON THE FRONTIER OF CIVILISATION

IT'S a pretty park," said the French artillery officer. "We've done a lot for it since the owner left. I hope he'll appreciate it when he comes back."

The car traversed a winding drive through woods, between banks embellished with little chalets of a rustic nature. At first, the chalets stood their full height above ground, suggesting tea-gardens in England. Further on they sank into the earth till, at the top of the ascent, only their solid brown roofs showed. Torn branches drooping across the driveway, with here and there a scorched patch of undergrowth, explained the reason of their modesty.

The château that commanded these glories of forest and park sat boldly on a terrace. There was nothing wrong with it except, if one looked closely, a few scratches or dints on its white stone walls, or a neatly drilled hole under a flight of steps. One such hole ended in an unexploded shell. "Yes," said the officer. "They arrive here occasionally."

Something bellowed across the folds of the

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wooded hills; something grunted in reply. Something passed overhead, querulously but not without dignity. Two clear fresh barks joined the chorus, and a man moved lazily in the direction of the guns.

"Well. Suppose we come and look at things a little," said the commanding officer.

AN OBSERVATION POST

There was a specimen tree—a tree worthy of such a park—the sort of tree visitors are always taken to admire. A ladder ran up it to a platform. What little wind there was swayed the tall top, and the ladder creaked like a ship's gangway. A telephone bell tinkled 50 foot overhead. Two invisible guns spoke fervently for half a minute, and broke off like terriers choked on a leash. We climbed till the topmost platform swayed sickly beneath us. Here one found a rustic shelter, always of the tea-garden pattern, a table, a map, and a little window wreathed with living branches that gave one the first view of the Devil and all his works. It was a stretch of open country, with a few sticks like old tooth-brushes which had once been trees round a farm. The rest was yellow grass, barren to all appearance as the veldt.

"The grass is yellow because they have used gas here," said an officer. "Their trenches are ——. You can see for yourself."

The guns in the woods began again. They

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seemed to have no relation to the regularly spaced bursts of smoke along a little smear in the desert earth two thousand yards away—no connection at all with the strong voices overhead coming and going. It was as impersonal as the drive of the sea along a breakwater.

Thus it went: a pause—a gathering of sound like the race of an incoming wave; then the high-flung heads of breakers spouting white up the face of a groyne. Suddenly, a seventh wave broke and spread the shape of its foam like a plume overtopping all the others.

“That’s one of our torpilleurs—what you call trench-sweepers,” said the observer among the whispering leaves.

Some one crossed the platform to consult the map with its ranges. A blistering outbreak of white smokes rose a little beyond the large plume. It was as though the tide had struck a reef out yonder.

Then a new voice of tremendous volume lifted itself out of a lull that followed. Somebody laughed. Evidently the voice was known.

“That is not for us,” a gunner said. “They are being waked up from ——” he named a distant French position. “So and so is attending to them there. We go on with our usual work. Look! Another torpilleur.”

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“THE BARBARIAN”

Again a big plume rose; and again the lighter shells broke at their appointed distance beyond it. The smoke died away on that stretch of trench, as the foam of a swell dies in the angle of a harbour wall, and broke out afresh half a mile lower down. In its apparent laziness, in its awful deliberation, and its quick spasms of wrath, it was more like the work of waves than of men; and our high platform's gentle sway and glide was exactly the motion of a ship drifting with us toward that shore.

“The usual work. Only the usual work,” the officer explained. “Sometimes it is here. Sometimes above or below us. I have been here since May.”

A little sunshine flooded the stricken landscape and made its chemical yellow look more foul. A detachment of men moved out on a road which ran toward the French trenches, and then vanished at the foot of a little rise. Other men appeared moving toward us with that concentration of purpose and bearing shown in both Armies when—dinner is at hand. They looked like people who had been digging hard.

“The same work. Always the same work!” the officer said. “And you could walk from here to the sea or to Switzerland in that ditch—and you'll find the same work going on everywhere. It isn't war.”

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“It’s better than that,” said another. “It’s the eating-up of a people. They come and they fill the trenches and they die, and they die; and they send more and *those* die. We do the same, of course, but—look!”

He pointed to the large deliberate smoke-heads renewing themselves along that yellowed beach. “That is the frontier of civilisation. They have all civilisation against them—those brutes yonder. It’s not the local victories of the old wars that we’re after. It’s the barbarian—all the barbarian. Now, you’ve seen the whole thing in little. Come and look at our children.”

SOLDIERS IN CAVES

We left that tall tree whose fruits are death ripened and distributed at the tingle of small bells. The observer returned to his maps and calculations; the telephone-boy stiffened up beside his exchange as the amateurs went out of his life. Some one called down through the branches to ask who was attending to—Belial, let us say, for I could not catch the gun’s name. It seemed to belong to that terrific new voice which had lifted itself for the second or third time. It appeared from the reply that if Belial talked too long he would be dealt with from another point miles away.

The troops we came down to see were at rest in a chain of caves which had begun life as quarries

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and had been fitted up by the army for its own uses. There were underground corridors, ante-chambers, rotundas, and ventilating shafts with a bewildering play of cross lights, so that wherever you looked you saw Goya's pictures of men-at-arms.

Every soldier has some of the old maid in him, and rejoices in all the gadgets and devices of his own invention. Death and wounding come by nature, but to lie dry, sleep soft, and keep yourself clean by forethought and contrivance is art, and in all things the Frenchman is gloriously an artist.

Moreover, the French officers seem as mother-keen on their men as their men are brother-fond of them. Maybe the possessive form of address: "Mon général," "mon capitaine," helps the idea, which our men cloke in other and curter phrases. And those soldiers, like ours, had been welded for months in one furnace. As an officer said: "Half our orders now need not be given. Experience makes us think together." I believe, too, that if a French private has an idea—and they are full of ideas—it reaches his C. O. quicker than it does with us.

THE SENTINEL HOUNDS

The overwhelming impression was the brilliant health and vitality of these men and the quality of their breeding. They bore themselves with swing and rampant delight in life, while their voices as they talked in the side-caverns among the stands

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of arms were the controlled voices of civilisation. Yet, as the lights pierced the gloom they looked like bandits dividing the spoil. One picture, though far from war, stays with me. A perfectly built, dark-skinned young giant had peeled himself out of his blue coat and had brought it down with a swish upon the shoulder of a half-stripped comrade who was kneeling at his feet busy with some footgear. They stood against a background of semi-luminous blue haze, through which glimmered a pile of coppery straw half covered by a red blanket. By divine accident of light and pose it was St. Martin giving his cloak to the beggar. There were scores of pictures in these galleries—notably a rock-hewn chapel where the red of the cross on the rough canvas altar-cloth glowed like a ruby. Further inside the caves we found a row of little rock-cut kennels, each inhabited by one wise, silent dog. Their duties begin at night with the sentinels and listening-posts. “And believe me,” said a proud instructor, “my fellow here knows the difference between the noise of our shells and the Boche shells.”

When we came out into the open again there were good opportunities for this study. Voices and wings met and passed in the air, and, perhaps, one strong young tree had not been bending quite so far across the picturesque park-drive when we first went that way.

“Oh, yes,” said an officer, “shells have to fall

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somewhere, and," he added with fine toleration, "it is, after all, against us that the Boche directs them. But come you and look at my dug-out. It's the most superior of all possible dug-outs."

"No. Come and look at our mess. It's the Ritz of these parts." And they joyously told how they had got, or procured, the various fittings and the elegancies, while hands stretched out of the gloom to shake, and men nodded welcome and greeting all through that cheery brotherhood in the woods.

WORK IN THE FIELDS

The voices and the wings were still busy after lunch, when the car slipped past the tea-houses in the drive, and came into a country where women and children worked among the crops. There were large raw shell holes by the wayside or in the midst of fields, and often a cottage or a villa had been smashed as a bonnet-box is smashed by an umbrella. That must be part of Belial's work when he bellows so truculently among the hills to the north.

We were looking for a town that lives under shell-fire. The regular road to it was reported unhealthy—not that the women and children seemed to care. We took byways of which certain exposed heights and corners were lightly blinded by wind-brakes of dried tree-tops. Here the shell holes were rather thick on the ground. But the women and the children and the old men went on with their work

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with the cattle and the crops; and where a house had been broken by shells the rubbish was collected in a neat pile, and where a room or two still remained usable, it was inhabited, and the tattered window-curtains fluttered as proudly as any flag. And time was when I used to denounce young France because it tried to kill itself beneath my car wheels; and the fat old women who crossed roads without warning; and the specially deaf old men who slept in carts on the wrong side of the road! Now, I could take off my hat to every single soul of them, but that one cannot traverse a whole land bareheaded. The nearer we came to our town the fewer were the people, till at last we halted in a well-built suburb of paved streets where there was no life at all. . . .

A WRECKED TOWN

The stillness was as terrible as the spread of the quick busy weeds between the paving-stones; the air smelt of pounded mortar and crushed stone; the sound of a footfall echoed like the drop of a pebble in a well. At first the horror of wrecked apartment-houses and big shops laid open makes one waste energy in anger. It is not seemly that rooms should be torn out of the sides of buildings as one tears the soft heart out of English bread; that villa roofs should lie across iron gates of private garages, or that drawing-room doors should flap alone and dis-

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connected between two emptinesses of twisted girders. The eye wearies of the repeated pattern that burst shells make on stone walls, as the mouth sickens of the taste of mortar and charred timber. One quarter of the place had been shelled nearly level; the façades of the houses stood doorless, roofless, and windowless like stage scenery. This was near the cathedral, which is always a favourite mark for the heathen. They had gashed and ripped the sides of the cathedral itself, so that the birds flew in and out at will; they had smashed holes in the roof; knocked huge cantles out of the buttresses, and pitted and starred the paved square outside. They were at work, too, that very afternoon, though I do not think the cathedral was their objective for the moment. We walked to and fro in the silence of the streets and beneath the whirring wings overhead. Presently, a young woman, keeping to the wall, crossed a corner. An old woman opened a shutter (how it jarred!), and spoke to her. The silence closed again, but it seemed to me that I heard a sound of singing—the sort of chant one hears in nightmare-cities of voices crying from underground.

IN THE CATHEDRAL

“Nonsense,” said an officer. “Who should be singing here?” We circled the cathedral again, and saw what pavement-stones can do against their own city, when the shell jerks them upward. But

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there *was* singing after all—on the other side of a little door in the flank of the cathedral. We looked in, doubting, and saw at least a hundred folk, mostly women, who knelt before the altar of an unwrecked chapel. We withdrew quietly from that holy ground, and it was not only the eyes of the French officers that filled with tears. Then there came an old, old thing with a prayer-book in her hand, pattering across the square, evidently late for service.

“And who are those women?” I asked.

“Some are caretakers; people who have still little shops here. (There is one quarter where you can buy things.) There are many old people, too, who will not go away. They are of the place, you see.”

“And this bombardment happens often?” I said.

“It happens always. Would you like to look at the railway station? Of course, it has not been so bombarded as the cathedral.”

We went through the gross nakedness of streets without people, till we reached the railway station, which was very fairly knocked about, but, as my friends said, nothing like as much as the cathedral. Then we had to cross the end of a long street down which the Boche could see clearly. As one glanced up it, one perceived how the weeds, to whom men's war is the truce of God, had come back and were well established the whole length of it, watched by the long perspective of open, empty windows.

II

THE NATION'S SPIRIT AND A NEW INHERITANCE

WE left that stricken but undefeated town, dodged a few miles down the roads beside which the women tended their cows, and dropped into a place on a hill where a Moroccan regiment of many experiences was in billets.

They were Mohammedans bafflingly like half a dozen of our Indian frontier types, though they spoke no accessible tongue. They had, of course, turned the farm buildings where they lay into a little bit of Africa in colour and smell. They had been gassed in the north; shot over and shot down, and set up to be shelled again; and their officers talked of North African wars that we had never heard of—sultry days against long odds in the desert years ago. “Afterward—is it not so with you also?—we get our best recruits from the tribes we have fought. These men are children. They make no trouble. They only want to go where cartridges are burnt. They are of the few races to whom fighting is pleasure.”

“And how long have you dealt with them?”

“A long time—a long time. I helped to organize

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the corps. I am one of those whose heart is in Africa." He spoke slowly, almost feeling for his French words, and gave some order. I shall not forget his eyes as he turned to a huge, brown, Afreedee-like Mussulman hunkering down beside his accoutrements. He had two sides to his head, that bearded, burned, slow-spoken officer, met and parted with in an hour.

The day closed—(after an amazing interlude in the château of a dream, which was all glassy ponds, stately trees, and vistas of white and gold saloons. The proprietor was somebody's chauffeur at the front, and we drank to his excellent health)—at a little village in a twilight full of the petrol of many cars and the wholesome flavour of healthy troops. There is no better guide to camp than one's own thoughtful nose; and though I poked mine everywhere, in no place then or later did it strike that vile betraying taint of underfed, unclean men. And the same with the horses.

THE LINE THAT NEVER SLEEPS

It is difficult to keep an edge after hours of fresh air and experiences; so one does not get the most from the most interesting part of the day—the dinner with the local headquarters. Here the professionals meet—the Line, the Gunners, the Intelligence with stupefying photo-plans of the enemy's trenches; the Supply; the Staff, who collect and

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note all things, and are very properly chaffed; and, be sure, the Interpreter, who, by force of questioning prisoners, naturally develop into a Sadducee. It is their little asides to each other, the slang, and the half-words which, if one understood, instead of blinking drowsily at one's plate, would give the day's history in little. But tire and the difficulties of a sister (not a foreign) tongue cloud everything, and one goes to billets amid a murmur of voices, the rush of single cars through the night, the passage of battalions, and behind it all, the echo of the deep voices calling one to the other, along the line that never sleeps.

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The ridge with the scattered pines might have hidden children at play. Certainly a horse would have been quite visible, but there was no hint of guns, except a semaphore which announced it was forbidden to pass that way, as the battery was firing. The Boches must have looked for that battery, too. The ground was pitted with shell holes of all calibres—some of them as fresh as mole-casts in the misty damp morning; others where the poppies had grown from seed to flower all through the summer.

“And where are the guns?” I demanded at last.

They were almost under one's hand, their ammunition in cellars and dug-outs beside them. As far as one can make out, the 75 gun has no pet name.

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The bayonet is Rosalie the virgin of Bayonne, but the 75, the watchful nurse of the trenches and little sister of the Line, seems to be always "soixante-quinze." Even those who love her best do not insist that she is beautiful. Her merits are French—logic, directness, simplicity, and the supreme gift of "occasionality." She is equal to everything on the spur of the moment. One sees and studies the few appliances which make her do what she does, and one feels that any one could have invented her.

FAMOUS FRENCH 75'S

"As a matter of fact," says a commandant, "anybody—or, rather, everybody did. The general idea is after such-and-such system, the patent of which had expired, and we improved it; the breech action, with slight modification, is somebody else's; the sighting is perhaps a little special; and so is the traversing, but, at bottom, it is only an assembly of variations and arrangements."

That, of course, is all that Shakespeare ever got out of the alphabet. The French Artillery make their own guns as he made his plays. It is just as simple as that.

"There is nothing going on for the moment; it's too misty," said the Commandant. (I fancy that the Boche being, as a rule, methodical, amateurs are introduced to batteries in the Boche's intervals. At

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least, there are hours healthy and unhealthy which vary with each position.) "But," the Commandant reflected a moment, "there is a place—and a distance. Let us say . . ." He gave a range.

The gun-servers stood back with the bored contempt of the professional for the layman who intrudes on his mysteries. Other civilians had come that way before—had seen, and grinned, and complimented and gone their way, leaving the gunners high up on the bleak hillside to grill or mildew or freeze for weeks and months. Then she spoke. Her voice was higher pitched, it seemed, than ours—with a more shrewish tang to the speeding shell. Her recoil was as swift and as graceful as the shrug of a French-woman's shoulders; the empty case leaped forth and clanged against the trail; the tops of two or three pines fifty yards away nodded knowingly to each other, though there was no wind.

"They'll be bothered down below to know the meaning of our single shot. We don't give them one dose at a time as a rule," somebody laughed.

We waited in the fragrant silence. Nothing came back from the mist that clogged the lower grounds, though no shell of this war was ever launched with more earnest prayers that it might do hurt.

Then they talked about the lives of guns; what number of rounds some will stand and others will not; how soon one can make two good guns out of

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three spoilt ones, and what crazy luck sometimes goes with a single shot or a blind salvo.

LESSON FROM THE "BOCHE"

A shell must fall somewhere, and by the law of averages occasionally lights straight as a homing pigeon on the one spot where it can wreck most. Then earth opens for yards around, and men must be dug out,—some merely breathless, who shake their ears, swear, and carry on, and others whose souls have gone loose among terrors. These have to be dealt with as their psychology demands, and the French officer is a good psychologist. One of them said: "Our national psychology has changed. I do not recognise it myself."

"What made the change?"

"The Boche. If he had been quiet for another twenty years the world must have been his—rotten, but all his. Now he is saving the world."

"How?"

"Because he has shown us what Evil is. We—you and I, England and the rest—had begun to doubt the existence of Evil. The Boche is saving us."

Then we had another look at the animal in its trench—a little nearer this time than before, and quieter on account of the mist. Pick up the chain anywhere you please, you shall find the same observation-post, table, map, observer, and telephon-

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ist; the same always-hidden, always-ready guns; and same vexed foreshore of trenches, smoking and shaking from Switzerland to the sea. The handling of the war varies with the nature of the country, but the tools are unaltered. One looks upon them at last with the same weariness of wonder as the eye receives from endless repetitions of Egyptian hieroglyphics. A long, low profile, with a lump to one side, means the field-gun and its attendant ammunition-case; a circle and slot stand for an observation-post; the trench is a bent line, studded with vertical plumes of explosion; the great guns of position, coming and going on their motors, repeat themselves as scarabs; and man himself is a small blue smudge, no larger than a foresight, crawling and creeping or watching and running among all these terrific symbols.

TRAGEDY OF RHEIMS

But there is no hieroglyphic for Rheims, no blunting of the mind at the abominations committed on the cathedral there. The thing peers upward, maimed and blinded, from out of the utter wreckage of the Archbishop's palace on the one side and dust-heaps of crumbled houses on the other. They shelled, as they still shell it, with high explosives and with incendiary shells, so that the statues and the stonework in places are burned the colour of raw flesh. The gargoyles are smashed; statues,

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crockets, and spires tumbled; walls split and torn; windows thrust out and tracery obliterated. Wherever one looks at the tortured pile there is mutilation and defilement, and yet it had never more of a soul than it has to-day.

Inside—(“Cover yourselves, gentlemen,” said the sacristan, “this place is no longer consecrated”)—everything is swept clear or burned out from end to end, except two candlesticks in front of the niche where Joan of Arc’s image used to stand. There is a French flag there now. [And the last time I saw Rheims Cathedral was in a spring twilight, when the great west window glowed, and the only lights within were those of candles which some penitent English had lit in Joan’s honour on those same candlesticks.] The high altar was covered with floor-carpets; the pavement tiles were cracked and jarred out by the rubbish that had fallen from above, the floor was gritty with dust of glass and powdered stone, little twists of leading from the windows, and iron fragments. Two great doors had been blown inwards by the blast of a shell in the Archbishop’s garden, till they had bent grotesquely to the curve of a cask. There they had jammed. The windows—but the record has been made, and will be kept by better hands than mine. It will last through the generation in which the Teuton is cut off from the fellowship of mankind—all the long, still years when this war of the body is at an end,

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and the real war begins. Rheims is but one of the altars which the heathen have put up to commemorate their own death throughout all the world. It will serve. There is a mark, well known by now, which they have left for a visible seal of their doom. When they first set the place alight some hundreds of their wounded were being tended in the Cathedral. The French saved as many as they could, but some had to be left. Among them was a major, who lay with his back against a pillar. It has been ordained that the signs of his torments should remain—an outline of both legs and half a body, printed in greasy black upon the stones. There are very many people who hope and pray that the sign will be respected at least by our children's children.

IRON NERVE AND FAITH

And, in the meantime, Rheims goes about what business it may have with that iron nerve and endurance and faith which is the new inheritance of France. There is agony enough when the big shells come in; there is pain and terror among the people; and always fresh desecration to watch and suffer. The old men and the women and the children drink of that cup daily, and yet the bitterness does not enter into their souls. Mere words of admiration are impertinent, but the exquisite quality of the French soul has been the marvel to me throughout.

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They say themselves, when they talk: "We did not know what our nation was. Frankly, we did not expect it ourselves. But the thing came, and—you see, we go on."

Or as a woman put it more logically, "What else can we do? Remember, *we* knew the Boche in '70 when *you* did not. We know what he has done in the last year. This is not war. It is against wild beasts that we fight. There is no arrangement possible with wild beasts." This is the one vital point which we in England *must* realise. We are dealing with animals who have scientifically and philosophically removed themselves inconceivably outside civilisation. When you have heard a few—only a few—tales of their doings, you begin to understand a little. When you have seen Rheims, you understand a little more. When you have looked long enough at the faces of the women, you are inclined to think that the women will have a large say in the final judgment. They have earned it a thousand times.

III

BATTLE SPECTACLE AND A REVIEW

TRAVELLING with two chauffeurs is not the luxury it looks; since there is only one of you and there is always another of those iron men to relieve the wheel. Nor can I decide whether an ex-professor of the German tongue, or an ex-roadracer who has lived six years abroad, or a Maréchal des Logis, or a Brigadier makes the most thrusting driver through three-mile stretches of military traffic repeated at half-hour intervals. Sometimes it was motor-ambulances strung all along a level; or supply; or those eternal big guns coming round corners with trees chained on their long backs to puzzle aeroplanes, and their leafy, big-shell limbers snorting behind them. In the rare breathing-spaces men with rollers and road metal attacked the road. In peace the roads of France, thanks to the motor, were none too good. In war they stand the incessant traffic far better than they did with the tourist. My impression—after some seven hundred miles printed off on me at between 60 and 70 kilometres—was of uniform excellence. Nor did I come upon any smashes or breakdowns in that distance, and

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they were certainly trying them hard. Nor, which is the greater marvel, did *we* kill anybody; though we did miracles down the streets to avoid babes, kittens, and chickens. The land is used to every detail of war, and to its grime and horror and make-shifts, but also to war's unbounded courtesy, kindness, and long-suffering, and the gaiety that comes, thank God, to balance overwhelming material loss.

FARM LIFE AMIDST WAR

There was a village that had been stamped flat, till it looked older than Pompeii. There were not three roofs left, nor one whole house. In most places you saw straight into the cellars. The hops were ripe in the grave-dotted fields round about. They had been brought in and piled in the nearest outline of a dwelling. Women sat on chairs on the pavement, picking the good-smelling bundles. When they had finished one, they reached back and pulled out another through the window-hole behind them, talking and laughing the while. A cart had to be manœuvred out of what had been a farm-yard, to take the hops to market. A thick, broad, fair-haired wench, of the sort that Millet drew, flung all her weight on a spoke and brought the cart forward into the street. Then she shook herself, and, hands on hips, danced a little defiant jig in her sabots as she went back to get the horse. An-

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other girl came across a bridge. She was precisely of the opposite type, slender, creamy-skinned, and delicate-featured. She carried a brand-new broom over her shoulder through that desolation, and bore herself with the pride and grace of Queen Iseult.

The farm-girl came out leading the horse, and as the two young things passed they nodded and smiled at each other, with the delicate tangle of the hop-vines at their feet.

The guns spoke earnestly in the north. That was the Argonne, where the Crown Prince was busily getting rid of a few thousands of his father's faithful subjects in order to secure himself the reversion of his father's throne. No man likes losing his job, and when at long last the inner history of this war comes to be written, we may find that the people we mistook for principals and prime agents were only average incompetents moving all Hell to avoid dismissal. (For it is absolutely true that when a man sells his soul to the devil he does it for the price of half nothing.)

WATCHING THE GUN-FIRE

It must have been a hot fight. A village, wrecked as is usual along this line, opened on it from a hillside that overlooked an Italian landscape of carefully drawn hills studded with small villages—a plain with a road and a river in the foreground, and an all-revealing afternoon light upon every-

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thing. The hills smoked and shook and bellowed. An observation-balloon climbed up to see; while an aeroplane which had nothing to do with the strife, but was merely training a beginner, ducked and swooped on the edge of the plain. Two rose-pink pillars of crumbled masonry, guarding some carefully trimmed evergreens on a lawn half buried in rubbish, represented an hotel where the Crown Prince had once stayed. All up the hillside to our right the foundations of houses lay out, like a bit of tripe, with the sunshine in their square hollows. Suddenly a band began to play up the hill among some trees; and an officer of local Guards in the new steel anti-shrapnel helmet, which is like the seventeenth century sallet, suggested that we should climb and get a better view. He was a kindly man, and in speaking English had discovered (as I do when speaking French) that it is simpler to stick to one gender. His choice was the feminine, and the Boche described as "she" throughout made me think better of myself, which is the essence of friendship. We climbed a flight of old stone steps, for generations the playground of little children, and found a ruined church, and a battalion in billets, recreating themselves with excellent music and a little horseplay on the outer edge of the crowd. The trouble in the hills was none of their business for that day.

Still higher up, on a narrow path among the

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trees, stood a priest and three or four officers. They watched the battle and claimed the great bursts of smoke for one side or the other, at the same time as they kept an eye on the flickering aeroplane. "Ours," they said, half under their breath. "Theirs." "No, not ours that one—theirs! . . . That fool is banking too steep . . . That's Boche shrapnel. They always burst it high. That's our big gun behind that outer hill . . . He'll drop his machine in the street if he doesn't take care. . . . There goes a trench-sweeper. Those last two were theirs, but *that*"—it was a full roar—"was ours."

BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES

The valley held and increased the sounds till they seemed to hit our hillside like a sea.

A change of light showed a village, exquisitely pencilled atop of a hill, with reddish haze at its feet.

"What is that place?" I asked.

The priest replied in a voice as deep as an organ: "That is Saint—— It is in the Boche lines. Its condition is pitiable."

The thunders and the smokes rolled up and diminished and renewed themselves, but the small children romped up and down the old stone steps; the beginner's aeroplane unsteadily chased its own shadow over the fields; and the soldiers in billet asked the band for their favourite tunes.

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Said the lieutenant of local Guards as the cars went on: "She—play—Tipperary."

And she did—to an accompaniment of heavy pieces in the hills, which followed us into a town all ringed with enormous searchlights, French and Boche together, scowling at each other beneath the stars.

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It happened about that time that Lord Kitchener with General Joffre reviewed a French Army Corps.

We came on it in a vast dip of ground under grey clouds, as one comes suddenly on water; for it lay out in misty blue lakes of men mixed with darker patches, like osiers and undergrowth, of guns, horses, and wagons. A straight road cut the landscape in two along its murmuring front.

VETERANS OF THE WAR

It was as though Cadmus had sown the dragon's teeth, not in orderly furrows but broadcast, till, horrified by what arose, he had emptied out the whole bag and fled. But these were no new warriors. The record of their mere pitched battles would have satiated a Napoleon. Their regiments and batteries had learnt to achieve the impossible as a matter of routine, and in twelve months they had scarcely for a week lost direct contact with death. We went down the line and looked into the eyes of those men with the used bayonets and

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rifles; the packs that could almost stow themselves on the shoulders that would be strange without them; at the splashed guns on their repaired wheels, and the easy-working limbers. One could feel the strength and power of the mass as one feels the flush of heat from off a sunbaked wall. When the Generals' cars arrived there, there was no loud word or galloping about. The lakes of men gathered into straight-edged battalions; the batteries aligned a little; a squadron reined back or spurred up; but it was all as swiftly smooth as the certainty with which a man used to the pistol draws and levels it at the required moment. A few peasant women saw the Generals alight. The aeroplanes, which had been skimming low as swallows along the front of the line (theirs must have been a superb view) ascended leisurely, and "waited on" like hawks. Then followed the inspection, and one saw the two figures, tall and short, growing smaller side by side along the white road, till far off among the cavalry they entered their cars again, and moved along the horizon to another rise of grey-green plain.

"The army will move across where you are standing. Get to a flank," some one said.

AN ARMY IN MOTION

We were no more than well clear of that immobile host when it all surged forward, headed by

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massed bands playing a tune that sounded like the very pulse of France.

The two Generals, with their Staff, and the French Minister for War, were on foot near a patch of very green lucerne. They made about twenty figures in all. The cars were little grey blocks against the grey skyline. There was nothing else in all that great plain except the army; no sound but the changing notes of the aeroplanes and the blunted impression, rather than noise, of feet of men on soft ground. They came over a slight ridge, so that one saw the curve of it first furred, then grassed, with the tips of bayonets, which immediately grew to full height, and then, beneath them, poured the wonderful infantry. The speed, the thrust, the drive of that broad blue mass was like a tide-race up an arm of the sea; and how such speed could go with such weight, and how such weight could be in itself so absolutely under control, filled one with terror. All the while, the band, on a far headland, was telling them and telling them (as if they did not know!) of the passion and gaiety and high heart of their own land in the speech that only they could fully understand. (To hear the music of a country is like hearing a woman think aloud.)

“What *is* the tune?” I asked of an officer beside me.

“My faith, I can’t recall for the moment. I’ve

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marched to it often enough, though. 'Sambre-et-Meuse,' perhaps. Look! There goes my battalion! Those Chasseurs yonder."

He knew, of course; but what could a stranger identify in that earth-shaking passage of thirty thousand?

ARTILLERY AND CAVALRY

The note behind the ridge changed to something deeper.

"Ah! Our guns," said an artillery officer, and smiled tolerantly on the last blue waves of the Line already beating toward the horizon.

They came twelve abreast—one hundred and fifty guns free for the moment to take the air in company, behind their teams. And next week would see them, hidden singly or in lurking confederacies, by mountain and marsh and forest, or the wrecked habitations of men—where?

The big guns followed them, with that long-nosed air of detachment peculiar to the breed. The Gunner at my side made no comment. He was content to let his Arm speak for itself, but when one big gun in a sticky place fell out of alignment for an instant I saw his eyebrows contract. The artillery passed on with the same inhuman speed and silence as the Line; and the Cavalry's shattering trumpets closed it all.

They are like our Cavalry in that their horses are in high condition, and they talk hopefully of

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getting past the barbed wire one of these days and coming into their own. Meantime, they are employed on "various work as requisite," and they all sympathise with our rough-rider of Dragoons who flatly refused to take off his spurs in the trenches. If he had to die as a damned infantryman, he wasn't going to be buried as such. A troop-horse of a flanking squadron decided that he had had enough of war, and jibbed like Lot's wife. His rider (we all watched him) ranged about till he found a stick, which he used, but without effect. Then he got off and led the horse, which was evidently what the brute wanted, for when the man remounted the jibbing began again. The last we saw of him was one immensely lonely figure leading one bad but happy horse across an absolutely empty world. Think of his reception—the sole man of 40,000 who had fallen out!

THE BOCHE AS MR. SMITH

The Commander of that Army Corps came up to salute. The cars went away with the Generals and the Minister for War; the Army passed out of sight over the ridges to the north; the peasant women stooped again to their work in the fields, and wet mist shut down on all the plain; but one tingled with the electricity that had passed. Now one knows what the solidarity of civilisation means. Later on the civilised nations will know more, and

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will wonder and laugh together at their old blindness. When Lord Kitchener went down the line, before the march past, they say that he stopped to speak to a General who had been Marchand's Chief of Staff at the time of Fashoda. And Fashoda was one of several cases when civilisation was very nearly manœuvred into fighting with itself "for the King of Prussia," as the saying goes. The all-embracing vileness of the Boche is best realised from French soil, where they have had large experience of it. "And yet," as some one observed, "we ought to have known that a race who have brought anonymous letter-writing to its highest pitch in their own dirty Court affairs would certainly use the same methods in their foreign politics. *Why* didn't we realise?"

"For the same reason," another responded, "that society did not realise that the late Mr. Smith, of your England, who married three wives, bought baths in advance for each of them, and, when they had left him all their money, drowned them one by one."

"And were the baths by any chance called Denmark, Austria, and France in 1870?" a third asked.

"No, they were respectable British tubs. But until Mr. Smith had drowned his third wife people didn't get suspicious. They argued that 'men don't do such things.' That sentiment is the criminal's best protection."

IV

THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE

WE passed into the zone of another army and a hillier country, where the border villages lay more sheltered. Here and there a town and the fields round it gave us a glimpse of the furious industry with which France makes and handles material and troops. With her, as with us, the wounded officer of experience goes back to the drill-ground to train the new levies. But it was always the little crowded, defiant villages, and the civil population waiting unweariedly and cheerfully on the unwearied, cheerful army, that went closest to the heart. Take these pictures, caught almost anywhere during a journey: A knot of little children in difficulties with the village water-tap or high-handled pump. A soldier, bearded and fatherly, or young and slim and therefore rather shy of the big girls' chaff, comes forward and lifts the pail or swings the handle. His reward, from the smallest babe swung high in air, or, if he is an older man, pressed against his knees, is a kiss. Then nobody laughs.

Or a fat old lady making oration against some wicked young soldiers who, she says, know what

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has happened to a certain bottle of wine. "And I meant it for all—yes, for all of you—this evening, instead of the thieves who stole it. Yes, I tell you—stole it!" The whole street hears her; so does the officer, who pretends not to, and the amused half-battalion up the road. The young men express penitence; she growls like a thunderstorm, but, softening at last, cuffs and drives them affectionately before her. They are all one family.

Or a girl at work with horses in a ploughed field that is dotted with graves. The machine must avoid each sacred plot. So, hands on the ploughstilts, her hair flying forward, she shouts and wrenches till her little brother runs up and swings the team out of the furrow. Every aspect and detail of life in France seems overlaid with a smooth patina of long-continued war—everything except the spirit of the people, and that is as fresh and glorious as the sight of their own land in sunshine.

A CITY AND WOMAN

We found a city among hills which knew itself to be a prize greatly coveted by the Kaiser. For, truly, it was a pleasant, a desirable, and an insolent city. Its streets were full of life; it boasted an establishment almost as big as Harrod's and full of buyers, and its women dressed and shod themselves with care and grace, as befits ladies who, at any time, may be ripped into rags by bombs from

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aeroplanes. And there was another city whose population seemed to be all soldiers in training; and yet another given up to big guns and ammunition—an extraordinary sight.

After that, we came to a little town of pale stone which an Army had made its headquarters. It looked like a plain woman who had fainted in public. It had rejoiced in many public institutions that were turned into hospitals and offices; the wounded limped its wide, dusty streets, detachments of Infantry went through it swiftly; and utterly bored motor-lorries cruised up and down roaring, I suppose, for something to look at or to talk to. In the centre of it I found one Janny, or rather his marble bust, brooding over a minute iron-railed garden of half-dried asters opposite a shut-up school, which it appeared from the inscription Janny had founded somewhere in the arid Thirties. It was precisely the sort of school that Janny, by the look of him, would have invented. Not even French adaptability could make anything of it. So Janny had his school, with a faint perfume of varnish, all to himself in a hot stillness of used-up air and little whirls of dust. And because that town seemed so barren, I met there a French General whom I would have gone very far to have encountered. He, like the others, had created and tempered an army for certain work in a certain place, and its hand had been heavy on the Boche. We talked of what the French

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woman was, and had done, and was doing, and extolled her for her goodness and her faith and her splendid courage. When we parted, I went back and made my profoundest apologies to Janny, who must have had a mother. The pale, overwhelmed town did not now any longer resemble a woman who had fainted, but one who must endure in public all manner of private woe and still, with hands that never cease working, keeps her soul and is cleanly strong for herself and for her men.

FRENCH OFFICERS

The guns began to speak again among the hills that we dived into; the air grew chillier as we climbed; forest and wet rocks closed round us in the mist, to the sound of waters trickling alongside; there was a tang of wet fern, cut pine, and the first breath of autumn when the road entered a tunnel and a new world—Alsace.

Said the Governor of those parts thoughtfully: “The main thing was to get those factory chimneys smoking again.” (They were doing so in little flats and villages all along.) “You won’t see any girls, because they’re at work in the textile factories. Yes, it isn’t a bad country for summer hotels, but I’m afraid it won’t do for winter sports. We’ve only a mètre of snow, and it doesn’t lie, except when you are hauling guns up mountains. Then, of course, it

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drifts and freezes like Davos. That's our new railway below there. Pity it's too misty to see the view."

But for his medals, there was nothing in the Governor to show that he was not English. He might have come straight from an Indian frontier command.

One notices this approximation of type in the higher ranks, and many of the juniors are cut out of the very same cloth as ours. They get whatever fun may be going: their performances are as incredible and outrageous as the language in which they describe them afterward is bald, but convincing, and—I overheard the tail-end of a yarn told by a child of twenty to some other babes. It was veiled in the obscurity of the French tongue, and the points were lost in shouts of laughter—but I imagine the subaltern among his equals displays just as much reverence for his elders and betters as our own boys do. The epilogue, at least, was as old as both Armies:

"And what did he say then?"

"Oh, the usual thing. He held his breath till I thought he'd burst. Then he damned me in heaps, and I took good care to keep out of his sight till next day."

But officially and in the high social atmosphere of Headquarters their manners and their meekness

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are of the most admirable. There they attend devoutly on the wisdom of their seniors, who treat them, so it seemed, with affectionate confidence.

FRONT THAT NEVER SLEEPS

When the day's reports are in, all along the front, there is a man, expert in the meaning of things, who boils them down for that cold official digest which tells us that "There was the usual grenade fighting at ——. We made appreciable advance at ——" &c. The original material comes in sheaves and sheaves, where individual character and temperament have full and amusing play. It is reduced for domestic consumption like an overwhelming electric current. Otherwise we could not take it in. But at closer range one realises that the Front never sleeps; never ceases from trying new ideas and weapons which, so soon as the Boche thinks he has mastered them, are discarded for newer annoyances and bewilderments.

"The Boche is above all things observant and imitative," said one who counted quite a few Boches dead on the front of his sector. "When you present him with a new idea, he thinks it over for a day or two. Then he presents his riposte."

"Yes, my General. That was exactly what he did to me when I—did so and so. He was quite silent for a day. Then—he stole my patent."

"And you?"

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“I had a notion that he'd do that, so I had changed the specification.”

Thus spoke the Staff, and so it is among the junior commands, down to the semi-isolated posts where boy-Napoulons live on their own, through unbelievable adventures. They are inventive young devils, these veterans of 21, possessed of the single ideal—to kill—which they follow with men as single-minded as themselves. Battlefield tactics do not exist; when a whole nation goes to ground there can be none of the “victories” of the old bookish days. But there is always the killing—the well-schemed smashing of a full trench, the rushing out and the mowing down of its occupants; the unsuspecting battalion far in the rear, located after two nights' extreme risk alone among rubbish of masonry, and wiped out as it eats or washes itself; and, more rarely, the body to body encounter with animals removed from the protection of their machinery, when the bayonets get their chance. The Boche does not at all like meeting men whose womenfolk he has dishonoured or mutilated, or used as a protection against bullets. It is not that these men are angry or violent. They do not waste time in that way. They kill him.

THE BUSINESS OF WAR

The French are less reticent than we about atrocities committed by the Boche, because those

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atrocities form part of their lives. They are not tucked away in reports of Commissions, and vaguely referred to as "too awful." Later on, perhaps, we shall be unreserved in our turn. But they do not talk of them with any babbling heat or bleat or make funny little appeals to a "public opinion" that, like the Boche, has gone underground. It occurs to me that this must be because every Frenchman has his place and his chance, direct or indirect, to diminish the number of Boches still alive. Whether he lies out in a sandwich of damp earth, or sweats the big guns up the crests behind the trees, or brings the fat, loaded barges into the very heart of the city, where the shell-wagons wait, or spends his last crippled years at the harvest, he is doing his work to that end.

If he is a civilian he may—as he does—say things about his Government, which, after all, is very like other popular governments. (A lifetime spent in watching how the cat jumps does not make lion-tamers.) But there is very little human rubbish knocking about France to hinder work or darken counsel. Above all, there is a thing called the Honour of Civilisation, to which France is attached. The meanest man feels that he, in his place, is permitted to help uphold it, and, I think, bears himself, therefore, with new dignity.

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A CONTRAST IN TYPES

This is written in a garden of smooth turf, under a copper beech, beside a glassy mill-stream, where soldiers of Alpine regiments are writing letters home, while the guns shout up and down the narrow valleys.

A great wolf-hound, who considers himself in charge of the old-fashioned farmhouse, cannot understand why his master, aged six, should be sitting on the knees of the Maréchal des Logis, the iron man who drives the big car.

“But you *are* French, little one?” says the giant, with a yearning arm round the child.

“Yes,” very slowly mouthing the French words; “I—can’t—speak—French—but—I—am—French.”

The small face disappears in the big beard.

Somehow, I can’t imagine the Maréchal des Logis killing babies—even if his superior officer, now sketching the scene, were to order him!

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The great building must once have been a monastery. Twilight softened its gaunt wings, in an angle of which were collected fifty prisoners, picked up among the hills behind the mists.

They stood in some sort of military formation preparatory to being marched off. They were dressed in khaki, the colour of gassed grass, that

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might have belonged to any army. Two wore spectacles, and I counted eight faces of the fifty which were asymmetrical—out of drawing on one side.

“Some of their later drafts give us that type,” said the Interpreter. One of them had been wounded in the head and roughly bandaged. The others seemed all sound. Most of them looked at nothing, but several were vividly alive with terror that cannot keep the eyelids still, and a few wavered on the grey edge of collapse.

They were the breed which, at the word of command, had stolen out to drown women and children; had raped women in the streets at the word of command; and, always at the word of command, had sprayed petrol, or squirted flame; or defiled the property and persons of their captives. They stood there outside all humanity. Yet they were made in the likeness of humanity. One realised it with a shock when the bandaged creature began to shiver, and they shuffled off in response to the orders of civilised men.

V

LIFE IN TRENCHES ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE

VERY early in the morning I met Alan Breck, with a half-healed bullet-scraps across the bridge of his nose, and an Alpine cap over one ear. His people a few hundred years ago had been Scotch. He bore a Scotch name, and still recognised the head of his clan, but his French occasionally ran into German words, for he was an Alsatian on one side.

“This,” he explained, “is the very best country in the world to fight in. It’s picturesque and full of cover. I’m a gunner. I’ve been here for months. It’s lovely.”

It might have been the hills under Mussoorie, and what our cars expected to do in it I could not understand. But the demon-driver who had been a road-racer took the 70 h. p. Mercédès and threaded the narrow valleys, as well as occasional half-Swiss villages full of Alpine troops, at a restrained thirty miles an hour. He shot up a new-made road, more like Mussoorie than ever, and did not fall down the hillside even once. An ammunition-mule of a mountain-battery met him at a tight corner, and began to climb a tree.

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"See! There isn't another place in France where that could happen," said Alan. "I tell you, this is a magnificent country."

The mule was hauled down by his tail before he had reached the lower branches, and went on through the woods, his ammunition-boxes jinking on his back, for all the world as though he were re-joining his battery at Jutogh. One expected to meet the little Hill people bent under their loads under the forest gloom. The light, the colour, the smell of wood smoke, pine-needles, wet earth, and warm mule were all Himalayan. Only the Mercédès was violently and loudly a stranger.

"Halt!" said Alan at last, when she had done everything except imitate the mule.

"The road continues," said the demon-driver seductively.

"Yes, but they will hear you if you go on. Stop and wait. We've a mountain battery to look at."

They were not at work for the moment, and the Commandant, a grim and forceful man, showed me some details of their construction. When we left them in their bower—it looked like a Hill priest's wayside shrine—we heard them singing through the steep-descending pines. They, too, like the 75's, seem to have no pet name in the service.

It was a poisonously blind country. The woods blocked all sense of direction above and around. The ground was at any angle you please, and all

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sounds were split up and muddled by the tree-trunks, which acted as silencers. High above us the respectable, all-concealing forest had turned into sparse, ghastly blue sticks of timber—an assembly of leper-trees round a bald mountain top. “That’s where we’re going,” said Alan. “Isn’t it an adorable country?”

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A machine-gun loosed a few shots in the fumbling style of her kind when they feel for an opening. A couple of rifle shots answered. They might have been half a mile away or a hundred yards below. An adorable country! We climbed up till we found once again a complete tea-garden of little sunk houses, almost invisible in the brown-pink recesses of the thick forest. Here the trenches began, and with them for the next few hours life in two dimensions—length and breadth. You could have eaten your dinner almost anywhere off the swept dry ground, for the steep slopes favoured draining, there was no lack of timber, and there was unlimited labour. It had made neat double-length dug-outs where the wounded could be laid in during their passage down the mountain side; well-tended occasional latrines properly limed; dug-outs for sleeping and eating; overhead protections and tool-sheds where needed, and, as one came nearer the working face, very clever cellars against trench-sweepers.

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Men passed on their business; a squad with a captured machine-gun which they tested in a sheltered dip; armourers at their benches busy with sick rifles; fatigue-parties for straw, rations, and ammunition; long processions of single blue figures turned sideways between the brown sunless walls. One understood after a while the nightmare that lays hold of trench-stale men, when the dreamer wanders for ever in those blind mazes till, after centuries of agonising flight, he finds himself stumbling out again into the white blaze and horror of the mined front—he who thought he had almost reached home!

IN THE FRONT LINE

There were no trees above us now. Their trunks lay along the edge of the trench, built in with stones, where necessary, or sometimes overhanging it in ragged splinters or bushy tops. Bits of cloth, not French, showed, too, in the uneven lines of débris at the trench lip, and some thoughtful soul had marked an unexploded Boche trench-sweeper as "not to be touched." It was a young lawyer from Paris who pointed that out to me.

We met the Colonel at the head of an indescribable pit of ruin, full of sunshine, whose steps ran down a very steep hillside under the lee of an almost vertically plunging parapet. To the left of that parapet the whole hillside was one gruel of smashed

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trees, split stones, and powdered soil. It might have been a rag-picker's dump-heap on a colossal scale.

Alan looked at it critically. I think he had helped to make it not long before.

"We're on the top of the hill now, and the Boches are below us," said he. "We gave them a very fair sickener lately."

"This," said the Colonel, "is the front line."

There were overhead guards against hand-bombs which disposed me to believe him, but what convinced me most was a corporal urging us in whispers not to talk so loud. The men were at dinner, and a good smell of food filled the trench. This was the first smell I had encountered in my long travels uphill—a mixed, entirely wholesome flavour of stew, leather, earth, and rifle-oil.

FRONT-LINE PROFESSIONALS

A proportion of men were standing to arms while others ate; but dinner-time is slack time, even among animals, and it was close on noon.

"The Boches got *their* soup a few days ago," some one whispered. I thought of the pulverised hillside, and hoped it had been hot enough.

We edged along the still trench, where the soldiers stared, with justified contempt, I thought, upon the civilian who scuttled through their life for a few emotional minutes in order to make words out of their blood. Somehow it reminded me of

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coming in late to a play and incommoding a long line of packed stalls. The whispered dialogue was much the same: "Pardon!" "I beg your pardon, monsieur." "To the right, monsieur." "If monsieur will lower his head." "One sees best from here, monsieur," and so on. It was their day and night-long business, carried through without display or heat, or doubt or indecision. Those who worked, worked; those off duty, not five feet behind them in the dug-outs, were deep in their papers, or their meals or their letters; while death stood ready at every minute to drop down into the narrow cut from out of the narrow strip of unconcerned sky. And for the better part of a week one had skirted hundreds of miles of such a frieze!

The loopholes not in use were plugged rather like old-fashioned hives. Said the Colonel, removing a plug: "Here are the Boches. Look, and you'll see their sandbags." Through the jumble of riven trees and stones one saw what might have been a bit of green sacking. "They're about seven mètres distant just here," the Colonel went on. That was true, too. We entered a little fortalice with a cannon in it, in an embrasure which at that moment struck me as unnecessarily vast, even though it was partly closed by a frail packing-case lid. The Colonel sat him down in front of it, and explained the theory of this sort of redoubt. "By the way," he said to the gunner at last, "can't you find some-

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thing better than *that?*” He twitched the lid aside. “I think it’s too light. Get a log of wood or something.”

HANDY TRENCH-SWEEPERS

I loved that Colonel! He knew his men and he knew the Boches—had them marked down like birds. When he said they were beside dead trees or behind boulders, sure enough they were there! But, as I have said, the dinner-hour is always slack, and even when we came to a place where a section of trench had been bashed open by trench-sweepers, and it was recommended to duck and hurry, nothing much happened. The uncanny thing was the absence of movement in the Boche trenches. Sometimes one imagined that one smelt strange tobacco, or heard a rifle-bolt working after a shot. Otherwise they were as still as pig at noonday.

We held on through the maze, past trench-sweepers of a handy light pattern, with their screw-tailed charge all ready; and a grave or so; and when I came on men who merely stood within easy reach of their rifles, I knew I was in the second line. When they lay frankly at ease in their dug-outs, I knew it was the third. A shotgun would have sprinkled all three.

“No flat plains,” said Alan. “No hunting for gun positions—the hills are full of them—and the trenches close together and commanding each other. You see what a beautiful country it is.”

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The Colonel confirmed this, but from another point of view. War was his business, as the still woods could testify—but his hobby was his trenches. He had tapped the mountain streams and dug out a laundry where a man could wash his shirt and go up and be killed in it, all in a morning; had drained the trenches till a muddy stretch in them was an offence; and at the bottom of the hill (it looked like a hydropathic establishment on the stage) he had created baths where half a battalion at a time could wash. He never told me how all that country had been fought over as fiercely as Ypres in the West; nor what blood had gone down the valleys before his trenches pushed over the scalped mountain top. No. He sketched out new endeavours in earth and stones and trees for the comfort of his men on that populous mountain.

And there came a priest, who was a sub-lieutenant, out of a wood of snuff-brown shadows and half-veiled trunks. Would it please me to look at a chapel? It was all open to the hillside, most tenderly and devoutly done in rustic work with reedings of peeled branches and panels of moss and thatch—St. Hubert's own shrine. I saw the hunters who passed before it, going to the chase on the far side of the mountain where their game lay.

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A BOMBARDED TOWN

Alan carried me off to tea the same evening in a town where he seemed to know everybody. He had spent the afternoon on another mountain top, inspecting gun positions; whereby he had been shelled a little—*marmité* is the slang for it. There had been no serious *marmitage*, and he had spotted a Boche position which was *marmitable*.

“And we may get shelled now,” he added, hopefully. “They shell this town whenever they think of it. Perhaps they’ll shell us at tea.”

It was a quaintly beautiful little place, with its mixture of French and German ideas; its old bridge and gentle-minded river, between the cultivated hills. The sand-bagged cellar doors, the ruined houses, and the holes in the pavement looked as unreal as the violences of a cinema against that soft and simple setting. The people were abroad in the streets, and the little children were playing. A big shell gives notice enough for one to get to shelter, if the shelter is near enough. That appears to be as much as any one expects in the world where one is shelled, and that world has settled down to it. People’s lips are a little firmer, the modelling of the brows is a little more pronounced, and, maybe, there is a change in the expression of the eyes; but nothing that a casual afternoon caller need particularly notice.

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CASES FOR HOSPITAL

The house where we took tea was the "big house" of the place, old and massive, a treasure house of ancient furniture. It had everything that the moderate heart of man could desire—gardens, garages, outbuildings, and the air of peace that goes with beauty in age. It stood over a high cellarage, and opposite the cellar door was a brand-new blind-age of earth packed between timbers. The cellar was a hospital, with its beds and stores, and under the electric light the orderly waited ready for the cases to be carried down out of the streets.

"Yes, they are all civil cases," said he.

They come without much warning—a woman gashed by falling timber; a child with its temple crushed by a flying stone; an urgent amputation case, and so on. One never knows. Bombardment, the Boche text-books say, "is designed to terrify the civil population so that they may put pressure on their politicians to conclude peace." In real life, men are rarely soothed by the sight of their women being tortured.

We took tea in the hall upstairs, with a propriety and an interchange of compliments that suited the little occasion. There was no attempt to disguise the existence of a bombardment, but it was not allowed to outweigh talk of lighter matters. I know one guest who sat through it as near as might be

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inarticulate with wonder. But he was English, and when Alan asked him whether he had enjoyed himself, he said: "Oh, yes. Thank you very much."

"Nice people, aren't they?" Alan went on.

"Oh, very nice. And—and such good tea."

He managed to convey a few of his sentiments to Alan after dinner.

"But what else could the people have done?" said he. "They are French."

VI

THE COMMON TASK OF A GREAT PEOPLE

"THIS is the end of the line," said the Staff Officer, kindest and most patient of chaperons. It buttressed itself on a fortress among hills. Beyond that, the silence was more awful than the mixed noise of business to the westward. In mileage on the map the line must be between four and five hundred miles; in actual trench-work many times that distance. It is too much to see at full length; the mind does not readily break away from the obsession of its entirety or the grip of its detail. One visualises the thing afterwards as a white-hot gash, worming all across France between intolerable sounds and lights, under ceaseless blasts of whirled dirt. Nor is it any relief to lose oneself among wildernesses of piling, stoning, timbering, concreting, and wire-work, or incalculable quantities of soil thrown up raw to the light and cloaked by the changing seasons—as the unburied dead are cloaked.

Yet there are no words to give the essential simplicity of it. It is the rampart put up by Man against the Beast, precisely as in the Stone Age. If it goes, all that keeps us from the Beast goes with it. One sees this at the front as clearly as one sees

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the French villages behind the German lines. Sometimes people steal away from them and bring word of what they endure.

Where the rifle and the bayonet serve, men use those tools along the front. Where the knife gives better results, they go in behind the hand-grenades with the naked twelve-inch knife. Each race is supposed to fight in its own way, but this war has passed beyond all the known ways. They say that the Belgians in the north settle accounts with a certain dry passion which has varied very little since their agony began. Some sections of the English line have produced a soft-voiced, rather reserved type, which does its work with its mouth shut. The French carry an edge to their fighting, a precision, and a dreadful knowledge coupled with an insensibility to shock, unlike anything one has imagined of mankind. To be sure, there has never been like provocation, for never since the *Æsir* went about to bind the Fenris Wolf has all the world united to bind the Beast.

The last I saw of the front was Alan Breck speeding back to his gun-positions among the mountains; and I wondered what delight of what household the lad must have been in the old days.

SUPPORTS AND RESERVES

Then we had to work our way, department by department, against the tides of men behind the

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line—supports and their supports, reserves and reserves of reserves, as well as the masses in training. They flooded towns and villages, and when we tried short-cuts we found them in every by-lane. Have you seen mounted men reading their home letters with the reins thrown on the horses' necks, moving in absorbed silence through a street which almost said "Hush!" to its dogs; or met, in a forest, a procession of perfectly new guns, apparently taking themselves from the foundry to the front?

In spite of their love of drama, there is not much "window-dressing" in the French character. The Boche, who is the priest of the Higher Counter-jumper, would have had the neutral Press out in cars to advertise these vast spectacles of men and material. But the same instinct as makes their rich farmers keep to their smocks makes the French keep quiet.

"This is our affair," they argue. "Everybody concerned is taking part in it. Like the review you saw the other day, there are no spectators."

"But it might be of advantage if the world knew."

Mine was a foolish remark. There is only one world to-day, the world of the Allies. Each of them knows what the others are doing and—the rest doesn't matter. This is a curious but delightful fact to realise at first hand. And think what it will be later, when we shall all circulate among each other

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and open our hearts and talk it over in a brotherhood more intimate than the ties of blood!

I lay that night at a little French town, and was kept awake by a man, somewhere in the hot, still darkness, howling aloud from the pain of his wounds. I was glad that he was alone, for when one man gives way the others sometimes follow. Yet the single note of misery was worse than the baying and gulping of a whole ward. I wished that a delegation of strikers could have heard it.

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That a civilian should be in the war zone at all is a fair guarantee of his good faith. It is when he is outside the zone unchaperoned that questions begin, and the permits are looked into. If these are irregular—but one doesn't care to contemplate it. If regular, there are still a few counter-checks. As the sergeant at the railway station said when he helped us out of an impasse: "You will realise that it is the most undesirable persons whose papers are of the most regular. It is their business you see. The Commissary of Police is at the Hôtel de Ville, if you will come along for the little formality. Myself, I used to keep a shop in Paris. My God, these provincial towns are desolating!"

PARIS—AND NO FOREIGNERS

He would have loved his Paris as we found it. Life was renewing itself in the streets, whose draw-

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ing and proportion one could never notice before. People's eyes, and the women's especially, seemed to be set to a longer range, a more comprehensive gaze. One would have said they came from the sea or the mountains, where things are few and simple, rather than from houses. Best of all, there were no foreigners—the beloved city for the first time was French throughout from end to end. It felt like coming back to an old friend's house for a quiet talk after he had got rid of a houseful of visitors. The functionaries and police had dropped their masks of official politeness, and were just friendly. At the hotels, so like school two days before the term begins, the impersonal valet, the chambermaid of the set two-franc smile, and the unbending head-waiter had given place to one's own brothers and sisters, full of one's own anxieties. "My son is an aviator, monsieur. I could have claimed Italian nationality for him at the beginning, but he would not have it." . . . "Both my brothers, monsieur, are at the war. One is dead already. And my fiancé, I have not heard from him since March. He is cook in a battalion." . . . "Here is the wine-list, monsieur. Yes, both my sons and a nephew, and—I have no news of them, not a word of news. My God, we all suffer these days." And so, too, among the shops—the mere statement of the loss or the grief at the heart, but never a word of doubt, never a whimper of despair.

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“Now, why,” asked a shopkeeper, “does not our Government, or your Government, or both our Governments, send some of the British Army to Paris? I assure you we should make them welcome.”

“Perhaps,” I began, “you might make them too welcome.”

He laughed. “We should make them as welcome as our own army. They would enjoy themselves.” I had a vision of British officers, each with ninety days’ pay to his credit, and a damsel or two at home, shopping consumedly.

“And also,” said the shopkeeper, “the moral effect on Paris to see more of your troops would be very good.”

But I saw a quite English Provost-Marshal losing himself in chase of defaulters of the New Army who knew their Paris! Still, there is something to be said for the idea—to the extent of a virtuous brigade or so. At present, the English officer in Paris is a scarce bird, and he explains at once why he is and what he is doing there. He must have good reasons. I suggested teeth to an acquaintance. “No good,” he grumbled. “They’ve thought of that, too. Behind our lines is simply crawling with dentists now!”

A PEOPLE TRANSFIGURED

If one asked after the people that gave dinners and dances last year, where every one talked so

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brilliantly of such vital things, one got in return the addresses of hospitals. Those pleasant hostesses and maidens seemed to be in charge of departments or on duty in wards, or kitchens, or sculleries. Some of the hospitals were in Paris. (Their staffs might have one hour a day in which to see visitors.) Others were up the line, and liable to be shelled or bombed.

I recalled one Frenchwoman in particular, because she had once explained to me the necessities of civilised life. These included a masseuse, a manicurist, and a maid to look after the lapdogs. She is employed now, and has been for months past, on the disinfection and repair of soldiers' clothes. There was no need to ask after the men one had known. Still, there was no sense of desolation. They had gone on; the others were getting ready.

All France works outward to the Front—precisely as an endless chain of fire-buckets works toward the conflagration. Leave the fire behind you and go back till you reach the source of supplies. You will find no break, no pause, no apparent haste, but never any slackening. Everybody has his or her bucket, little or big, and nobody disputes how they should be used. It is a people possessed of the precedent and tradition of war for existence, accustomed to hard living and hard labour, sanely economical by temperament, logical by training, and

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illumined and transfigured by their resolve and endurance.

You know, when supreme trial overtakes an acquaintance whom till then we conceived we knew, how the man's nature sometimes changes past knowledge or belief. He who was altogether such an one as ourselves goes forward simply, even lightly, to heights we thought unattainable. Though he is the very same comrade that lived our small life with us, yet in all things he has become great. So it is with France to-day. She has discovered the measure of her soul.

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One sees this not alone in the—it is more than contempt of death—in the godlike preoccupation of her people under arms which makes them put death out of the account, but in the equal passion and fervour with which her people throughout give themselves to the smallest as well as the greatest tasks that may in any way serve their sword. I might tell you something that I saw of the cleaning out of certain latrines; of the education and antecedents of the cleaners; what they said in the matter and how perfectly the work was done. There was a little Rabelais in it, naturally, but the rest was pure devotion, rejoicing to be of use.

Similarly with stables, barricades, and barbed-

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wire work, the clearing and piling away of wrecked house-rubbish, the serving of meals till the service rocks on its poor tired feet, but keeps its temper; and all the unlovely, monotonous details that go with war.

The women, as I have tried to show, work stride for stride with the men, with hearts as resolute and a spirit that has little mercy for short-comings. A woman takes her place wherever she can relieve a man—in the shop, at the posts, on the tramways, the hotels, and a thousand other businesses. She is inured to field-work, and half the harvest of France this year lies in her lap. One feels at every turn how her men trust her. She knows, for she shares everything with her world, what has befallen her sisters who are now in German hands, and her soul is the undying flame behind the men's steel. Neither men nor women have any illusion as to miracles presently to be performed which shall "sweep out" or "drive back" the Boche. Since the Army is the Nation, they know much, though they are officially told little. They all recognise that the old-fashioned "victory" of the past is almost as obsolete as a rifle in a front-line trench. They all accept the new war, which means grinding down and wearing out the enemy by every means and plan and device that can be compassed. It is slow and expensive, but as deadly sure as the logic that leads them to

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make it their one work, their sole thought, their single preoccupation.

A NATION'S CONFIDENCE

The same logic saves them a vast amount of energy. They knew Germany in '70, when the world would not believe in their knowledge; they knew the German mind before the war; they know what she has done (they have photographs) during this war. They do not fall into spasms of horror and indignation over atrocities "that cannot be mentioned," as the English papers say. They mention them in full and book them to the account. They do not discuss, nor consider, nor waste an emotion over anything that Germany says or boasts or argues or implies or intrigues after. They have the heart's ease that comes from all being at work for their country; the knowledge that the burden of work is equally distributed among all; the certainty that the women are working side by side with the men; the assurance that when one man's task is at the moment ended, another takes his place.

Out of these things is born their power of recuperation in their leisure; their reasoned calm while at work; and their superb confidence in their arms. Even if France of to-day stood alone against the world's enemy, it would be almost inconceivable to imagine her defeat now; wholly so to imagine

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any surrender. The war will go on till the enemy is finished. The French do not know when that hour will come; they seldom speak of it; they do not amuse themselves with dreams of triumphs or terms. Their business is war, and they do their business.

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I

THE MEN AT WORK

The ore, the furnace and the hammer are all that is needed for a sword.—*Native proverb.*

THIS was a cantonment one had never seen before, and the grey-haired military policeman could give no help.

“My experience,” he spoke detachedly, “is that you’ll find everything everywhere. Is it any particular corps you’re looking for?”

“Not in the least,” I said.

“Then you’re all right. You can’t miss getting something.” He pointed generally to the North Camp. “It’s like floods in a town, isn’t it?”

He had hit the just word. All known marks in the place were submerged by troops. Parade-grounds to their utmost limits were crowded with them; rises and sky-lines were furred with them, and the length of the roads heaved and rippled like bicycle-chains with blocks of men on the move.

The voice of a sergeant in the torment reserved for sergeants at roll-call boomed across a bunker. He was calling over recruits to a specialist corps.

“But I’ve called you once!” he snapped at a man in leggings.

“But I’m Clarke Two,” was the virtuous reply.

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“Oh, you are, are you?” He pencilled the correction with a scornful mouth, out of one corner of which he added, “‘Sloppy’ Clarke! You’re all Clarkes or Watsons to-day. You don’t know your own names. You don’t know what corps you’re in. (This was bitterly unjust, for they were squinting up at a biplane.) You don’t know anything.”

“Mm!” said the military policeman. “The more a man has in his head, the harder it is for him to manage his carcass—at first. I’m glad I never was a sergeant. Listen to the instructors! Like rooks, ain’t it?”

There was a mile of sergeants and instructors, varied by company officers, all at work on the ready material under their hands. They grunted, barked, yapped, expostulated, and, in rare cases, purred, as the lines broke and formed and wheeled over the vast maidan. When companies numbered off one could hear the tone and accent of every walk in life, and maybe half the counties of England, from the deep-throated “Woon” of the north to the sharp, half-whistled Devonshire “Tu.” And as the instructors laboured, so did the men, with a passion to learn as passionately as they were taught.

Presently, in the drift of the foot-traffic down the road, there came another grey-haired man, one foot in a bright slipper, which showed he was an old soldier cherishing a sore toe. He drew alongside and considered these zealous myriads.

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“Good?” said I, deferentially.

“Yes,” he said. “Very good”—then, half to himself: “Quite different, though.” A pivot-man near us had shifted a little, instead of marking time, on the wheel. His face clouded, his lips moved. Obviously he was cursing his own clumsiness.

“That’s what I meant,” said the veteran. “Innocent! Innocent! Mark you, they ain’t doin’ it to be done with it and get off. They’re doin’ it because—because they want to do it.”

“Wake up! Wake *up* there, Isherwood!” This was a young subaltern’s reminder flung at a back which straightened itself. That one human name coming up out of all that maze of impersonal manoeuvring stuck in the memory like wreckage on the ocean.

“An’ it wasn’t ’ardly even necessary to caution Mister Isherwood,” my companion commented. “Prob’ly he’s bitterly ashamed of ’imself.”

I asked a leading question because the old soldier told me that when his toe was sound, he, too, was a military policeman.

“Crime? Crime?” said he. “They don’t know what crime is—that lot don’t—none of ’em!” He mourned over them like a benevolent old Satan looking into a busy Eden, and his last word was “Innocent!”

The car worked her way through miles of men—men route-marching, going to dig or build bridges,

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or wrestle with stores and transport—four or five miles of men, and every man with eager eyes. There was no music—not even drums and fifes. I heard nothing but a distant skirl of the pipes. Trust a Scot to get his national weapon as long as there is a chief in the North! Admitting that war is a serious business, specially to the man who is being fought for, and that it may be right to carry a long face and contribute to relief funds which should be laid on the National Debt, it surely could do no harm to cheer the men with a few bands. Half the money that has been spent in treating, for example. . . .

THE NORTH IN BLUE

There was a moor among woods with a pond in a hollow, the centre of a world of tents whose population was North-Country. One heard it from far off.

“Yo’ mun trail t’ pick an’ t’ rifle at t’ same time. Try again,” said the instructor.

An isolated company tried again with set seriousness, and yet again. They were used to the pick—won their living by it, in fact—and so, favoured it more than the rifle; but miners don’t carry picks at the trail by instinct, though they can twiddle their rifles as one twiddles walking-sticks.

They were clad in a blue garb that disguised all contours; yet their shoulders, backs, and loins could

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not altogether be disguised, and these were excellent. Another company, at physical drill in shirt and trousers, showed what superb material had offered itself to be worked upon, and how much poise and directed strength had been added to that material in the past few months. When the New Army gets all its new uniform, it will gaze at itself like a new Narcissus. But the present kit is indescribable. That is why, English fashion, it has been made honourable by its wearers; and our world in the years to come will look back with reverence as well as affection on those blue slops and that epileptic cap. One far-seeing commandant who had special facilities has possessed himself of brass buttons, thousands of 'em, which he has added to his men's outfit for the moral effect of (*a*) having something to clean, and (*b*) of keeping it so. It has paid. The smartest regiment in the Service could not do itself justice in such garments, but I managed to get a view of a battalion, coming in from a walk, at a distance which more or less subdued the—er—uniform, and they moved with the elastic swing and little quick ripple that means so much. A miner is not supposed to be as good a marcher as a townsman, but when he gets set to time and pace and learns due economy of effort, his developed back and shoulder muscles take him along very handsomely. Another battalion fell in for parade while I watched, again at a distance. They came to hand quietly and

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collectedly enough, and with only that amount of pressing which is caused by fear of being late. A platoon—or whatever they call it—was giving the whole of its attention to its signalling instructors, with the air of men resolved on getting the last flicker of the last cinema-film for their money. Crime in the military sense they do not know any more than their fellow-innocents up the road. It is hopeless to pretend to be other than what one is, because one's soul in this life is as exposed as one's body. It is futile to tell civilian lies—there are no civilians to listen—and they have not yet learned to tell Service ones without being detected. It is useless to sulk at any external condition of affairs, because the rest of the world with which a man is concerned is facing those identical conditions. There is neither poverty nor riches, nor any possibility of pride, except in so far as one may do one's task a little better than one's mate.

DUTIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

In the point of food they are extremely well looked after, quality and quantity, wet canteen and dry. Drafts come in all round the clock, and they have to be fed; late guards and sentries want something hot at odd times, and the big marquee-canteen is the world's gathering-place, where food, life's first interest to man in hard work, is thoroughly discussed. They can get outside of a vast o' vittles.

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Thus, a contractor who delivers ten thousand rations a day stands, by deputy at least, in the presence of just that number of rather fit, long, deep men. They are what is called "independent"—a civilian weakness which they will learn to blush over in a few months, and to discourage among later recruits; but they are also very quick to pick up dodges and tricks that make a man more comfortable in camp life, and their domestic routine runs on wheels. It must have been hard at first for civilians to see the necessity for that continuous, apparently pernicky, house-maidding and "following-up" which is vital to the comfort of large bodies of men in confined quarters. In civil life men leave these things to their womenfolk, but where women are not, officers, inspecting tents, feet, and such-like, develop a she-side to their head, and evidently make their non-commissioned officers and men develop it too. A good soldier is always a bit of an old maid. But, as I heard a private say to a sergeant in the matter of some kit chucked into a corner: "Yo' canna keep owt redd up ony proper gate on a sand-hill." To whom his superior officer: "Ah know yo' canna', but yo' mun try, Billy."

And Heaven knows they are trying hard enough—men, n.c.o.'s, and officers—with all the masked and undervoiced effort of our peoples when we are really at work. They stand at the very beginning of things; creating out of chaos, meeting emergencies

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as they arise; handicapped in every direction, and overcoming every handicap by simple goodwill, humour, self-sacrifice, common-sense, and such trumpery virtues. I watched their faces in the camp, and at lunch looked down a line of some twenty men in the mess-tent, wondering how many would survive to see the full splendour and significance of the work here so nobly begun. But they were not interested in the future beyond their next immediate job. They ate quickly and went out to it, and by the time I drove away again I was overtaking their battalions on the road. Not unrelated units lugged together for foot-slogging, but real battalions, of a spirit in themselves which defied even the blue slops—wave after wave of proper men, with undistracted eyes, who never talked a word about any war. But not a note of music—and they North-countrymen!

II

IRON INTO STEEL

Thanda lohā garam lohe ko marta hai (Cold iron will cut hot iron.)

At the next halt I fell into Scotland—blocks and blocks of it—a world of precise-spoken, thin-lipped men, with keen eyes. They gave me directions which led by friendly stages to the heart of another work of creation and a huge drill-shed where the miniature rifles were busy. Few things are duller than Morris-tube practice in the shed, unless it be judging triangles of error against blank-walls. I thought of the military policeman with the sore toe; for these “innocents” were visibly enjoying both games. They sighted over the sand-bags with the gravity of surveyors, while the instructors hurled knowledge at them like sling-stones.

“Man, d’ye see your error? Step here, man, and I’ll show ye.” Teacher and taught glared at each other like theologians in full debate; for this is the Scot’s way of giving and getting knowledge.

At the miniature targets squad after squad rose from beside their deadly-earnest instructors, gathered up their target-cards, and whisperingly compared them, five heads together under a window.

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“Aye, that was where I loosed too soon.” “I misdoubt I took too much o’ the foresight.” Not a word of hope and comfort in their achievements. Nothing but calvinistic self-criticism.

These men ran a little smaller than the North-country folk down the road, but in depth of chest, girth of fore-arm, biceps, and neck-measurement they were beautifully level and well up; and the squads at bayonet-practice had their balance, drive, and recover already. As the light failed one noticed the whites of their eyes turning towards their instructors. It reminded one that there is always a touch of the cateran in the most docile Scot, even as the wolf persists in every dog.

“And what about crime?” I demanded.

There was none. They had not joined to play the fool. Occasionally a few unstable souls who have mistaken their vocation try to return to civil life by way of dishonourable discharge, and think it “funny” to pile up offences. The New Army has no use for those people either, and attends to them on what may be called “democratic lines,” which is all the same as the old barrack-room court-martial. Nor does it suffer fools gladly. There is no time to instruct them. They go to other spheres.

There was, or rather is, a man who intends to join a certain battalion. He joined it once, scraped past the local doctor, and was drafted into the corps, only to be hove out for varicose veins. He

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went back to his accommodating doctor, repeated the process, and was again rejected. They are waiting for him now in his third incarnation; both sides are equally determined. And there was another Scot who joined, served awhile, and left, as he might have left a pit or a factory. Somehow it occurred to him that explanations were required, so he wrote to his commanding officer from his home address and asked him what he recommended him to do. The C.O., to his infinite credit, wrote back: "Suppose you rejoin," which the man did, and no more said. His punishment, of course, will come to him when he realises what he has done. If he does not then perish in his self-contempt (he has a good conceit of himself) he will make one first-rate non-commissioned officer.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

I had the luck to meet a Sergeant-Major, who was the Sergeant-Major of one's dreams. He had just had sure information that the kilts for his battalion were coming in a few days, so, after three months' hard work, life smiled upon him. From kilts one naturally went on to the pipes. The battalion had its pipes—a very good set. How did it get them? Well, there was, of course, the Duke. They began with him. And there was a Scots lord concerned with the regiment. And there was a leddy of a certain clan connected with the battalion. Hence the

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pipes. Could anything be simpler or more logical? And when the kilts came the men would be different creatures. Were they good men, I asked. "Yes. Verra good. Wha's to mislead 'em?" said he.

"Old soldiers," I suggested, meanly enough. "Re-joined privates of long ago."

"Ay, there might have been a few such in the beginning, but they'd be more useful in the Special Reserve Battalions. Our boys are good boys, but, ye'll understand, they've to be handled—just handled a little." Then a subaltern came in, loaded with regimental forms, and visibly leaning on the Sergeant-Major, who explained, clarified, and referred them on the proper quarters.

"Does the work come back to you?" I asked, for he had been long in pleasant civil employ.

"Ay. It does that. It just does that." And he addressed the fluttering papers, lists, and notes, with the certainty of an old golfer on a well-known green.

Squads were at bayonet practice in the square. (They like bayonet practice, especially after looking at pictures in the illustrated dailies.) A new draft was being introduced to its rifles. The rest were getting ready for evening parade. They were all in khaki, so one could see how they had come on in the last ten weeks. It was a result the meekest might have been proud of, but the New Army does

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not cultivate useless emotions. Their officers and their instructors worked over them patiently and coldly and repeatedly, with their souls in the job: and with their soul, mind, and body in the same job the men took—soaked up—the instruction. And that seems to be the note of the New Army.

WHAT THE ARMY DOES AND THINKS

They have joined for good reason. For that reason they sleep uncomplainingly double thick on barrack floors, or lie like herrings in the tents and sing hymns and other things when they are flooded out. They walk and dig half the day or all the night as required; they wear—though they will not eat—anything that is issued to them; they make themselves an organised and kindly life out of a few acres of dirt and a little canvas; they keep their edge and anneal their discipline under conditions that would depress a fox-terrier and disorganise a champion football team. They ask nothing in return save work and equipment. And being what they are, they thoroughly and unfeignedly enjoy what they are doing; and they purpose to do much more.

But they also think. They think it vile that so many unmarried young men who are not likely to be affected by Government allowances should be so shy about sharing their life. They discuss these young

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men and their womenfolk by name, and imagine rude punishments for them, suited to their known characters. They discuss, too, their elders who in time past warned them of the sin of soldiering. These men, who live honourably and simply under the triple vow of Obedience, Temperance, and Poverty, recall, not without envy, the sort of life which well-kept moralists lead in the unpicketed, unsentried towns; and it galls them that such folk should continue in comfort and volubility at the expense of good men's lives, or should profit greasily at the end of it all. They stare hard, even in their blue slops, at white-collared, bowler-hatted young men, who, by the way, are just learning to drop their eyes under that gaze. In the third-class railway carriages they hint that they would like explanations from the casual "nut," and they explain to him wherein his explanations are unconvincing. And when they are home on leave, the slack-jawed son of the local shop-keeper, and the rising nephew of the big banker, and the dumb but cunning carter's lad receive instruction or encouragement suited to their needs and the nation's. The older men and the officers will tell you that if the allowances are made more liberal we shall get all the men we want. But the younger men of the New Army do not worry about allowances—or, for that matter, make 'em!

There is a gulf already opening between those who have joined and those who have not; but we

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shall not know the width and the depth of that gulf till the war is over. The wise youth is he who jumps it now and lands in safety among the trained and armed men.

III

GUNS AND SUPPLY

Under all and after the Wheel carries everything.—
Proverb.

ONE had known the place for years as a picturesque old house, standing in a peaceful park; had watched the growth of certain young oaks along a new-laid avenue, and applauded the owner's enterprise in turning a stretch of pasture to plough. There are scores of such estates in England which the motorist, through passing so often, comes to look upon almost as his own. In a single day the brackened turf between the oaks and the iron road-fence blossomed into tents, and the drives were all cut up with hoofs and wheels. A little later, one's car, sweeping home of warm September nights, was stopped by sentries, who asked her name and business; for the owner of that retired house and discreetly wooded park had gone elsewhere in haste, and his estate was taken over by the military.

Later still, one met men and horses arguing with each other for miles about that country-side; or the car would be flung on her brakes by artillery issuing from cross-lanes—clean batteries jingling off to their work on the Downs, and hungry ones coming back

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to meals. Every day brought the men and the horses and the weights behind them to a better understanding, till in a little while the car could pass a quarter of a mile of them without having to hoot more than once.

“Why are you so virtuous?” she asked of a section encountered at a blind and brambly corner. “Why do you obtrude your personality less than an average tax-cart?”

“Because,” said a driver, his arm flung up to keep the untrimmed hedge from sweeping his cap off, “because those are our blessed orders. We don’t do it for love.”

No one accuses the Gunner of maudlin affection for anything except his beasts and his weapons. He hasn’t the time. He serves at least three jealous gods—his horse and all its saddlery and harness; his gun, whose least detail of efficiency is more important than men’s lives; and, when these have been attended to, the never-ending mystery of his art commands him.

It was a wettish, windy day when I visited the so-long-known house and park. Cock pheasants ducked in and out of trim rhododendron clumps, neat gates opened into sacredly preserved vegetable gardens, the many-coloured leaves of specimen trees pasted themselves stickily against sodden tent walls, and there was a mixture of circus smells from the horse-lines and the faint, civilised breath of chrys-

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anthemums in the potting sheds. The main drive was being relaid with a foot of flint; the other approaches were churned and pitted under the gun wheels and heavy supply wagons. Great breadths of what had been well-kept turf between unbrowsed trees were blanks of slippery brown wetness, dotted with picketed horses and field-kitchens. It was a crazy mixture of stark necessity and manicured luxury, all cheek by jowl, in the indiscriminating rain.

SERVICE CONDITIONS

The cook-houses, store-rooms, forges, and workshops were collections of tilts, poles, rick-cloths, and odd lumber, beavered together as on service. The officers' mess was a thin, soaked marquee.

Less than a hundred yards away were dozens of vacant, well-furnished rooms in the big brick house, of which the Staff furtively occupied one corner. There were accommodations for very many men in its stables and out-houses alone; or the whole building might have been gutted and rearranged for barracks twice over in the last three months.

Scattered among the tents were rows of half-built tin sheds, the ready-prepared lumber and the corrugated iron lying beside them, waiting to be pieced together like children's toys. But there were no workmen. I was told that they had come that morning, but had knocked off because it was wet.

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“I see. And where are the batteries?” I demanded.

“Out at work, of course. They’ve been out since seven.”

“How shocking! In this dreadful weather, too!”

“They took some bread and cheese with them. They’ll be back about dinner-time if you care to wait. Here’s one of our field-kitchens.”

Batteries look after their own stomachs, and are not catered for by contractors. The cook-house was a wagon-tilt. The wood, being damp, smoked a good deal. One thought of the wide, adequate kitchen ranges and the concrete passages of the service quarters in the big house just behind. One even dared to think Teutonically of the perfectly good panelling and the thick hard-wood floors that could——

“Service conditions, you see,” said my guide, as the cook inspected the baked meats and the men inside the wagon-tilt grated the carrots and prepared the onions. It was old work to them after all these months—done swiftly, with the clean economy of effort that camp life teaches.

“What are these lads when they’re at home?” I inquired.

“Londoners chiefly—all sorts and conditions.”

The cook in shirt sleeves made another investigation, and sniffed judicially. He might have been cooking since the Peninsular. He looked at his watch and across towards the park gates. He was

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responsible for one hundred and sixty rations, and a battery has the habit of saying quite all that it thinks of its food.

"How often do the batteries go out?" I continued.

"'Bout five days a week. You see, we're being worked up a little."

"And have they got plenty of ground to work over?"

"Oh—yes-s."

"What's the difficulty this time? Birds?"

"No; but we got orders the other day not to go over a golf-course. That rather knocks the bottom out of tactical schemes."

Perfect shamelessness, like perfect virtue, is impregnable; and, after all, the lightnings of this war, which have brought out so much resolve and self-sacrifice, must show up equally certain souls and institutions that are irredeemable.

The weather took off a little before noon. The carpenters could have put in a good half-day's work on the sheds, and even if they had been rained upon they had roofs with fires awaiting their return. The batteries had none of these things.

THE GUNNER AT HOME

They came in at last far down the park, heralded by that unmistakable half-grumble, half-grunt of

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guns on the move. The picketed horses heard it first, and one of them neighed long and loud, which proved that he had abandoned civilian habits. Horses in stables and mews seldom do more than snicker, even when they are halves of separated pairs. But these gentlemen had a corporate life of their own now, and knew what "pulling together" means.

When a battery comes into camp it "parks" all six guns at the appointed place, side by side in one mathematically straight line, and the accuracy of the alignment is, like ceremonial-drill with the Foot, a fair test of its attainments. The ground was no treat for parking. Specimen trees and draining ditches had to be avoided and circumvented. The gunners, their reins, the guns, the ground, were equally wet, and the slob dropped away like gruel from the brake-shoes. And they were Londoners—clerks, mechanics, shop assistants, and delivery men—anything and everything that you please. But they were all home and at home in their saddles and seats. They said nothing; their officers said little enough to them. They came in across what had once been turf; wheeled with tight traces; halted, unhooked; the wise teams stumped off to their pickets, and, behold, the six guns were left precisely where they should have been left to the fraction of an inch. You could see the wind blowing the last few drops of wet from each leather muzzle-cover at exactly the same angle. It was all old known evolu-

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tions, taken unconsciously in the course of their day's work by men well abreast of it.

"Our men have one advantage," said a voice. "As Territorials they were introduced to unmade horses once a year at training. So they've never been accustomed to made horses."

"And what do the horses say about it all?" I asked, remembering what I had seen on the road in the early days.

"They said a good deal at first, but our chaps could make allowances for 'em. They know now."

Allah never intended the Gunner to talk. His own arm does that for him. The batteries off-saddled in silence, though one noticed on all sides little quiet caresses between man and beast—affectionate nuzzlings and nose-slappings. Surely the Gunner's relation to his horse is more intimate even than the cavalryman's; for a lost horse only turns cavalry into infantry, but trouble in a gun team may mean death all round. And this is the Gunner's war. The young wet officers said so joyously as they passed to and fro picking up scandal about breast-straps and breechings, examining the collars of ammunition-wagon teams, and listening to remarks on shoes. Local blacksmiths, assisted by the battery itself, do the shoeing. There are master smiths and important farriers, who have cheerfully thrown up good wages to help the game, and their horses reward them by keeping fit. A fair proportion of the horses

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are aged—there was never a Gunner yet satisfied with his team or its rations till he had left the battery—but they do their work steadfastly and wholeheartedly as the men. I am persuaded the horses like being in society and working out their daily problems of draught and direction. The English, and Londoners particularly, are the kindest and most reasonable of folk with animals. If it were not our business strictly to underrate ourselves for the next few years, one would say that the Territorial batteries had already done wonders. But perhaps it is better to let it all go with the grudging admission wrung out of a wringing wet bombardier, “Well, it isn’t so dam’ bad—considerin’.”

I left them taking their dinner in mess tins to their tents, with a strenuous afternoon’s cleaning-up ahead of them. The big park held some thousands of men. I had seen no more than a few hundreds, and had missed the howitzer-batteries after all.

A cock pheasant chaperoned me down the drive, complaining loudly that where he was used to walk with his ladies under the beech trees, some unsporting people had built a miniature landscape with tiny villages, churches, and factories, and came there daily to point cannon at it.

“Keep away from that place,” said I, “or you’ll find yourself in a field-kitchen.”

“Not me!” he crowed. “I’m as sacred as golf-courses.”

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MECHANISM AND MECHANICS

There was a little town a couple of miles down the road where one used to lunch in the old days, and had the hotel to oneself. Now there are six ever-changing officers in billet there, and the astonished houses quiver all day to traction engines and high-piled lorries. A unit of the Army Service Corps and some mechanical transport lived near the station, and fed the troops for twenty miles around.

“Are your people easy to find?” I asked of a wandering private, with the hands of a sweep, the head of a Christian among lions, and suicide in his eye.

“Well, the A.S.C. are in the Territorial Drill Hall for one thing; and for another you’re likely to hear *us!* There’s some motors come in from Bulford.” He snorted and passed on, smelling of petrol.

The drill-shed was peace and comfort. The A.S.C. were getting ready there for pay-day and for a concert that evening. Outside in the wind and the occasional rain-spurts, life was different. The Bulford motors and some other crocks sat on a side-road between what had been the local garage and a newly-erected workshop of creaking scaffold-poles and bellying slatting rick-cloths, where a forge glowed and general repairs were being effected. Beneath the motors men lay on their backs and called

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their friends to pass them spanners, or, for pity's sake, to shove another sack under their mud-wreathed heads.

A corporal, who had been nine years a fitter and seven in a city garage, briefly and briskly outlined the more virulent diseases that develop in Government rolling-stock. (I heard quite a lot about Bulford.) Hollow voices from beneath eviscerated gear-boxes confirmed him. We withdrew to the shelter of the rick-cloth workshop—that corporal; the sergeant who had been a carpenter, with a business of his own, and, incidentally, had served through the Boer War; another sergeant who was a member of the Master Builders' Association; and a private who had also been fitter, chauffeur, and a few other things. The third sergeant, who kept a poultry-farm in Surrey, had some duty elsewhere.

A man at a carpenter's bench was finishing a spoke for a newly-painted cart. He squinted along it.

"That's funny," said the master builder. "Of course in his own business he'd chuck his job sooner than do wood-work. But it's *all* funny."

"What I grudge," a sergeant struck in, "is havin' to put mechanics to loading and unloading beef. That's where modified conscription for the beauties that won't roll up 'ld be useful to *us*. We want hewers of wood, we do. And I'd hew 'em!"

"I want that file." This was a private in a hurry, come from beneath an unspeakable Bulford. Some

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one asked him musically if he "would tell his wife in the morning who he was with to-night."

"You'll find it in the tool-chest," said the sergeant. It was his own sacred tool-chest which he had contributed to the common stock.

"And what sort of men have you got in this unit?" I asked.

"Every sort you can think of. There isn't a thing you couldn't have made here if you wanted to. But"—the corporal, who had been a fitter, spoke with fervour—"you can't expect us to make big-ends, can you? That five-ton Bulford lorry out there in the wet——"

"And she isn't the worst," said the master builder. "But it's all part of the game. *And* so funny when you come to think of it. Me painting carts, and certificated plumbers loading frozen beef!"

"What about the discipline?" I asked.

The corporal turned a fitter's eye on me. "The mechanism is the discipline," said he, with most profound truth. "Jockeyin' a sick car on the road is discipline, too. *What* about the discipline? He turned to the sergeant with the carpenter's chest. There was one sergeant of Regulars, with twenty years' service behind him and a knowledge of human nature. He struck in.

"*You* ought to know. You've just been made corporal," said that sergeant of Regulars.

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“Well, there’s so much which everybody knows has got to be done that—that—why, we all turn in and do it,” quoth the corporal. “I don’t have any trouble with my lot.”

“Yes; that’s how the case stands,” said the sergeant of Regulars. “Come and see our stores.”

They were beautifully arranged in a shed which felt like a monastery after the windy, clashing world without; and the young private who acted as checker—he came from some railway office—had the thin, keen face of the cleric.

“We’re in billets in the town,” said the sergeant who had been a carpenter. “But I’m a married man. I shouldn’t care to have men billeted on *us* at home, an’ I don’t want to inconvenience other people. So I’ve knocked up a bunk for myself on the premises. It’s handier to the stores, too.”

“THE HUMOUR OF IT”

We entered what had been the local garage. The mechanical transport were in full possession, tinkering the gizzards of more cars. We discussed chewed-up gears (samples to hand), and the civil population’s old-time views of the military. The corporal told a tale of a clergyman in a Midland town who, only a year ago, on the occasion of some manœuvres, preached a sermon warning his flock to guard their womenfolk against the soldiers.

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"And when you think—when you *know*," said the corporal, "what life in those little towns really is!" He whistled.

"See that old landau," said he, opening the door of an ancient wreck jammed against a wall. "That's two of our chaps' dressing-room. They don't care to be billeted, so they sleep 'tween the landau and the wall. It's handier for their work, too. Work comes in at all hours. I wish I was cavalry. There's some use in cursing a horse."

Truly, it's an awful thing to belong to a service where speech brings no alleviation.

"*You!*" A private with callipers turned from the bench by the window. "You'd die outside of a garage. But what you said about civilians and soldiers is all out of date now."

The sergeant of Regulars permitted himself a small, hidden smile. The private with the callipers had been some twelve weeks a soldier.

"I don't say it isn't," said the corporal. "I'm saying what it used to be."

"We-ell," the private screwed up the callipers, "didn't you feel a little bit that way yourself—when you were a civilian?"

"I—I don't think I did." The corporal was taken aback. "I don't think I ever thought about it."

"Ah! *There* you are!" said the private, very drily.

Some one laughed in the shadow of the landau

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dressing-room. "Anyhow, we're all in it now, Private Percy," said a voice.

There must be a good many thousand conversations of this kind being held all over England nowadays. Our breed does not warble much about patriotism or Fatherland, but it has a wonderful sense of justice, even when its own shortcomings are concerned.

We went over to the drill-shed to see the men paid.

The first man I ran across there was a sergeant who had served in the Mounted Infantry in the South African picnic that we used to call a war. He had been a private chauffeur for some years—long enough to catch the professional look, but was joyously reverting to service type again.

The men lined up, were called out, saluted emphatically at the pay-table, and fell back with their emoluments. They smiled at each other.

"An' it's *all* so funny," murmured the master builder in my ear. "About a quarter—no, less than a quarter—of what one 'ud be making on one's own!"

"Fifty bob a week, cottage, and all found, I was. An' only two cars to look after," said a voice behind. "An' if I'd been asked—simply *asked*—to lie down in the mud all the afternoon——!" The speaker looked at his wages with awe. Some one wanted to know, *sotto voce*, if "that was union

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rates," and the grin spread among the uniformed experts. The joke, you will observe, lay in situations thrown up, businesses abandoned, and pleasant prospects cut short at the nod of duty.

"Thank Heaven!" said one of them at last, "it's too dark to work on those blessed Bulfords any more to-day. We'll get ready for the concert."

But it was not too dark, half an hour later, for my car to meet a big lorry storming back in the wind and the wet from the northern camps. She gave me London allowance—half one inch between hub and hub—swung her corner like a Brooklands professional, changed gear for the uphill with a sweet click, and charged away. For aught I knew, she was driven by an ex-"fifty-bob-a-week-a-cottage-and-all-found"-er, who next month might be dodging shells with her and thinking it "*all* so funny."

Horse, Foot, even the Guns may sometimes get a little rest, but so long as men eat thrice a day there is no rest for the Army Service Corps. They carry the campaign on their all-sustaining backs.

IV

CANADIANS IN CAMP

Before you hit the buffalo, find out where the rest of the herd is.—*Proverb.*

THIS particular fold of downs behind Salisbury might have been a hump of prairie near Winnipeg. The team that came over the rise, widely spaced between pole-bar and whiffle-trees, were certainly children of the prairie. They shied at the car. Their driver asked them dispassionately what they thought they were doing, anyway. They put their wise heads together, and did nothing at all. Yes. Oh, yes! said the driver. They were Western horses. They weighed better than twelve hundred apiece. He himself was from Edmonton way. The Camp? Why, the camp was right ahead along up this road. No chance to miss it, and, "Sa-ay! Look out for our lorries!"

A fleet of them hove in sight going at the rate of many knots, and keeping their left with a conscientiousness only learned when you come out of a country where nearly all the Provinces (except British Columbia) keep to the right. Every line of them, from steering-wheel to brake-shoes, proclaimed their nationality. Three perfectly efficient young men

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who were sprinkling a golf-green with sifted earth ceased their duties to stare at them. Two riding-boys (also efficient) on racehorses, their knees under their chins and their saddles between their horses' ears, cantered past on the turf. The rattle of the motors upset their catsmeat, so one could compare their style of riding with that of an officer loping along to overtake a string of buck-wagons that were trotting towards the horizon. The riding-boys have to endure sore hardship nowadays. One gentleman has already complained that his "private gallops" are being cut up by gun-wheels and "irremediably ruined."

Then more lorries, contractors' wagons, and increasing vileness of the battered road-bed till one slid through a rude gate into a new world, of canvas as far as the eye could reach, and beyond that out-lying clouds of tents. It is not a contingent that Canada has sent, but an army—horse, foot, guns, engineers, and all details, fully equipped. Taking that army's strength at thirty-three thousand, and the Dominion's population at eight million, the camp is Canada on the scale of one to two hundred and forty—an entire nation unrolled across a few square miles of turf and tents and huts.

Here I could study at close hand "a Colony" yearning to shake off "the British yoke." For, beyond question, they yearned—the rank and file unreservedly, the officers with more restraint but equal

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fervour—and the things they said about the Yoke were simply lamentable.

From Nova Scotia to Victoria, and every city, township, distributing-centre, and divisional point between; from sub-tropical White River and sultry Jackfish to the ultimate north that lies up beside Alaska; from Kootenay, and Nelson of the fruit-farms, to Prince Edward Island, where motors are not allowed; they yearned to shake it off, with the dust of England from their feet, “at once and some time before that.”

I had been warned that when Armageddon came the “Colonies” would “revolt against the Mother Country as one man”; but I had no notion I should ever see the dread spectacle with my own eyes—or the “one man” so tall!

Joking apart, the Canadian Army wants to get to work. It admits that London is “some city,” but says it did not take the trip to visit London only. Armageddon, which so many people in Europe knew was bound to come, has struck Canada out of the blue, like a noonday murder in a small town. How will they feel when they actually view some of the destruction in France, these men who are used to making and owning their homes? And what effect will it have on their land’s outlook and development for the next few generations? Older countries may possibly slip back into some sort of toleration. New peoples, in their first serious war,

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like girls in their first real love-affair, neither forget nor forgive. That is why it pays to keep friends with the young.

And such young! They ran inches above all normal standards, not in a few companies or battalions, but through the whole corps; and it was not easy to pick out foolish or even dull faces among them. Details going about their business through the camps' much mud; defaulters on fatigue; orderlies, foot and mounted; the procession of lorry-drivers; companies falling in for inspection; battalions parading; brigades moving off for manœuvres; batteries clanking in from the ranges; they were all supple, free, and intelligent; and moved with a lift and a drive that made one sing for joy.

CAMP GOSSIP

Only a few months ago that entire collection poured into Valcartier camp in pink shirts and straw hats, desperately afraid they might not be in time. Since then they have been taught several things. Notably, that the more independent the individual soldier, the more does he need forethought and endless care when he is in bulk.

"Just because we were all used to looking after ourselves in civil life," said an officer, "we used to send parties out without rations. And the parties used to go, too! And we expected the boys to look after their own feet. But we're wiser now."

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"They're learning the same thing in the New Army," I said. "Company officers have to be taught to be mothers and housekeepers and sanitary inspectors. Where do your men come from?"

"Tell me some place that they don't come from," said he, and I could not. The men had rolled up from everywhere between the Arctic circle and the border, and I was told that those who could not get into the first contingent were moving heaven and earth and local politicians to get into the second.

"There's some use in politics now," that officer reflected. "But it's going to thin the voting-lists at home."

A good many of the old South African crowd (the rest are coming) were present and awfully correct. Men last met as privates between De Aar and Belmont were captains and majors now, while one lad who, to the best of his ability, had painted Cape Town pink in those fresh years, was a grim non-commissioned officer worth his disciplined weight in dollars.

"I didn't remind Dan of old times when he turned up at Valcartier disguised as a respectable citizen," said my informant. "I just roped him in for my crowd. He's a father to 'em. *He* knows."

"And have you many cheery souls coming on?" I asked.

"Not many; but it's always the same with a first

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contingent. You take everything that offers and weed the braves out later."

"*We* don't weed," said an officer of artillery. "Any one who has had his passage paid for by the Canadian Government stays with us till he eats out of our hand. *And* he does. They make the best men in the long run," he added. I thought of a friend of mine who is now disabusing two or three "old soldiers" in a Service corps of the idea that they can run the battalion, and I laughed. The Gunner was right. "Old soldiers," after a little loving care, become valuable and virtuous.

A company of Foot was drawn up under the lee of a fir plantation behind us. They were a miniature of their army as their army was of their people, and one could feel the impact of strong personality almost like a blow.

"If you'd believe it," said a cavalryman, "we're forbidden to cut into that little wood-lot, yonder! Not one stick of it may we have! We could make shelters for our horses in a day out of that stuff."

"But it's timber!" I gasped. "Sacred, tame trees!"

"Oh, we know what wood is! They issue it to us by the pound. Wood to burn—by the pound! What's wood for, anyway?"

"And when do you think we shall be allowed to go?" some one asked, not for the first time.

"By and by," said I. "And then you'll have to

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detail half your army to see that your equipment isn't stolen from you."

"What!" cried an old Strathcona Horse. He looked anxiously towards the horse-lines.

"I was thinking of your mechanical transport and your travelling workshops and a few other things that you've got."

I got away from those large men on their windy hill-top, and slid through mud and past mechanical transport and troops untold towards Lark Hill. On the way I passed three fresh-cut pine sticks, laid and notched one atop of the other to shore up a caving bank. Trust a Canadian or a beaver within gunshot of standing timber!

ENGINEERS AND APPLIANCES

Lark Hill is where the Canadian Engineers live, in the midst of a profligate abundance of tools and carts, pontoon wagons, field telephones, and other mouth-watering gear. Hundreds of tin huts are being built there, but quite leisurely, by contract. I noticed three workmen, at eleven o'clock of that Monday forenoon, as drunk as Davy's sow, reeling and shouting across the landscape. So far as I could ascertain, the workmen do not work extra shifts, nor even, but I hope this is incorrect, on Saturday afternoons; and I think they take their full hour at noon these short days.

Every camp throws up men one has met at the

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other end of the earth; so, of course, the Engineer C.O. was an ex-South African Canadian.

"Some of our boys are digging a trench over yonder," he said. "I'd like you to look at 'em."

The boys seemed to average five feet ten inches, with thirty-seven inch chests. The soil was unaccommodating chalk.

"What are you?" I asked of the first pickaxe.

"Private."

"Yes, but before that?"

"McGill (University understood). Nineteen twelve."

"And that boy with the shovel?"

"Queen's, I think. No; he's Toronto."

And thus the class in applied geology went on half up the trench, under supervision of a Corporal-Bachelor-of-Science with a most scientific biceps. They were young; they were beautifully fit, and they were all truly thankful that they lived in these high days.

Sappers, like sergeants, take care to make themselves comfortable. The corps were dealing with all sorts of little domestic matters in the way of arrangements for baths, which are cruelly needed, and an apparatus for depopulating shirts, which is even more wanted. Healthy but unwashen men sleeping on the ground are bound to develop certain things which at first disgust them, but later are accepted as an unlovely part of the game. It would

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be quite easy to make bakehouses and super-heated steam fittings to deal with the trouble. The huts themselves stand on brick piers, from one to three feet above ground. The board floors are not grooved or tongued, so there is ample ventilation from beneath; but they have installed decent cooking ranges and gas, and the men have already made themselves all sorts of handy little labour-saving gadgets. They would do this if they were in the real desert. Incidentally, I came across a delightful bit of racial instinct. A man had been told to knock up a desk out of broken packing-cases. There is only one type of desk in Canada—the roller-top, with three shelves each side the knee-hole, characteristic sloping sides, raised back, and long shelf in front of the writer. He reproduced it faithfully, barring, of course, the roller-top; and the thing leaped to the eye out of its English office surroundings. The Engineers do not suffer for lack of talents. Their senior officers appear to have been the heads, and their juniors the assistants, in big concerns that wrestle with unharnessed nature. (There is a tale of the building of a bridge in Valcartier Camp which is not bad hearing.) The rank and file include miners; road, trestle, and bridge men; iron construction men who, among other things, are steeplejacks; whole castes of such as deal in high explosives for a living; loco-drivers, superintendents, too, for aught I know, and a solid packing of selected machinists,

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mechanics, and electricians. Unluckily, they were all a foot or so too tall for me to tell them that, even if their equipment escaped at the front, they would infallibly be raided for their men.

AN UNRELATED DETACHMENT

I left McGill, Queen's, and Toronto still digging in their trench, which another undergraduate, mounted and leading a horse, went out of his way to jump standing. My last glimpse was of a little detachment, with five or six South African ribbons among them, who were being looked over by an officer. No one thought it strange that they should have embodied themselves and crossed the salt seas independently as "So-and-So's Horse." (It is best to travel with a title these days.) Once arrived, they were not at all particular, except that they meant to join the Army, and the lonely batch was stating its qualifications as Engineers.

"They get over any way and every way," said my companion. "Swimming, I believe."

"But who was the So-and-So that they were christened after?" I asked.

"I guess he was the man who financed 'em or grub-staked 'em while they were waiting. He may be one of 'em in that crowd now; or he may be a provincial magnate at home getting another bunch together."

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THE VANGUARD OF A NATION

Then I went back to the main camp for a last look at that wonderful army, where the tin-roofed messes take French conversation lessons with the keen-faced French-Canadian officers, and where one sees esprit-de-corps in the making. Nowhere is local sentiment stronger than in Canada. East and West, lake and maritime provinces, prairie and mountain, fruit district and timber lands—they each thrill to it. The West keeps one cold blue open-air eye on the townful East. Winnipeg sits between, posing alternately as sophisticated metropolis and simple prairie. Alberta, of the thousand horses, looks down from her high-peaked saddle on all who walk on their feet; and British Columbia thanks God for an equable climate, and that she is not like Ottawa, full of politicians and frozen sludge. Quebec, unassailable in her years and experience, smiles tolerantly on the Nova Scotian, for he has a history too, and asks Montreal if any good thing can come out of Brandon, Moose Jaw, or Regina. They discuss each other outrageously, as they know each other intimately, over four thousand miles of longitude—their fathers, their families, and all the connections. Which is useful when it comes to sizing up the merits of a newly-promoted non-commissioned officer or the capacities of a quarter-master.

As their Army does and suffers, and its record be-

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gins to blaze, fierce pride of regiment will be added to local love and the national pride that backs and envelops all. But that pride is held in very severe check now; for they are neither provinces nor tribes but a welded people fighting in the War of Liberty. They permit themselves to hope that the physique of their next contingent will not be worse than that of the present. They believe that their country can send forward a certain number of men and a certain number behind that, all equipped to a certain scale. Of discomforts endured, of the long learning and relearning and waiting on, they say nothing. They do not hint what they will do when their hour strikes, though they more than hint their longing for that hour. In all their talk I caught no phrase that could be twisted into the shadow of a boast or any claim to superiority, even in respect to their kit and outfit; no word or implication of self-praise for any sacrifice made or intended. It was their rigid humility that impressed one as most significant—and, perhaps, most menacing for such as may have to deal with this vanguard of an armed Nation.

V

INDIAN TROOPS

Larai meri laddu nahin batte (War is not sugar-plums).
—*Hindi Proverb.*

WORKING from the East to the West of England, through a countryside alive with troops of all arms, the car came at dusk into a cathedral town entirely inhabited by one type of regiment. The telegraph-office was an orderly jam of solid, large, made men, with years of discipline behind them and the tan of Indian suns on their faces—Englishmen still so fresh from the troopships that one of them asked me, “What’s the day o’ the month?” They were advising friends of their arrival in England, or when they might be expected on short leave at the week’s end; and the fresh-faced telegraph girls behind the grilles worked with six pairs of hands apiece and all the goodwill and patience in the world to back them. That same young woman who, with nothing to do, makes you wait ten minutes for a penny stamp while she finishes a talk with a lady-friend, will, at a crisis, go on till she drops, and keep her temper throughout. “Well, *if* that’s her village,” I heard one of the girls say to an anxious soul, “I tell *you* that that will be her telegraph-office. You leave it to me. *She’ll* get it all right.”

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He backed out, and a dozen more quietly took his place. Their regiments hailed from all the old known stations of the East and beyond that into the Far East again. They cursed their cool barrack accommodation; they rejoiced in the keen autumn smells, and paraded the long street all filled with "Europe shops"; while their officers and their officers' wives, and, I think, mothers who had come down to snatch a glimpse of their boys, crowded the hotels, and the little unastonished Anglo-Indian children circulated round the knees of big friends they had made aboardship and asked, "Where are you going now?"

One caught scraps of our old gipsy talk—names of boarding-houses, agents' addresses: "Milly stays with mother, of course." "I'm taking Jack down to school to-morrow. It's past half-term, but that doesn't matter nowadays"; and cheery farewells between men and calm-eyed women. Except for the frocks, it might have been an evening assembly at any station bandstand in India.

Outside, on the surging pavements, a small boy cried: "Paper! Evenin' paper!" Then seductively: "*Kargus!*"

"What?" I said, thinking my ears had cheated me.

"*Dekko! Kargus!*" said he. ("Look here! Paper!")

"Why on earth d'you say that?"

"Because the men like it," he replied, and slapped

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an evening paper (no change for a penny) into the hand of a man in a helmet.

Who shall say that the English are not adaptable?

The car swam bonnet-deep through a mile of troops; and a mile up the road one could hear the deep hum of all those crowded streets that the cathedral bells were chiming over. It was only one small block of Anglo-India getting ready to take its place in the all-devouring Line.

SCREW-GUNS

An hour later at —— (Shall we ever be able to name people and places outright again?) the wind brought up one whiff—one unmistakable whiff—of *ghi*. Somewhere among the English pines that, for the moment, pretended to be the lower slopes of the Dun, there were native troops. A mule squealed in the dark and set off half-a-dozen others. It was screw-guns—batteries of them, waiting their turn also at the game. Morning showed them in their immaculate lines as though they had just marched in from Jutogh—little, low guns with their ammunition; very big English gunners in disengaged attitudes which, nevertheless, did not encourage stray civilians to poke and peer into things; and the native drivers all busied over their charges. True, the wind was bitter, and many of the drivers had tied

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up their heads, but so one does at Quetta in the cold weather—not to mention Peshawur—and, said a naick of drivers: “It is not the cold for which we have no liking. It is the wet. The English air is good, but water falls at all seasons. Yet notwithstanding, we of this battery (and, oh, the pride men can throw into a mere number!) have not lost one mule. Neither at sea nor on land have we *one* lost. That can be shown, sahib.”

Then one heard the deep racking tobacco-cough in the lee of a tent where four or five men—Kangra folk by the look of them—were drinking tobacco out of a cow’s horn. Their own country’s tobacco, be sure, for English tobacco—— But there was no need to explain. Who would have dreamed to smell bazaar-tobacco on a south country golf links?

A large proportion of the men are, of course, Sikhs, to whom tobacco is forbidden; the Havildar Major himself was a Sikh of the Sikhs. He spoke, of all things in this strange world, of the late Mr. M. McAuliffe’s monumental book on the Sikh religion, saying, not without warrant, that McAuliffe Sahib had translated into English much of the Holy Book—the great Grunth Sahib that lives at Amritzar. He enlarged, too, on the ancient prophecy among the Sikhs—that a hatted race should some day come out of the sea and lead them to victory all the earth over. So spoke Bir Singh, erect and enormous beneath the grey English skies. He hailed

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from a certain place called Banalu, near Patiala, where many years ago two Sikh soldiers executed a striking but perfectly just vengeance on certain villagers who had oppressed their young brother, a cultivator. They had gone to the extreme limits of abasement and conciliation. This failing, they took leave for a week-end and slew the whole tribe of their enemies. The story is buried in old Government reports, but when Bir Singh implied that he and his folk were orthodox I had no doubt of it. And behind him stood another giant, who knew, for his village was but a few miles up the Shalimar road, every foot of Lahore city. He brought word that there had been great floods at home, so that the risen Ravi river had touched the very walls of Runjit Singh's Fort. And that was only last rains—and, behold!—here he was now in England waiting orders to go to this fight which, he understood, was not at all a small fight, but a fight of fights, in which all the world and "our Raj" were engaged. The trouble in India was that all the young men—the mere *jiwans*—wanted to come out at once, which he said, was manifestly unjust to older men, who had waited so long. However, merit and patience had secured their reward, and the battery was here, and it would do the hot *jiwans* no harm to stay at home, and be zealous at drill until orders came for them in their turn. "Young men think that everything good in this world is theirs by right, sahib."

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Then came the big, still English gunners, who are trained to play with the little guns. They took one such gun and melted it into trifling pieces of not more than a hundred and fifty pounds each, and reassembled it, and explained its innermost heart till even a layman could understand. There is a lot to understand about screw-guns—specially the new kind. But the gunner of to-day, like his ancestor, does not talk much, except in his own time and place, when he is as multitudinously amazing as the Blue Marine.

THE MULE LINES

We went over to see the mule lines. I detest the whole generation of these parrot-mouthed hybrids, American, Egyptian, Andalusian, or up-country: so it gave me particular pleasure to hear a Pathan telling one chestnut beast who objected to have its mane hogged any more, what sort of lady-horse his mamma had been. But *qua* animals, they were a lovely lot, and had long since given up blowing and finicking over English fodder.

“Is there any sickness? Why is yonder mule lying down?” I demanded, as though all the lines could not see I was a shuddering amateur.

“There is no sickness, sahib? That mule lies down for his own pleasure. Also, to get out of the wind. He is very clever. He is from Hindustan.” said the man with the horse-clippers.

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“And thou?”

“I am a Pathan,” said he with impudent grin and true border cock of the turban, and he did me the honour to let me infer.

The lines were full of talk as the men went over their animals. They were not worrying themselves over this new country of Belait. It was the regular gossip of food and water and firewood, and where So-and-so had hid the curry-comb.

Talking of cookery, the orthodox men have been rather put out by English visitors who come to the cook-houses and stare directly *at* the food while it is being prepared. Sensible men do not object to this, because they know that these Englishmen have no evil intention nor any evil eye; but sometimes a narrow-souled purist (toothache or liver makes a man painfully religious) will “spy strangers,” and insist on the strict letter of the law, and then every one who wishes to be orthodox must agree with him—on an empty stomach, too—and wait till a fresh mess has been cooked. This is *taklif*—a burden—for where the intention is good and war is afoot much can and should be overlooked. Moreover, this war is not like any other war. It is a war of *our* Raj—“everybody’s war,” as they say in the bazaars. And that is another reason why it does not matter if an Englishman stares at one’s food. This I gathered in small pieces after watering time when the mules had filed up to the troughs in the twilight,

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hundreds of them, and the drivers grew discursive on the way to the lines.

The last I saw of them was in the early cold morning, all in marching order, jinking and jingling down a road through woods.

“Where are you going?”

“God knows!”

THE INN OF GOOD-BYES

It might have been for exercise merely, or it might be down to the sea and away to the front for the battle of “Our Raj.” The quiet hotel where people sit together and talk in earnest strained pairs is well used to such departures. The officers of a whole Division—the raw cuts of their tent-circles lie still unhealed on the links—dined there by scores; mothers and relatives came down from the uttermost parts of Scotland for a last look at their boys, and found beds goodness knows where: very quiet little weddings, too, set out from its doors to the church opposite. The Division went away a century of weeks ago by the road that the mule-battery took. Many of the civilians who pocketed the wills signed and witnessed in the smoking-room are full-blown executors now; some of the brides are widows.

And it is not nice to remember that when the hotel was so filled that not even another pleading mother could be given a place in which to lie down

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and have her cry out—not at all nice to remember that it never occurred to any of the comfortable people in the large but sparsely inhabited houses around that they might have offered a night's lodging, even to an unintroduced stranger.

GREATHEART AND CHRISTIANA

There were hospitals up the road preparing and being prepared for the Indian wounded. In one of these lay a man of, say, a Biluch regiment, sorely hit. Word had come from his colonel in France to the colonel's wife in England that she should seek till she found that very man and got news from his very mouth—news to send to his family and village. She found him at last, and he was very bewildered to see her there, because he had left her and her child on the verandah of the bungalow, long and long ago, when he and his colonel and the regiment went down to take ship for the war. How had she come? Who had guarded her during her train-journey of so many days? And, above all, how had the baba endured that sea which caused strong men to collapse? Not till all these matters had been cleared up in fullest detail did Greatheart on his cot permit his colonel's wife to waste one word on his own insignificant concerns. And that she should have wept filled him with real trouble. Truly, this is the war of "Our Raj"!

VI

TERRITORIAL BATTALIONS

To excuse oneself to oneself is human: but to excuse oneself to one's children is Hell.—*Arabic Proverb.*

BILLETED troops are difficult to get at. There are thousands of them in a little old town by the side of an even older park up the London Road, but to find a particular battalion is like ferreting un-stopped burrows.

"The Umpty-Umpth, were you looking for?" said a private in charge of a side-car. "We're the Eenty-Eenth. 'Only came in last week. I've never seen this place before. It's pretty. Hold on! There's a postman. He'll know."

He, too, was in khaki, bowed between mail-bags, and his accent was of a far and coaly county.

"I'm none too sure," said he, "but I think I saw——"

Here a third man cut in.

"Yon's t' battalion, marchin' into t' park now. Roon! Happen that'll catch 'em."

They turned out to be Territorials with a history behind them; but that I didn't know till later; and their band and cyclists. Very polite were those

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rear-rank cyclists—who pushed their loaded machines with one vast hand apiece.

They were strangers, they said. They had only come here a few days ago. But they knew the South well. They had been in Gloucestershire, which was a very nice southern place.

Then their battalion, I hazarded, was of northern extraction?

They admitted that I might go as far as that; their speech betraying their native town at every rich word.

“Huddersfield, of course?” I said, to make them out with it.

“Bolton,” said one at last. Being in uniform the pitman could not destroy the impertinent civilian.

“Ah, Bolton!” I returned. “*All* cotton, aren’t you?”

“Some coal,” he answered gravely. There is notorious rivalry ’twixt coal and cotton in Bolton, but I wanted to see him practise the self-control that the Army is always teaching.

As I have said, he and his companion were most polite, but the total of their information, boiled and peeled, was that they had just come from Bolton way; might at any moment be sent somewhere else, and they liked Gloucestershire in the south. A spy could not have learned much less.

The battalion halted, and moved off by companies for further evolutions. One could see they

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were more than used to drill and arms; a hardened, thick-necked, thin-flanked, deep-chested lot, dealt with quite faithfully by their sergeants, and altogether abreast of their work. Why, then, this reticence? What had they to be ashamed of, these big Bolton folk without an address? Where was their orderly-room?

There were many orderly-rooms in the little old town, most of them in bye-lanes less than one car wide. I found what I wanted, and—this was north-country all over—a private who volunteered to steer me to headquarters through the tricky southern streets. He was communicative, and told me a good deal about typhoid-inoculation and musketry practice, which accounted for only six companies being on parade. But surely they could not have been ashamed of *that*.

GUARDING A RAILWAY

I unearthed their skeleton at last in a peaceful, gracious five-hundred-year-old house that looked on to lawns and cut hedges bounded by age-old red brick walls—such a perfumed and dreaming place as one would choose for the setting of some even-pulsed English love-tale of the days before the war.

Officers were billeted in the low-ceiled, shiny-floored rooms full of books and flowers.

“And now,” I asked, when I had told the tale of

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the uncommunicative cyclist, "what *is* the matter with your battalion?"

They laughed cruelly at me. "Matter!" said they. "We're just off three months of guarding railways. After *that* a man wouldn't trust his own mother. You don't mean to say our cyclists let you know where we've come from last?"

"No, they didn't," I replied. "That was what worried me. I assumed you'd all committed murders, and had been sent here to live it down."

Then they told me what guarding a line really means. How men wake and walk, with only express troop-trains to keep them company, all the night long on windy embankments or under still more windy bridges; how they sleep behind three sleepers up-ended or a bit of tin, or, if they are lucky, in a platelayer's hut; how their food comes to them slopping across the square-headed ties that lie in wait to twist a man's ankle after dark; how they stand in blown coal-dust of goods-yards trying to watch five lines of trucks at once; how fools of all classes pester the lonely pickets, whose orders are to hold up motors for inquiry, and then write silly letters to the War Office about it. How nothing ever happens through the long weeks but infallibly would if the patrols were taken off. And they had one refreshing story of a workman who at six in the morning, which is no auspicious hour to jest with Lancashire, took a short cut to his work by

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ducking under some goods-wagons, and when challenged by the sentry replied, posturing on all fours, "Boo, I'm a German!" Whereat the upright sentry fired, unfortunately missed him, and then gave him the butt across his ass's head, so that his humour, and very nearly his life, terminated.

After which the sentry was seldom seen to smile, but frequently heard to murmur, "Ah should hev slipped t' baggonet into him."

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

"So you see," said the officers in conclusion, "you mustn't be surprised that our men wouldn't tell you much."

"I begin to see," I said. "How many of you are coal and how many cotton?"

"Two-thirds coal and one-third cotton, roughly. It keeps the men deadly keen. An operative isn't going to give up while a pitman goes on; and very much *vice versa*."

"That's class-prejudice," said I.

"It's most useful," said they. The officers themselves seemed to be interested in coal or cotton, and had known their men intimately on the civil side. If your orderly-room sergeant, or your quartermaster has been your trusted head clerk or foreman for ten or twelve years, and if eight out of a dozen sergeants have controlled pitmen and machinists, above and below ground, and eighty per cent of these pit-

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men and machinists are privates in the companies, your regiment works with something of the precision of a big business.

It was all new talk to me, for I had not yet met a Northern Territorial battalion with the strong pride of its strong town behind it. Where were they when the war came? How had they equipped themselves? I wanted to hear the tale. It was worth listening to as told with North-Country joy of life and the doing of things in that soft down-country house of the untroubled centuries. Like every one else, they were expecting anything but war. 'Hadn't even begun their annual camp. Then the thing came, and Bolton rose as one man and woman to fit out its battalion. There was a lady who wanted a fairly large sum of money for the men's extra footgear. She set aside a morning to collect it, and inside the hour came home with nearly twice her needs, and spent the rest of the time trying to make people take back fivers, at least, out of tenners. And the big hauling firms flung horses and transport at them and at the Government, often refusing any price, or, when it was paid, turning it into the war funds. What the battalion wanted it had but to ask for. Once it was short of, say, towels. An officer approached the head of a big firm, with no particular idea he would get more than a few dozen from that quarter.

"And how many towels d'you want?" said the

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head of the firm. The officer suggested a globular thousand.

“I think you’ll do better with twelve hundred,” was the curt answer. “They’re ready out yonder. Get ’em.”

And in this style Bolton turned out her battalion. Then the authorities took it and strung it by threes and fives along several score miles of railway track: and it had only just been reassembled, and it had been inoculated for typhoid. Consequently, they said (but all officers are like mothers and motor-car owners), it wasn’t up to what it would be in a little time. In spite of the cyclist, I had had a good look at the deep-chested battalion in the park, and after getting their musketry figures,¹ it seemed to me that very soon it might be worth looking at by more prejudiced persons than myself.

The next day I read that this battalion’s regular battalion in the field had distinguished itself by a piece of work which, in other wars, would have been judged heroic. Bolton will read it, not without remarks, and other towns who love Bolton, more or less, will say that if all the truth could come out their regiments had done as well. Anyway, the result will be more men—pitmen, mill-hands, clerks, checkers, weighers, winders, and hun-

¹Thanks to the miniature rifle clubs fostered by Lord Roberts a certain number of recruits in all the armies come to their regiments with a certain knowledge of sighting, rifle-handling, and the general details of good shooting, especially at snap and disappearing work.

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dreds of those sleek, well-groomed business-chaps whom one used to meet in the big Midland hotels, protesting that war was out of date. These latter develop surprisingly in the camp atmosphere. I recall one raging in his army shirt-sleeves at a comrade who had derided his principles. "I *am* a blanky pacificist," he hissed, "and I'm proud of it, and—and I'm going to make *you* one before I've finished with you!"

THE SECRET OF THE SERVICES

Pride of city, calling, class, and creed imposes standards and obligations which hold men above themselves at a pinch, and steady them through long strain. One meets it in the New Army at every turn, from the picked Territorials who slipped across Channel last night to the six-week-old Service battalion maturing itself in mud. It is balanced by the ineradicable English instinct to understate, detract, and decry—to mask the thing done by loudly drawing attention to the things undone. The more one sees of the camps the more one is filled with facts and figures of joyous significance, which will become clearer as the days lengthen; and the less one hears of the endurance, decency, self-sacrifice, and utter devotion which have made, and are hourly making, this wonderful new world. The camps take this for granted—else why should any man be there at all? He might have gone on with his business, or

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—watched “soccer.” But having chosen to do his bit, he does it, and talks as much about his motives as he would of his religion or his love-affairs. He is eloquent over the shortcomings of the authorities, more pessimistic as to the future of his next neighbour battalion than would be safe to print, and lyric on his personal needs—baths and drying-rooms for choice. But when the grousing gets beyond a certain point—say at three A.M., in steady wet, with the tent-pegs drawing like false teeth—the nephew of the insurance-agent asks the cousin of the baronet to inquire of the son of the fried-fish vendor what the stevedore’s brother and the tutor of the public school joined the Army *for*. Then they sing “Somewhere the Sun is Shining” till the Sergeant Ironmonger’s assistant cautions them to drown in silence or the Lieutenant Telephone-appliances-manufacturer will speak to them in the morning.

The New armies have not yet evolved their typical private, n.-c.-o., and officer, though one can see them shaping. They are humorous because, for all our long faces, we are the only genuinely humorous race on earth; but they all know for true that there are no excuses in the Service. “If there *were*,” said a three-month-old under-gardener-private to me, “what ’ud become of Discipline?”

They are already setting standards for the coming millions, and have sown little sprouts of regimental tradition which may grow into age-old trees.

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In one corps, for example, though no dubbin is issued a man loses his name for parading with dirty boots. He looks down scornfully on the next battalion where they are not expected to achieve the impossible. In another—an ex-Guards sergeant brought 'em up by hand—the drill is rather high-class. In a third they fuss about records for route-marching, and men who fall out have to explain themselves to their sweating companions. This is entirely right. They are all now in the Year One, and the meanest of them may be an ancestor of whom regimental posterity will say: "There were giants in those days!"

THE REAL QUESTION

This much we can realise, even though we are so close to it. The old safe instinct saves us from triumph and exultation. But what will be the position in years to come of the young man who has deliberately elected to outcaste himself from this all-embracing brotherhood? What of his family, and, above all, what of his descendants, when the books have been closed and the last balance struck of sacrifice and sorrow in every hamlet, village, parish, suburb, city, shire, district, province, and Dominion throughout the Empire?

SOUVENIRS OF FRANCE

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I

J'étais géant alors, et haut de cent coudées.—BONAPARTE.

IN the spring of the Paris Exhibition of 1878 my father was in charge of the Indian Section of Arts and Manufactures there, and it was his duty to arrange them as they arrived. He promised me, then twelve or thirteen years old, that I should accompany him to Paris on condition that I gave no trouble. The democracy of an English School had made that easy.

Our happy expedition crossed the Channel in a steamer, I think, made of two steamers attached to each other side by side. (Was it the old *Calais-Douvres* designed to prevent sea-sickness which even the gods themselves cannot do?) And, late at night, we came to a boarding-house full of English people at the back of the Parc Monceau. In the morning, when I had waked to the divine smell of roasting coffee and the bell-like call of the *marchand-d'habits*, my father said in effect, "I shall be busy every day for some time. Here is ——" I think it was two francs. "There are lots of restaurants, all called Duval, where you can eat. I will get you a free pass for the Exhibition and you

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can go where you please." Then he was swallowed by black-coated officials and workmen in blouses.

Imagine the delight of a child let loose among all the wonders of all the world as they emerged from packing-cases, free to enter every unfinished building that was being raised round an edifice called the Trocadero, and to pass at all times through gates in wooden barricades behind which workmen put up kiosques and pavilions, or set out plants and trees! At first, these genial deep-voiced men asked questions, but after a few days no one looked at my pass, and I considered myself an accepted fly on this great wheel of colour and smells and sights, all revolving to a ceaseless *mitraille* of hammers and machinery. My father, too, had been entirely correct as to this Monsieur Duval. His restaurants were everywhere in Paris; his satisfying *déjeuners* cost exactly one franc. There were also, if one had made the necessary economies, celestial gingerbreads to be bought everywhere.

At the boarding-house were two English boys from a School called Christ's Hospital, or, in talk, the Blue Coat School, which dates from the time of Edward VI. We fraternised, and soon discovered that the Bois de Boulogne was an ideal ground for paper-chases, which, at that time, were not understood in France.

But the scholars of Christ's Hospital are obligated to wear the ancient costume of their School. This

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consists of white linen bands round the neck, in lieu of collar; a long blue cloth bedgown, fastened by many bright flat buttons and loosely girt at the hip with a leather girdle; blue knee breeches; vividly yellow stockings, and square-toed shoes with buckles. Hats are not worn, and when engaged in athletic exercise the skirts of the blue bedgown are drawn through the girdle. I ask you to consider the effect on a pious *gendarmérie* of two such apparitions, scattering or pursuing trails of torn paper through their sacred Bois in '78! My friends were often halted and questioned; but the *gendarmes*, tolerant so long as you are polite, soon perceived them to be the young of some species of the insane English. "But what," they demanded unofficially, "is the genesis and intention of this bizarre uniform? Military? Civil? Ecclesiastical?"

My brutal experiments in French among my workmen at my Trocadero made me interpreter here. I have often wondered what the *gendarmes* and the interested priests must have thought. With the ribaldly inquisitive cabmen of those days (they talked too much, those gentlemen in leather hats) one was less polite; for a selection of simple phrases drawn, again, from my blue-bloused friends at the Trocadero, would act on them marvellously. You see, they dared not abandon their vehicles, and the radius of a whiplash is limited. But conceive this against to-day's background! Three small savages

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capering on, let us say, the *trottoir* of the Avenue d'Iéna while they harpoon a red and roaring *cocher* with epithets of Zoological origin or the ripostes of Cambronne! . . . Primitive? Possibly—but Love is founded on a variety of experiences.

When these delights palled, and I had sufficiently superintended my Exposition for the day, I would explore my Paris. Thus I came to know the Bridges and the men who clipped the poodles on the little quays below them. I perceived from the pantomime of the artists engaged that there were two schools of thought in this art. One began at the head; the other at the tail. When I told this to my father, who was also an artist, he laughed enormously. And I accepted it as a tribute to my powers of narration!

I discovered on my own account Quasimodo's Notre Dame. (I believed profoundly in the phantasmagoria of *Notre Dame*, including Esmeralda and her Djali (translated). I even came to know a little of the Left Bank and the book-boxes of the Quai Voltaire then filled with savage prints and lithographs of the War of '70. The tobacconists, too, sold glazed clay pipes of the heads of bearded soldiers and generals. I considered myself well informed as to that war because, a few years before, I had been given a scrap-book of pictures cut out of the *Illustrated London News*. One was called "The Burning of Bazeilles," and another—a ter-

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rible perspective of a forlorn army laying down their rifles in a wilderness of snow—represented Bourbaki's disarmament at the Swiss frontier. The *concierge* and his wife at the boarding-house also told me tales of that war of which I comprehended—and forgot—nothing.

But my Exposition was always the heart of things for me. A feature of it was the head of Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty which, later, was presented to the United States. One ascended by a staircase (5 c.) to the dome of the skull and looked out through the vacant eye-balls at a bright-coloured world beneath. I climbed up there often, and once an elderly Frenchman said to me, "Now, you young Englisher, you can say you have looked through the eyes of Liberty Herself." He spoke less than the truth. It was through the eyes of France that I began to see.

What I did not understand—and it was much—I brought home at evening and laid before my father, who either explained it or told me where I could get the information. He treated me always as a comrade, and his severest orders were, at most, suggestions or invitations. "If I were you, I should do so-and-so"—"You might do worse than, etc." prefaced delightful talks while I was going to bed and he was dressing for some function. It was one of his "suggestions" that led me to look (but not for long) at an Algerian exhibit of educational ap-

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pliances—copy-books filled with classical French sentences, and simple sums perpetrated by young Algerians for whom I felt sympathy, being under a similar yoke. By some means or other I gathered dimly that France “had sound ideas about her Colonies” and that I “might do worse” than remember that. I forgot, of course—to remember later.

This was eight years after the war of '70 and six since the last of the £200,000,000 indemnity had been paid. The Boche had done his best to cripple France, but his memory did not include “the night-cap of Père Bugeaud,” nor his prevision anything in the least resembling the Maréchal Lyautey. Madagascar, Tonquin, Indo-China, and the rest were not. The Boche, disregarding the possibilities of a fringe of administration on a beach in North Africa, thought Colonial affairs might divert France. Others must have seen more among the packing-cases where my father talked with the black-coated officials with the rosettes.

I returned to England and my School with a knowledge that there existed a land across the water, where everything was different, and delightful, where one walked among marvels, and all food tasted extremely well. Therefore, I thought well of that place.

Later, I was “invited” to study French. “You’ll never be able to talk it, but if I were you, I’d try to read it” was his word. I append here the method

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of instruction. Give an English boy the first half of *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* in his native tongue. When he is properly intoxicated, withdraw it and present to him the second half in the original. Afterwards—not before—Dumas the Prince of *amuseurs*, and the rest as God pleases.

The official study of the French language in the English schools of those days assumed that its literature was “immoral”; whereas the proper slant of accents and the correct assignment of genders was virtuous. In my own interests, then, I made my “graves” and “acutes” as nearly vertical as might be, while my caligraphy served as a fig-leaf to cover those delicate problems of sex in inanimate objects so dear to the meticulous Gaul. During my holidays I would read all the French books that interested, and should not have interested, me, till at sixteen I could deal with them almost as with English.

This served me well a few years later, when, as a subordinate on an Indian journal, it was part of my duty to translate columns upon columns of the *Novoe Vremya* detailing Russian campaigns in Central Asia which were then of some interest. At that time I was a young man in my father’s house—a family reunited after long separations in childhood, very content to be together. Never was youth more fortunate! People from all parts of the world would visit my father in his capacity of Provincial

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Art Director and Curator of the Art Museum. Among these was a French official, or philosopher, named Gustave Le Bon—of the type as it seemed to me of those black-coated ones in Paris six or seven years before. Some of his talk dealt with the significance of those wearisome educational exhibits from Algeria, which I had seen: the theory and the logic of Colonial administration, and so forth, all set out in beautifully balanced French of which the dominant word was "*Emprise morale.*" He talked also on occasion like a Maxim articulate, and my father almost as swiftly, each explaining and comparing the ends and aims of his government. Thus was a second link of the chain riveted which in due time would assist to draw my heart towards France.

Occasionally Russian officers wandered through our part of Northern India who spoke admirable French and explained disarmingly their innocent missions. And there was an annually recurrent native theatrical troupe that presented Indian plays in the bazaar, whose elderly and unshaven German scene-painter had been, he told me, "out on the barricades in '48." He revealed to me a France I have never imagined.

In the Anglo-Indian life of those days were no theatres; no picture-galleries; no cinemas; no transport other than the horse; and no society. Every one was either an official or a soldier, with his

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work to do. Our community numbered in the hot weather perhaps seventy whites in all. At the big Christmas dances, when the outlying stations came in, four hundred might be present for a week! The climate, through half the year, forbade exercise after seven in the morning and before six in the evening. There was time, then, to read—anything and everything one could find—from Scarron's dreary *Roman Comique* to Gyp, as well as that ponderous *Novoe Vremya* and the French papers. The journals in our office came in from Paris to Peking; each wonderfully preserving its own national smell, so that one could identify it in the dark. At that time—'83 to '88—the French Press was not nationally enamoured of England. I answered some of their criticisms by what I then conceived to be parodies of Victor Hugo's more extravagant prose. The peace of Europe, however, was not seriously endangered by these exercises; my illustrious contemporaries must have known that newspapers have to be filled daily.

Oh! Demain c'est la grande chose!
De quoi demain sera-t-il fait?

VICTOR HUGO.

After these happy years, I found myself again in Paris at the Exhibition of 1889-90. My city was much as I had left it, except for an edifice called the Eiffel Tower, but it was still ignorant of wireless and automobiles. I used to establish myself at

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a small hotel in the Batignolles, dominated by a fat elderly landlady who brought me unequalled *café au lait* in big bowls. I must have made other friendships also—else how did I come to assist at that moonlight *pas de quatre* in front of the Sorbonne? A glance into the future would have shown me that I was to be a Doctor of that learned Institute, but I needed all my eyes at the time to watch a *gendarme* who desired to attach himself to our company merely because we sang to him that Love was an infant of Bohemia ignorant of the Code Napoléon.

Those times passed also, and life became more varied. It included a certain amount of travel—to South Africa for example, where at a town called Johannesburg I had the honour of meeting some German officers, unnecessarily interested in the future political relations and armaments, which last their country supplied, of the Boers. They talked too loudly. Personally, I have always liked the Boer, and it occurred to me, as to some others, at the time that he might not be our most serious opponent.

During the Boer War (1899–1902) what should have enlightened us all as to the future was the thoroughness of the anti-British propaganda, much of which rebounded mainly from the United States by way of what was vaguely called :“The Continent.” Some of it was of French provenance—

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grossly impolite and playing into the Boches' hands. But the specific charges of our "atrocities" during the war revealed, though we had not sense enough to profit by it, the Boche mentality. For example, there was a statement that on a certain day, at a certain place, some English officers entered a Boer farmhouse which was flying the white flag. Names and dates were entirely true. (I was with the party and shared the "honours" of the action.) It went on to say that we had dragged out two or three Boer men and women from under the beds there; had given them a hundred yards' allowance and shot them down as they ran! In other words, it prefigured absolutely the technique of Louvain and Termonde and the villages of the Border in '14, etc., etc.; the touch about the "hundred yards' allowance" being a sporting attempt to dress the dish *à l'anglaise*. Another announcement—a telegraphic "extra"—picked up on the floor of a newspaper office at Bloemfontein the day after we had entered that town, affirmed that our Brigade of Guards had, two days previously, been driven on to the attack in one of the "battles" of those days, by the fire of their own Corps Artillery! Even so, we were not enlightened; and when later we came across very deep trenches, undercut, on the shrapnel side, no one realised we were looking at the forerunner of the "dug-out" and a new type of war. But how could we guess?

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The Boer wisely did not care to sit in trenches as the German experts had recommended. He preferred to lie behind a boulder in the open and shoot his picked man at eight hundred or a thousand yards. When he had expended his cartridges he retired towards the Equator on his indefatigable little pony. The uniformed foreign volunteers of his forces (there was no uniform among the Boers) had been trained in an older school. Consequently they were sometimes captured or even killed in action. Among our "captives" was a charming Frenchman who had fought because he intensely loathed the English. He was master of a pleasant literary style, and in his account, later, of his adventures referred to me (surely Hate is more observant even than love!) by the one title to which I most objected. If he be still alive I would make him my compliments across the years and assure him that his thrust went home.

But I go forward too quickly. The business of Fashoda in '98 was—after the French Press had been very rude, very stupid, and very short-sighted in beating us to help "the King of Prussia"—the opening of the inevitable *entente cordiale*. At the time the French Government, I think, purchased a quantity of military stores which were duly expended sixteen years later in quite another direction. And in 1915, in a vast hollow of the Argonne, I beheld an army of forty thousand men and a hundred

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and twenty Seventy-Fives reviewed by Joffre and Kitchener, and felt the *frisson* run through its ranks when Kitchener shook hands with and talked to General Marchand in the face of the line. Then the bank of horizon-blue and the clanking guns rolled forward to the unsatisfied thunders beyond the horizon.

After the Boer War, but the precise date has escaped me, there visited Cape Town, where I used to spend my winters, the triple-screw cruiser *Dupleix* (Admiral Rivet) which was thrown open to all the world for "inspections." There are two ways of "inspecting" ships. The first is to go round the ship before taking *déjeuner* on board. The second is to sit quite still after *déjeuner* on board, and let the ship go round you. Since the lighter guns of the *Dupleix* were mounted by threes in little cupolas, the impression of her revolving armament was prodigious. Cape Town, in turn, invited all her officers to "inspect" the vineyards of Constantia, where they make not too weak wines. My charge, on that occasion, was a young Breton lieutenant. He returned, his head on his companion's shoulder, sleeping like an angel. You must understand I had several times drunk to the *entente cordiale* in sweet champagne at eleven in the morning on the deck of the *Dupleix*; temperature beneath her awnings about 85° F. Thus honour was satisfied!

• But in all those years I knew little of France be-

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yond an occasional trip to Paris. The coming of the automobile broke the spell, and, year after year, in the cars of the period when motorists were as much pioneers of travel as are now airmen, we explored France. (But, Monsieur, we cannot accommodate *that* here. It will frighten the horses!" That was at the old hotel in Avignon.)

Then was revealed to us, season after season, the immense and amazing beauty of France; the laborious thrift of her people, and a little of their hard philosophy; the excellence of her agriculture and the forethought and system of her forestry. Some of our Indian forestry officials had had their training at Nancy, and had always told me about it.

But at first one paid for one's knowledge with one's skin. Neither men nor beasts were prepared for this visitation of ferocious and exacting vehicles; and part of the tourists' equipment used to be a whip with a long lash, to save the temperamental dogs of France from committing suicide. The soft roads of the astonished departments went to pieces beneath our very bad tyres, and we broke our strongest springs on hump-backed little bridges in secluded towns of one street, where the old women knitted at the fountains. (That was the Rhone Road. Route 7.) Worst of all, we were so ignorant that we did not know that one always finds a good *déjeuner* if one falls in behind the French Army at half-past eleven.

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But matters adjusted themselves with the years and, from the point of view of the early motorists, civilisation now horribly overruns France and one eats, instead of dines, at "hotels of all the luxuries."

There is a certain little meadow by the sea, under Mount Canigou, which Spring fills with narcissi when she first sets foot in Europe. For years in succession we went down to that meadow, spread our maps among the flowers, and began our travels—all France to play with, and our auto to convey us. From the tourists' point of view March is not a good season. Winds blow; there may be snowdrifts on the low passes that a month later would be clear. Yet, for those who love the land and its people, March is the month above all; for then France, who never stops working, begins her spring cleanings, loppings, and prunings. The roadmen are out taking stock of winter damages; the happy, dirty gipsy-vans are out too; the barges along a thousand miles of canals refit and repaint under the eye of the barge-dogs, who allow no liberties; the roads are made interesting by the dung-carts, the huge bundles of new vine-stocks, and the freshly ordered bright-painted agricultural implements. The working year renews its pulse with the roar almost of a tide.

One blemish remains. No motorist can foresee what any citizen of the Republic on foot will do. He is generally at work in the fields, but when he

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walks the roads he is a flickering, wanton mystery.

I have seen him absorbed in dreams, with expanded chest and radiant eye, advance well on the wrong side of the road, till our horn made him leap sideways and call us "Assassin!"

But a people who work as unrelentingly as the French, must have great dreams to salt their lives with. When a man has spent the long day leading pannier loads of manure, a donkey-load at a time, up the terraced hillside to his hanging vineyard; when he has hand-dealt each knotted vine-stock its own portion of the good dark muck, it is then he wants to straighten his back on the way home, and to plunge into the life of events and prodigies—such as lecturing his wife or being President of the Republic.

I tried to explain to a companion of one of our tours that these "play-acting people," as he called them, have lived through devastating dramas of their own, the consequences of which lie heavy on every aspect of their lives. We had gone astray one evening in a wild plain of heath and rock, darkened by olive trees and lit by the flare of a windy sunset. We came into the village where a line of young men, linking hands, swept the public square dancing. Their faces were very clear in that unearthly light, and the tricolour ribbons in their caps rattled in the mistral. An infantry soldier leaned

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against a shop door and watched them with an elder brother's instructed smile.

"What's this circus?" said my friend as they shouted round us.

"Those are conscripts," I replied. "Young men drawn for service in the Army for the next three years." But he was frankly contemptuous, and the lounging infantryman only impressed him as slovenly and ungroomed.

"But there are three-quarters of a million of them," I said. "They have to take over each other's clothes and equipment and wear them out—like monks. Very little is wasted in this country." All the English in him revolted at the apparent meanness, but the splendour of the sacrifice was hid. As a Frenchman once said to me: "We Continentals are more separated from your world by our compulsory service than by anything else. How can you English understand our minds if you do not realise those years of service—those years of service for us all? When we come to talk to you about life it is like talking about death to children."

Again—at a cosmopolitan dinner-party—an Italian youth, but so English-trained that the young Englishman he was talking to looked on him as a brother, said, all of a sudden, "Yes, it *was* rather a bore! I had got my House colours and I had got my Boats. I'd have given *anything* for another year

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at Eton. But I had to come away for my service. 'Get up at three in the morning and groom your own horse, you know, and all that sort of thing. The pay is a penny a day and the food—you can't live on it! . . .'

The Englishman stared—it was having to give up the Boats that impressed him, but a young Frenchman who had done his time merely nodded. I have been privileged also to hear a foreign professor of some ideal or other explain to a rather prominent philosopher that he "guessed France lacked a certain seriousness of moral purpose." To whom the philosopher, looking back across the years: "Ye-es. I did my service with the Artillery." Who would more surely extract fun, irony, and their true taste out of things as they pass, than one who had been forced to live under bodily stress in the face of fact, to sweat and pant and cast him down in the mud, dust, and heat of manœuvres—a unit among many thousands?

And as one came to know France more intimately one gathered memories and pictures of people and things which became part of one's accepted life, destined to grow more significant through the years.

On the way to Lavandou, before Lavandou had been exploited, there stood, against a belt of pines, an old black barn whose door carried a torn placard of some Government loan, which resembled a grotesque profile. This was a landmark always joy-

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ously greeted because it marked for us a stage of our great journey from Spring's Own Meadow. That placard survived all the war—always preserving its comic appearance. It outlived all the millions of the dead and the hundreds of murdered villages.

At Rheims, which was on one of our northerly circuits, we used to buy candles to burn before Joan of Arc. "But what do *you* want with candles?" the sacristan would say. (The God who made all the Creeds knew, but we did not.) And, two years after our last visit together in peace time, there remained only the gutted shell of the Cathedral, but, in a corner of the void, lay a metal candle-holder—I tried to believe that very one on which we had spiked our useless offerings.

Whatever the sacristan may think, I believe in the miracle that Joan of Arc wrought for France through the bad years of 1903-7, when the children born or begotten under the shadows of the '70 war had come to manhood and were (it will happen again in France as it will in England) full of defeatism and that costive ill-will that crawls like a snapping cur on the heels of war. Scientific observers may argue that those years also precluded the entry of young France into the arena of sports. It is incontestable that, more and more at that epoch, were the kiosques filled with little weekly papers of athletic interest; more and more did one

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meet on the roads young men training severely for walking, running, or cycle contests. But, *pari passu*, I observed in the churches that Saint Joseph was everywhere being dispossessed from his shrine in favour of Joan of Arc. It is not to the sporting journals but to Joan that I ascribe the renaissance of strength and purpose in the young of France at that hour.

With one exception—and he was a *douanier* fortified with brandy against the terrible rain of the Nord—I have in twenty-five years' road-travel met nothing but kindness and prompt help from every one—even from my ancient friends, the *gendarmes*.

Had I space, or you patience, I could tell you of the Personal Devil of Marsillargues, and of Michel Coste, the village electrician there who saved us from him; of the Boy of Villers Bocage who will unquestionably be the second Lesseps of France; of the veteran of '70, on the road to Canigou, who kept bees, and who talked and looked precisely like Anatole France; of the rural postman, survivor of a Madagascar battalion of '83-'86 ("Eighty of us, Monsieur, returned out of eleven hundred"), who delivered the superb lecture on the late Mr. Wilson, at the bridge below Bluebeard's Castle; and of the Lady of Bordeaux who, dressed almost entirely in one hat, also lectured the two embarrassed *gendarmes* (Do you know that the Bordelais can blush?) and the unembarrassed cab-driver.

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At every turn of my ways I gathered a certain amount of knowledge, and, perhaps, a little understanding.

For example, only a few years ago in the Béarnaise, on a hot day—the car halted opposite the house of a big-boned farmer standing by his splendid reversible plough. Behind him, his silky plough bullocks filed in to their dark stalls for the noontide rest.

“Are Monsieur and Madame interested in beasts? Good. Come and look.”

We were presented to each darling by name. It was a thriving establishment with the usual notice of a Government loan on a barn door. Then, underneath a wall by the main road, we saw an infant of four armed with a little green-barked switch which some one had peeled into pretty patterns for him. His office was to keep a flock of baby turkeys in the shadow of that wall as the sun shifted. “Sun is bad for young turkeys,” the farmer observed. “But *he* knows! He knows all about it. If you took his stick away he’d cry. Wouldn’t thee?”

The babe did not answer. His eyes were on his flock as it piped and cowered beneath the menace of his sceptre. *They* knew all about it too.

“Your son?”

“Assuredly.” With an arm over the forequarters of an ox who stood as still as a mantelpiece, the farmer talked of “La Terre” and the obligations of

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those who served it to enter on their vows early.

It was good stuff—well delivered—and impressive in what it took for granted. I dare not paint the horror of an English Administration and all its paid officials if an infant were discovered to be employed in what is legally “agricultural labour.”

But the strength of France is in her soil. If you stood one hundred Frenchmen on their heads, you would find the good plough-mould on the boots of at least seventy-five. They have known in their boyhood the chill before sunrise, and the cool of the evening on the naked chest; the sight, sound, and smell of the worked earth; the hot, dry, rustling cornland before the reapers go in; and the secrets of the dark and tempting barns. They give to La Terre the reverence they deny to some other gods: and she repays their worship.

There is a Town by a great River, where they hold agricultural shows on the main boulevard, attaching electric-power wires casually to the tree-trunks, with no more protection than an occasional warning that, if you touch them, you will perish. (With us, a pensioned Civil Servant would guard every one.) They sell, under the cool shadows of the trees, fascinating farm appliances from beehives to wine-presses. Once I asked an agent how long a certain manure-pump would last—*marche* being the word I used. The answer was illuminating. “If you leave it lying out in the winters, as

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you English do, it will not *marche* more than two years. Give it shelter and it will *marche* for ten." That is truth. No one can calculate how much the English farmer loses by sheer neglect of his tools, and by the sloth at the careless end of the day or season.

And in this same town is a flower-market, where each morning people attend whose little carts are drawn by dogs. The first business of every dog is to assure himself that all his friends and enemies in the square are present. To each, then, the proper word. That delivered, each dog lies down under his cart in silence till market closes and all go home. I was interested in a largish, square-mouthed, black fellow, whose zeal to arrive was only equalled by his choking anxiety to get away. I would have talked to him, but he told me that he was responsible for the cart, and was devoid of social accomplishments.

Afterwards, I foregathered with an old man who carried baggage from the railway station to quiet boarding-houses. His team was a fawn-coloured lady of seven varieties, fresh from maternal duty, and a composite black-and-white pointer. They were delivering a portmanteau at the time, and with some parade; for the lady who received it was evidently friend of all three. "Yes," said the old man when she had gone. "These two mix themselves in all my affairs. It gives them importance.

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As guard-dogs, of course, they are useless. They would not interfere with any one because, you see, *any one* may come out to take a trunk. In *our* business we must ingratiate ourselves with our *clientèle*." (The bitch fawned and feathered round my knees for proof of it.) "Other dogs are different? That is true. You tried to talk to that black one in the Flower Market? *But* he was in sole charge of his cart! Monsieur, it may serve you to remember that you should never speak to a single dog on duty. Two perhaps may be polite, but one . . . not so often."

Then he showed me how his team could pull on demand, going up hill.

"In theory why should a dog work at all?" I demanded.

"It is not a theory. It is logic. Because a dog is an animal of intelligence. He knows right and wrong—especially injustice. He loves a position of trust. It gives him his point of honour—his opportunity for devotion. Like a woman in effect. Now, *she* here has three little ones at home. She will feed them at *déjeuner* of course. But if I left her behind afterwards, she would bite *him* when he came back. Just like a woman again! Logically, also, dogs are too wise to be idle. It is an insult to them."

It cannot be easy to overthrow a people whose men, women, children, *and* dogs look on work as a

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natural part of life. With this virtue goes an acceptance of thrift in all things, which makes most things easy.

Again an illustration. At a big Paris post office a messenger entered to cash a money order and turned away from the wicket leaving one sou lying on the counter. The postal employé who had cashed him the order was serving another customer, and did not notice. But two well-dressed women in the queue instantly warned the messenger of his oversight, in that strict sudden staccato which a Frenchwoman reserves for serious affairs. It was not the amount that mattered but the principle. Call it sou-mindedness if you will. Myself, I respect it.

It makes for simplicity; the acceptance of hard living which fortifies the moral interior as small pebbles assist the digestion of fowls; and it allows its practitioner to be as extravagant as he pleases in speech and oratory. (The Englishman's inveterate habit of waste explains his inveterate habit of understatement.)

In the course of these years it occurred to me that there existed in France a civilisation at least coeval with ours; equally complete—not to say contented with itself; as incomprehensible as ours but complementary. What of civilisation since the fall of Rome had evolved itself appeared to me to have been due to one or other of those influences;

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the later systems being predatory, parvenu, or imposed. Therefore, what of civilisation was to continue lay in our united hands.

This idea precipitated itself out of talks, and experiences trivial or grave, the first part of which I have set down here.

II

Et ce n'est pas une vigilance d'un jour qui nous est demandée. Qui donc pourrait me surer l'ampleur des oscillations auxquelles cette guerre a donné cours, ou prédire en quelles limites de temps pourra s'enclorre l'évolution des conditions de vie mondialement successivement changées?

—GEORGES CLEMENCEAU.

FRANCE still remembers (but we have forgotten) how the shadow of war darkened over Europe from 1907 onwards when the watchword "World-Dominion or Downfall" was written, taught, prayed, preached, sculptured, set to music, and legislated for as a Gospel, an end, and a certainty. Part of my winters I then used to spend at a "sports" hotel in Switzerland frequented by German officers. On the day of their Kaiser's birthday, they would dine—very well—and talk and sing of The Day with great clarity and many threats against all mankind. And not the officers alone. I recall, out of many, an interesting conversation with a most respectable Town Councillor of Hamburg. He laid down for me the minimum of his country's requirements from England. They included an "order" by the "English Parliament" to our "Colonies" to abolish all tariffs against his country, etc., etc. Failing this, the English were to beware of the "Furor Teutonicus"

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—as it might have been *Ira Normanorum*. It was illuminating; it was as plain as the new railway sidings at Hamburg—plain as the Boche Press, or the way in which the German Colonies were armed and used as points of friction and blackmail all over the world. That was before Agadir. Could France or England say they had not been warned? . . .

What the French preparations were is known to us. The English argument was: "*Fi de manteau quand il fait beau.*" Peace being one hundred years old must, they said, be in the immutable order of "Civilisation." It followed, then, that even to teach respectable Englishmen to stand and walk without falling over each other and themselves was not only absurd but impious. Had we not an immediately effective Army of 80,000 as well as some Field Artillery? In view of the claims of "social reform" on the national purse, what more could be reasonably asked? Those were the years of nightmare!

In '13-'14 there was little pretence or concealment. The vital question was England's attitude. This was put to me, baldly enough, in a little hotel in Central France by a colonel of the 29th of the Line. He said, above a map, indicating the very place, "If you do not prolong our left *here*, you also will perish!" An Englishman who overheard him, remarked, "That man seemed very full of something or other. What was that *goshe* (*gauche*) he was talking about?"

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By chance or coincidence, it was about that time—late '13 or spring of '14—that I met again in Paris Monsieur Gustave Le Bon. It was as though the wheel had come full circle after thirty years. So, naturally, instead of questioning the future at the pleasant meal, we talked of the past.

A little later, in the hot staleness of an alternately chained and unchained newspaper's office,¹ an old man said to me, "It is for now! *They* will obey their orders. *We* shall not obey even ourselves." But Monsieur Clemenceau forgot that he had been Mayor of Montmartre during the Siege of '70 when, on his notification, the children of the quarter went to school through the shells.

Nor did he foresee that it would be laid upon him very soon to save his country.

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My next visit to France was at harvest time in the autumn of '15. The little Algerian copybooks had borne fruit in many places. There were multitudes of trains filled with Algerians, Senegalese, and Moroccan troops, commanded by a type of officer new to me and yet indescribably familiar since it handled native troops and delivered low-voiced orders in tongues whose cadence and inflection seemed on the point of giving me their mean-

¹This refers to a newspaper edited by Monsieur Clemenceau which was always in difficulties with the French Government of that day.

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ing. I asked if there were any difficulty as to Muhammedan food on campaign. I understood that they had not time to consider these things, but, in the case of the stricter sects, sheep and goats were killed after the orthodox Moslem fashion. Yes, so far as was known, all was quiet in North Africa. A man (Lyautey was the name) was in charge yonder, and there was also a certain quantity of wheat ready to ship to France when needed. A bearded, pale-eyed youth, older than his tortured years, told me this in the wreck of a courtyard while the remnant of a native battalion, just come out of action, cooked the evening meal over little fires, as in an Indian caravanserai.

In other places, I saw descendants of my old landlady of the Batignolles—slippered, untidy, voluble—dealing out bowls of soup to the *poilus*, or driving cows in ploughs not too far behind the shells. That is why I desire a colossal statue on one of the Seine bridges to that enduring woman who also stood fast and said: "*Faut pas s'en faire.*"

Of the men and officers of the French Army, it seemed to me that the demands of their normal national life had spared them some of the subconscious unease that weighed on our people. Accustomed by heredity and training to the food, exposure, and wasted hours at manœuvres, to lack of privacy and the impact of crowds, they were released from too much desire to dwell on the emotions of civil life.

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Compare the verse and prose written by combatants of the two races, and you will, I fancy, see a difference.¹

On the other hand, the French were in their own country and sometimes very near their own homes. In war, as in love, the divided objective leads to the Devil. There was a young soldier from Amiens where his girl also lived. His battalion came, at last, to lie within a few kilometres of the town. Twice he deserted, and twice France, who understands humanity, overlooked it. The third time he was tried and shot in a little chalk-pit within sight of the Amiens road. I had the tale from a child, who told it as savages tell—without comment.

And here is another tale, the authenticity of which I have not yet arrived at. It is ascribed to a General of the kind which is everywhere at unexpected hours. Very early one morning he came across a firing-party, etc., on their way to their duty. The condemned had been found asleep, worn out, on sentry in a front-line trench. The General, who knew his *dossier*, said to him, "You do not die be-

¹The two schools are alike, it seems to me, in the sincere angularity and rigidity of their literary frame-work. Is this because the writers had lived for years among naked beams and girders, shattered walls, and harshly interrupted outlines? Their insistence on obscure personal moods and minute phenomena observed at close range was explained to me by a man who said that, when one lies for hours under machine-gun fire in a shell-hole or a tobacco field, one concentrates, for sanity's sake, on the veining of some single leaf; the union of two water-drops; or the slow deliquescence of mud which releases a pebble on the slope of a crater. The result appears in the verses. It may be so.

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cause of any disgraceful act on your part; but because your death will save the lives of others. It takes more of courage to die thus. So, I will come with you." His arm around the man, the General accompanied him, and, just before those eyes ceased to see, saluted. There are several Generals whom I could credit with such an act, but I should like to know who it was.¹

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At last there arrived what was called—too justly, as one sees now—an Armistice; and the late President Woodrow Wilson entered to create a new world for us, with no authority whatever from his countrymen to make any arrangements in their name. (His political party was, at the moment, if I remember, in an electoral minority of 1,200,000 votes.)

His countrymen, through their representatives, repudiated, therefore, all the arrangements that he had made. These would have pledged England and the U. S. A. to assist France in event of future German attack, and would have stabilised the future. But a people whose origins, *ex necessitate*, must have abjured, individually and in writing, all European connections, do not readily embrace external responsibilities. The United States cleared her skirts of the imbroglio with the alacrity of a

¹I have since learned it was the late General Maud'huy.

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shocked schoolmistress. Ethnologically this was inevitable; objectively it was very comic; but, in its consequences, never was so far-reaching a refusal nor confusion more incalculable.

Yet, remember, the importation of the United States into the war was due to our common faults—our common inadequate preparations; our divided counsels and our national follies.

There followed, presently, a passionate propaganda that “Civilisation” should “put Germany on her feet” because she was in economic ruin and her heart had changed. After “Civilisation” had sufficiently studied that ruin and satisfied herself, at some cost, of the worthlessness of German currency, the mark returned to parity as a machine-gun rehoists itself over the apparently abandoned trench. The manœuvre to abolish her internal debt cost Germany no more than a few thousand old and unusable persons wiped out, perhaps by starvation. It was magnificent, and it was the first step of the real war which began at a quarter-past eleven on the 11th November 1918.

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My duties as one of the British Imperial War Graves Commission took me for the next few years over the devastated areas—from that obliteration of all things which had been the Ypres Salient to all but obliterated Rheims, of whose fifteen thou-

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sand houses thirty-five, I think, remained intact.

At first the Commission's great camions, equipped like ships, would push out into oceans of weeds to discover where lay the rough cemeteries of the early years. They would be guided sometimes by voices out of the earth or from beneath indistinguishable bivouacs, saying: "Monsieur, this was Flers," or whatever might be the name of the wreckage that had once carried a name.

And one met faces that seemed as though fire had passed over them—faces that hurried from one place to another asking for news of relatives—of women and children—who had utterly disappeared during the German "occupations." What would have been the effect on British mentality if even one hundred civilians had "disappeared" after a raid on England? And what if all the country between Canterbury and Bournemouth had been passed through a sieve for four years?

Then there came up out of that soil of France which had made them, old men and women, each with a long-handled spade, to refill the trenches, and the gun-pits. One was never out of sight of these labouring couples. At Rheims they impeded the Annamites and Senegalese who coiled away the endless barbed-wire. At Soissons and the border towns eastward, they assisted the removal of debris from the suburbs thus: "But this is *our* land. Look! Here was our garden. Here was the well. Mon-

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sieur, *mon Capitaine*, we tell you that *this is our land.*" And, all along the Somme, where troops gathered and exploded waste ammunition in the bellowing pits and hollows, they laboured like their own lost oxen with almost as little head for other interests. Theirs seemed an impossible task, even in the second year when the earth began to be cicatrised with white sutures to prove that the gaping trenches were satiated.

One followed these labours as the inadequate passenger seconds, with useless movements of shoulders and feet, the efforts of his chauffeur. It was like a relief after toothache when the first milliner's shop, with new hats, reopened in a small town near Laventie, which for years had resembled a decayed jaw-bone packed with green teeth.

The devastations were so scientific that one could convey no idea of them to visiting strangers. They would look at a smear of triturated brick-dust on an expanse of pitted mud and say: "But do you mean to tell me that there was ever anything there at all?" I imagine that this was one of the reasons why an English expert, from whom we seem destined still to suffer, pronounced at the Paris Conference that the French had "*effrontément exagéré les revendications des régions dévastées.*"

In this wandering employ one came upon very many people seen unguarded in their heights and deeps, from every angle of despair, sleek profiteer-

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ing, resolution, stunned agony, and almost insane cynicism. Often, too, in hideously ludicrous predicaments. There was a point near some brick-fields where our armies had once touched and where the dead lay close. A French officer—too young for that work—was leading with the human debris. To him came an elderly widow (for the moment mad) in search of her husband's body. It was there, she said. Her business was to find it. Tenderly and repeatedly, the young man explained that such matters were not to be looked upon, even could she indicate the very spot. She did not hear him. The trench must be searched from end to end. She would wait. At last, when the horror of appeal and denunciation had passed all limit, a woman of the people led her away. The boy wiped his forehead and gasped—"It is not fair. It is not fair. But it is always happening!" In other places, the peasant women sold butter and eggs to our searchers for the dead, and religiously cheated them at every small turn. Then they would give up half a day in which they might have continued their practices, to gather and walk five miles with flowers to lay on some grave of our people. Equally devout in both duties. After all, mankind is but made of earth and water; and our hearts, like muddy streams, cleanse themselves as they go forward.

The two races had been utterly wearied of each other's enforced society through four years. (Think

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how one sickens after four hours in an overcrowded railway compartment!) There were a thousand points of friction and disagreement. But I think that the detail of that *chiffonnage* along the empty fronts acted as an anodyne. And I know that when a French mining company reinstalled its machinery on a site churned thirty feet deep by the gun-fire of years, they came on what remained of two of our dead. They halted everything, and—the great girders for the engine-beds hanging in the cranes—sent word ten miles to notify our people to take delivery.

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In '20 and '21 it seemed as though all the Muhammedan world was about to range itself against Western civilisation, and England in particular. At one point only the ring of menace was incomplete. France was not then passionately loyal to British interests in the East—so I asked questions. I was assured that there was nothing of importance stirring in any French Muhammedan zone. All sorts of native troops had, of course, been demobilised lately in North Africa. Doubtless some of them had gone home with a revolver or so in view of social engagements *en route*. And, perhaps, might have held up some tourists. But why not go and look—at the Department of Algiers, for instance?

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So I crossed to the Department of Algiers and found myself returned to a people almost identical in aspect, habit, and gesture with the Moslems among whom I had been brought up. But I understood not a word of their speech. It was like a dream in which one can only make signs to old friends.

They were serenely occupied with their own affairs, into which, it appeared, the French entered as not too exacting comrades. Much of the administration seemed casual and desultory—yet reaching its end as a French infantry attack drifts to the objective. There was a sufficiency, too, of that officialdom and legality with which the national genius adorns the façades of its administration; but one felt that it could be more easily outflanked here than in other lands. The mystery baffled me. Let us concede that Islam in Africa is more homogeneous, less disorientated by the proximity of caste, than Islam in Asia. Granted that there are no organised bodies of public opinion in France to advocate the claims of the ineffective in order to justify their own inefficiencies. Granted, though Colonial officials deny this, that Paris does not eternally and infernally interfere with the man on the spot. Even so, how is the indescribable ease—*détente* if that be the right word—of the administrative atmosphere reached and maintained? How is the parallelism of the two races achieved, so that

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one does not make, nor the other demand, allowances? I fell back on Gustave Le Bon's formula delivered thirty-five years before: "*C'est l'emprise morale.*" Those little copy-books of my Exposition had done their work.

(I suppress here—though it was very beautiful—a denunciation of certain French writers who would represent their Colonial officers as mournfully devoured, beneath tropical moons, by a passion for drugs and fat black females.)

A Mayor of Algiers who held the city both in and by the hand told me a secret. "It is Paris," said he, "upon whom we depend in the last resort for some of our diplomacy. Our Algerian Deputies go there, of course, to take their seats in the Chambers. Many of our people know Paris, and more since this war. Good! If any important man out there," he pointed largely towards the Niger, "feels restless, or neglected, or thinks he would like to be a Prophet, he can always visit Paris. It is only a few days away. Perhaps he is invited there to talk. So he goes. For the rest?—oh! Paris charges herself with *that!* And he comes back more contented."

I had never thought of so simple a device! Were I a potential Mahdi with a grievance, the spectacle of the Place de la Concorde flood-lit in a May night would exercise a certain influence on me also.

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Beyond a tourist's experience of Algiers and an interesting night in microscopical, but aggressively French, Chandernagore where defaulting debtors from Calcutta used to take refuge, I know nothing of French colonies. But one result of the labours there was delivered to me *en bloc*, at the French Colonial Exposition only three years ago, where the illuminated splendour and mystery of the Ang-Kor façade imposed its significance upon the most hardened.

For me, once again, the wheel of life came full circle. Vincennes had been no part of my Paris: but the packing-cases; the rosetted officials running everywhere to overtake or countermand instructions; the furious erection of the stalls of the concessionaires (their sweetmeats were not so satisfying as in '78); the smell of trampled turf, raw timber, and sweating workmen, filled me with the august pride of a proprietor. And when I was told of the annoying little *contretemps* and delays, "incidental to all expositions but which would not interest you, Monsieur," I kept my face and pretended complete detachment.

Also, I was talking with ghosts—good and justified shadows out of that past when a few bewildered Africans and some copy-books were all that France showed the world of her Colonies. And now, at every turn—easy, assured, and interested—I beheld her peoples of many races and lands. They were

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each integral and unquestioning parts of a system which had been worked out on the line laid down long ago. One heard the triumphant ghosts summarising it. Listen! "Ye-es. You might do worse than look at the educational show-case. The French have some sound notions about their Colonies." . . . "My dear *confrère*, I tell you we must act so as to assimilate and to civilise those races according to the measure of *their* capacities. *Not* ours! Is it not so? He there—that boy of yours—may see it perhaps, but not we."

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As it is, I am well content with the multitude of beautiful things found by chance in small local museums, in neglected churches, in villages beneath unadvertised chateaux which do not as yet sell post-cards. There is richer treasure of this sort in France than with us—perhaps because their rulers in the past, when they felt religious or angry, merely slew men. Ours, more respectable, contented themselves with murdering the irreplaceable work of artists. I went, several times, in search of plunder of the eye, with a friend whose passion was thirteenth-century glass of a blue which is now restricted to the Angels. We discovered one very small, very accessible window in a decayed little church which we thought might be exchanged for something really modern and artistic from Limoges, or even Thiers. But it

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appears that these trifles are known and recorded—probably by the Church: certainly by the Police. So all the glass I possess now is one of those rings which the *poilus* used to make out of material that fell into their hands at Rheims.

And, because I said that the brick bulk of Albi Cathedral, seen against the moon, hit the soul like a hammer, my friend showed me vast cold Byzantine cathedrals where no one seemed to enter except, at its hour, which is worth waiting for, the single sun-shaft through the bull's-eye that fumbles round the empty dome and withdraws.

Once at Chartres, when the big organ was being repaired, we got leave to go out on the roof and look at the reverse of the windows. We found that every square millimetre of the glass had been microscopically etched by the years: inlaid here with fine lines of dirt blown up from the street; roughened in places to a tooth-like rough drawing-paper or rubbed down to the silky softness of uncut diamond; studded with minute iridescent efflorescences and conchoidal pittings, and everywhere worked into a thousand varying planes to sift and glorify the light. So we saw that it is not Man that makes perfection but the weather which his works must endure. Those were good journeys.

Years later, I came across another side of inexhaustible France. It was after the return of Alsace, when the Head Quarters of the Administration

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(what in English we should call "Government House") had been purged of Boche memories and refurnished in detail with tapestries, mirrors, carpets, porcelain, and the rest. It was of the best; of one period; superbly and officially French, and impressing itself on humanity as though it had been in place since Attila. (*Emprise morale* again!)

I asked a friend, an Alsatian General, whence the flood of material had come. "From Marianne," was the reply. "She had all sorts of things like these in her stocking—when she needs them. You have seen the Élysée?" "One sees nothing at the Élysée," I retorted, "except the backs of large Generals. Where has all this been stored? Who issues it? Above all, who has arranged it here?" "Not my business," said the General. "Ask Marianne."

My relations with that lady had been strained because I had "doubled" on some temporary bridge in the devastated area, and she, through her agents, had talked to me as though I would overthrow the Republic. But she is an unequalled housekeeper. Think what it must have been in the old days when Rome lavished the best she had on her first external possession—her beloved Provincia!

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En ce coing sont les Saxons, Estrelins, Ostrogotz et Alemans, peuples jadis invincibles maintenant aber keist et subjuguez par ung petit homme estropié. Ils nous de-

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mandent vengeance, secours, restitution de leur premier bon sens et liberté anticque.—RABELAIS, LV. IV.

Since the first need of the unrepentant sinner is to make "a face for himself," the first German manœuvre for position in the real war was to uproot the idea of Boche responsibility for the not-wholly-successful preliminary campaign. This they achieved in their own country by furious outcries and legislative enactments. It is, I believe, now a criminal offence for a Boche to breathe a doubt of his country's innocence. (Read "La Guerre" for "L'Amour m'a refait une virginité," and it is Frau Marion Delorme who declaims now.) But their technique with the foreigner filled me with professional jealousy as a purveyor of fiction vastly inferior. Many of our people conformed to this pressure, for England alone had lost more than eight hundred thousand dead of physique and conviction, and a large number of living who had been crippled or laid aside. Their places were taken in the public eye and ear by defeatists, intellectualists, Socialists, Communists, women enfranchised, and those whom four years of repressed and contagious fear had tried too severely. To these the thesis of the relativity of war-guilt offered a door for escape from themselves. If the war had been a cosmic dog-fight into which the nations had been drawn by cosmic hysteria, then all who had assisted to weaken, distract, delay, and confuse their own country and to encour-

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age the enemy were, indeed, the martyr-souls and prophets they had believed themselves to be. They could sleep at last with approving consciences, and wake to demand for what the war had been fought. (It was, of course, that their species might survive to achieve office, honour, and influence.)

A certain amount of the same gas was liberated on the French front, but the national response was more feeble. The French were occupied with reconstruction, the gyrations of the franc, and, as in England, with strikes. Also they knew more than we did of the measures the Boche was taking to rehabilitate himself materially. He borrowed on all sides to recondition his untouched factories and his quite adequate railways. This interested the United States enormously. They are even more interested to-day, but not so polite. I am no financial expert, but a gentleman with a camion in charge of four enormous white sows with golden hair whom I overtook on the Digne-Grenoble road was good enough to explain the system. "Yes. He will borrow from all who will lend, and they will *all* go the same way. There is a fellow in our village doing the same thing. That is how he pays his debts. It is high finance. What you and I call civil banditry." That perspicacious pig-breeder spoke sitting between his four ladies, who looked like the fat goddesses in *Orphée aux Enfers*. He was more accurate than any expert.

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There is a belief that the French are narrow and vindictive. It may be true, but the same man who would consider a wireless cabinet a wicked waste, tunes in to all European wave-lengths. England is like a ship moored off a mainland which we visit occasionally. We do not feel at Calais that the earth under foot vibrates sustainedly as far as Vladivostok, Dantzic, and the far South. It is, I think, his continentality of experience and intuition that gives the Frenchman his unshaken poise irrespective of circumstances or office at the moment; his power of useful words, his cynicism, and, above all, the quality of his humour.

After the stabilisation of the franc¹ and the general reduction of personnel and salaries organised by Monsieur Poincaré, I wished to hear from him the human effect of the measure. "It has been as one would expect," said he. "All the Préfets of all the Departments are running about telling their subordinates that, if the affair had rested with them, they would have increased all salaries. Then they say, 'But it is that Poincaré! Do you know the old brute? No? Well, I *do*. He is impossible—him and his idea!' And after all that is what I have been put here for."

¹Though I lost some money by it, and had been severely reprehended during the war for hinting that it was inevitable, I could not but admire the pudicity of France's four-fifths repudiation. Do you remember the line in *Monsieur, Madame, et Bébé*, "Protect me, O Lord, but do not protect me too much"?

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And, apropos to our English system of business by cheque which makes our taxation so disgustingly effective, he furnished an illustration. "Do you know what a litre jar is? Yes, it holds a litre; but it can also hold ten thousand francs in small paper. You fill one with your economies. Then you bury it. Then you begin to fill another. That is all. In the villages now, men say of their richer neighbours, 'He must be at least a two- or three-jar man.' No! It is not so easy to collect taxes when the money is *there!*" And the square thumb was turned towards the carpet.

I love that imperturbable Lorrainer.

Towards the end of his life, Clemenceau, who had honoured me with his friendship, permitted me to report myself to him when I came through Paris. On the last occasion he was completing, I believe, some personal records, and the twilight into which he retired was alive and populous. He talked to himself as much as to me, ranging from Thiers and Gambetta and a picturesque duel of Rochefort's, to the statesmen of the present. His trip to India had interested him greatly. He had caught malaria in Calcutta, and the doctors there administered medicines "out of bottles of the same pattern as my great-great-grandmother used. They said if I went North by train, I should die. I said, 'Then I will go North, and if necessary I will die in your accursed trains.' But, you see, I lived."

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“That was because of the medicine in the bottles,” I ventured.

“It was not. It was because I was so angry with the bottles!” He threw himself back and laughed. (I should not have dared to dose The Tiger when he was enjoying a temperature.)

That made me bold to ask, “And, now, Master, how do you think of men as you have dealt with them and they with you in all these years?”

The answer came slowly. “Yes. I have known men? . . . Yes, I have known them They are not so bad. . . . After all these years? . . . They are not so bad after all.”

There was the English handshake and then the accolade, as it had been in the office of *L'Homme Enchaîné* a thousand years ago.

And these are some of the reasons why I love France.

THE EYES OF ASIA



A RETIRED GENTLEMAN

A RETIRED GENTLEMAN

From Bishen Singh Saktawut, Subedar Major, 215th Indurgurh [Todd's] Rajputs, now at Lyndhurst, Hampshire, England, this letter is sent to Madhu Singh, Sawant, Risaldar Major [retired] 146th [Dublana] Horse, on his fief which he holds under the Thakore Sahib of Pech at Bukani by the River, near Chitursthira, Kotah, Rajputana, written in the fifth month of the year 1916, English count.

HAVING experienced five months of this war, I became infected with fever and a strong coldness of the stomach [rupture]. The doctor ordered me out of it altogether. They have also cut me with knives for a wound on my leg. It is now healed but the strength is gone, and it is very frightened of the ground. I have been in many hospitals for a long time. At this present I am living in a hospital for Indian troops in a forest-reservation called "New," which was established by a King's order in ages past. There is no order for my return to India. I do not desire it. My Regiment has now gone out of France—to Egypt, or Africa. My officer Sahibs are for the most part dead or in hospitals. During a railway journey when two people sit side by side for two hours one feels the absence of the other when he alights. How great then was my anguish at being severed from

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my Regiment after thirty-three years! Now, however, I am finished. If I return to India I cannot drill the new men between my two crutches. I should subsist in my village on my wound-pension among old and young who have never seen war. Here I have great consideration. Though I am useless they are patient with me.

Having knowledge of the English tongue, I am sometimes invited to interpret between those in the hospital for the Indian troops and visitors of high position. I advance eminent visitors, such as relatives of Kings and Princes, into the presence of the Colonel Doctor Sahib. I enjoy a small room apart from the hospital wards. I have a servant. The Colonel Doctor Sahib examines my body at certain times. I am forbidden to stoop even for my crutches. They are instantly restored to me by orderlies and my friends among the English. I come and go at my pleasure where I will, and my presence is solicited by the honourable.

You say I made a mistake to join the war at the end of my service? I have endured five months of it. Come you out and endure two and a half. You are three years younger than I. Why do you sit at home and drill new men? Remember:

The Brahman who steals,
The widow who wears ornaments,
The Rajput who avoids the battle,
Are only fit for crows' meat.

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You write me that this is a war for young men? The old are not entirely useless. The Badshah [the King] himself gave me the medal for fetching in my captain from out of the wires upon my back. That work caused me the coldness in my stomach. Old men should not do coolie-work. Your cavalry were useless in France. Infantry can fight in this war—not cavalry. It is as impossible for us to get out of our trenches and exterminate the enemy as it is for the enemy to attack us. Doubtless the cavalry brigades will show what they are made of in Egypt or Persia. This business in France is all Artillery work and mines. The blowing up of the Chitoree Bastion when Arjoon went to Heaven waving his sword, as the song says, would not be noticed in the noise of this war.

The nature of the enemy is to go to earth and flood us with artillery of large weight. When we were in the trenches it was a burden. When we rested in the villages we found great ease. As to our food, it was like a bunnia's marriage-feast. Everything given, nothing counted. Some of us—especially among your cavalry—grew so fat that they were compelled to wrestle to keep thin. This is because there was no marching.

The nature of the enemy is to commit shame upon women and children, and to defile the shrines of his own faith with his own dung. It is done by him as a drill. We believed till then they were some sort

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of caste apart from the rest. We did not know they were outcaste. Now it is established by the evidence of our senses. They attack on all fours running like apes. They are especially careful for their faces. When death is certain to them they offer gifts and repeat the number of their children. They are very good single shots from cover.

It is the nature of the enemy to shower seductions from out of their air-machines on our troops in the lines. They promised such as would desert that they would become Rajahs among them. Some of the men went over to see if this were true. No report came back. In this way we cleaned out five bad characters from our Company exactly as it used to be in the little wars on the Border. May the enemy be pleased with them! No man of any caste disgraced our Regiment.

The nature of the enemy in this war is like the Nat [juggler] who is compelled to climb a pole for his belly's sake. If he does not climb he starves. If he stops he falls down. This is my thought concerning the enemy.

Now that our troops have gone out of France, the war is entirely between the enemy and the English, etc., etc. Both sides accordingly increased the number and the size of their guns. The new wounded officers in the English hospital say that the battles of even yesterday are not to be compared with the battle of to-day. Tell this to those who have re-

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turned and who boast. Only fools will desire more war when this war is ended. Their reward will be an instant extinction on account of the innumerable quantity of arms, munitions, etc., etc., which will be left in the hands of the experts. Those who make war henceforward will be as small jackals fighting beneath the feet of elephants. This Government has abundance of material, and fresh strength is added every hour. Let there be no mistake. The foolish have been greatly deceived in these matters by the nature of the English which is in the highest degree deceptive. Everything is done and spoken upside-down in this country of the English. He who has a thousand says: "It is but a scant hundred." The possessor of palaces says: "It is a hut," and the rest in proportion. Their boast is not to boast. Their greatness is to make themselves very small. They draw a curtain in front of all they do. It is as difficult to look upon the naked face of their achievements as in our country upon the faces of women.

It is not true there is no caste in England. The mark of the high castes, such as Ul or Baharun [Earl or Baron], is that they can perform any office, such as handling the dead, wounds, blood, etc., without loss of caste. The Maharanee of the Nurses in the English Hospital which is near our Hospital is by caste Baharanee [Baroness]. I resort thither daily for society and enlightenment on the habits of this

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people. The high castes are forbidden to show curiosity, appetite, or fear in public places. In this respect they resemble troops on parade. Their male children are beaten from their ninth year to their seventeenth year, by men with sticks. Their women are counted equal with their men. It is reckoned as disgraceful for a Baharanee to show fear when lights are extinguished in the hospital on account of bomb-dropping air-ships, as for an Ul to avoid battle. They do not blacken each other's faces by loud abuse, but by jests spoken in a small voice.

The nature of the young men of high caste is as the nature of us Rajputs. They do not use opium, but they delight in horses, and sport and women, and are perpetually in debt to the moneylender. They shoot partridge and they are forced to ride foxes because there are no wild pig here. They know nothing of hawking or quail-fighting, but they gamble up to the hilt on all occasions and bear losses laughing. Their card-play is called Baraich [Bridge?]. They belittle their own and the achievements of their friends, so long as that friend faces them. In his absence they extol his deeds. They are of cheerful countenance. When they jest, they respect honour. It is so also with their women. The Nurses in the Hospital of my Baharanee where I resort for society jest with me as daughters with a father. They say that they will be stricken with grief if I return to India. They call me Dada

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which is father also in their tongue. Though I am utterly useless they are unwearied of me. They themselves hasten to restore me my crutches when I let them fall. None of these women lament their dead openly. The eldest son of my Baharanee at the English Hospital where I am made welcome was slain in battle. The next morning after the news my Baharanee let loose the plate-pianos [turned on the gramophones] for the delectation of the wounded. It comes into my mind to suggest to you that our women are unable to stand by themselves.

When the Badshah commanded me to his Palace to receive the medal, I saw all the wonders and entertainments of the city of London. There was neither trouble nor expense. My Baharanee gave orders I should inhabit her own house in that city. It was in reality a palace filled with carpets, gilt furniture, marbles, mirrors, silks, velvets, carvings, etc., etc. Hot water ran in silver pipes to my very bedside. The perfumed baths were perpetually renewed. When it rained daily I walked in a glass pavilion filled with scented flowers. I inhabited here ten days. Though I was utterly useless they were unwearied of me. A companion was found me. He was a Risaldar of Dekkani Horse, a man of family, wounded in the arms. We two received our medals together. We saw the King's Palace, and the custom of the Guard Mount in the mornings

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daily. Their drill is like stone walls, but the nature of the English music is without any meaning. We two saw the great temple, Seyn Pol [St. Paul's?], where their dead are. It is as a country enclosed in a house. My companion ascended to the very rooftop and saw all the city. We are nothing beside these people. We two also saw the Bird Garden [Zoological Gardens] where they studiously preserve all sorts of wild animals, even down to jackals and green parrots. It is the nature of the English to consider all created beings as equal. The Badshah himself wears khaki. His son the Shahzada is a young man who inhabits the trenches except when he is forbidden. He is a keen son of the sword.

It is true that trains run underneath the city in all directions. We descended into the earth upon a falling platform [lift] and travelled. The stopping-places are as close as beads on a thread. The doors of the carriages are guarded with gates that strike out sideways like cobras. Each sitter is allowed a space upon a divan of yellow canework. When the divans are full the surplus hang from the roof by leathers. Though our carriage was full, place was made for us. At the end of our journey the train was halted beyond its lawful time that we might come forth at ease. The trains were full of English soldiers. All castes of the English are now soldiers. They are become like us Rajputs—as many people so many soldiers.

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We two saw houses, shops, carriages, and crowds till our souls were broken. The succeeding days were as the first, without intermission. We begged at last to be excused from the sight of the multitudes and the height of the houses.

We two agreed that understanding is most needful in this present age. We in India must get education before all things. Hereafter we Rajputs must seriously consider our arrangements in all respects—in our houses as well as in our fields, etc., etc. Otherwise we become nothing. We have been deceived by the nature of the English. They have not at any time shown us anything of their possessions or their performances. We are not even children beside them. They have dealt with us as though they were themselves children talking *chotee boli* [little talk]. In this manner the ill-informed have been misled. Nothing is known in India of the great strength of this people. Make that perfectly clear to all fools. Why should we who serve the Government have the blood of the misinformed on our heads when they behave foolishly? This people have all the strength. There is no reason except the nature of the English that anything in their dominions should stand up which has been ordered to lie down. It is only their soft nature which saves evil from destruction. As the saying is, “We thought it was only an armed horseman. Behold, it is an elephant bearing a tower!”

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It is in my mind that the glory of us Rajputs has become diminished since the old days. In the old days, our Princesses charged in battle beside their men, and the name of the clans was great. Then all Rajputs were brothers and sisters. How has this come about? What man of us now relies upon the advice of his womenkind in any matter outside? In this country and in France the women understand perfectly what is needful in the day of trial. They say to their men: "Add to the renown of your race. We will attend to the rest through the excellent education which this just Government has caused us to receive." Thus the men's hearts are lightened when they go to the war. They confide securely in their well educated women. How is it with our horses? Shape and size from the sire: temper and virtue from the dam. If the mare endures thirst, the colt can run without water. Man's nature also draws from the spindle-side. Why have we allowed forgetfulness to impair our memory? This was well known in the old days. In this country arrangements for washing clothes exist in almost every house, such as tubs, boards, and irons, and there is a machine to squeeze water out of the washed clothes. They do not conceal their astonishment at our methods. Our women should be taught. Only by knowledge is anything achieved. Otherwise we are as children running about naked under the feet of grown men and women.

See what our women have already accomplished by education! The Thakore Sahib of Philawat was refused leave from the Government to go to war, on account of his youth. Yet his sister, who wedded the Rana of Haliana, had prepared a contingent of infantry out of her own dower-villages. They were set down in the roll of the Princes' contingents as stretcher-bearers: they being armed men out of the desert. She sent a telegram to her brother, commissioning him to go with them as Captain of stretcher-bearers: he being a son of the Sword for seventy generations. Thus cleverly he received permission from the Government to go. When they reached France he stole them out of the camp, every one of his sister's men, and joined himself to the Rajah of Kandesur's contingent. Those two boys together made their name bright in the trenches. The Philawat boy was hit twice and came to hospital here. The Government sent him a sealed letter by messenger where he lay. He had great fear of it, because what he and Kandesur had done was without orders. He expected a reprimand from the Government and also from his uncle because of the succession. But the letter was an announcement of decoration from the Shahzada himself, and when he had read it, the child hid his face beneath the sheets and wept for joy. I saw and heard this from my very bed in the hospital. So his Military Cross and the rest was due to the Ma-

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haranee of Haliana, his sister. Before her marriage she attended instruction in England at the great school for maidens called Ghatun [Girton?]. She goes unveiled among Englishmen, laying hold upon her husband's right arm in public assemblies in open daylight. And Haliana is sunborn.¹ Consider it! Consider it!

Do not be concerned if I do not return. I have seen all the reports of all the arrangements made for burial, etc., etc., in this country. They are entirely in accordance with our faith. My youth and old age have been given to the service of the Government, and if the Government can be served with the dust of my bones it is theirs. Now that my boy is dead in Arabia I have also withdrawn my petition to the Government for a land-grant. What use? The house is empty.

Man does not remain in the world
But his name remains.
Though Jam and Suliman are gone
Their names are not lost.

When that arrives, my Maharanee Baharanee will despatch to you *posh-free par parshel-posh* [post-free per parcel-post] my Cross that the Badshah gave me, and a letter from my Captain Sahib's Mother with whose brother I served when I was a man. As for my debts, it does not trouble me in the least that the moneylenders should be so troubled

¹The royal clans of the Rajputs derive their descent from the Sun.

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about them. But for the Army and the Police the people would have killed all moneylenders. Give my duty to the Rana of Pech, for his line were my father's overlords from the first. He can hang up my sword beside my father's.

Do not be concerned for whatever overtakes me. I have sifted the sands of France: now I sift those of England. Here I am held in the greatest kindness and honour imaginable by all whom I meet. Though I am useless as a child yet they are unwearied of me. The nurses in my Maharanee Baharanee's Hospital, which is by day a home and a house to me, minister to me as daughters to a father. They run after me and rebuke me if I do not wear a certain coat when it rains daily. I am like a dying tree in a garden of flowers.

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Scene. Pavilion and Dome Hospital, Brighton
1915.

What talk is this, Doctor Sahib? This Sahib says he will be my letter-writer? Just as though he were a bazar letter-writer at home? . . . What are the Sahib's charges? Two annas? Too much! I give one. . . . No, No! Sahib. You shouldn't have come down so quickly. You've forgotten, we Sikhs always bargain. . . . Well, one anna be it. I will give a bond to pay it out of my wound-pension when I get home. Sit by the side of my bed. . . .

This is the trouble, Sahib. My brother who holds his land and works mine, outside Amritsar City, is a fool. He is older than I. He has done his service and got one wound out of it in what they used to call war—that child's play in the Tirah years ago. He thinks himself a soldier! But that is not his offence. He sends me postcards, Sahib—scores of postcards—whining about the drouth or the taxes, or the crops, or our servants' pilferings or some such trouble. He doesn't know what trouble means. I want to tell him he is a fool. . . . What? True! True! One can get money and land but never a new brother. But for all that, he is a fool.

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. . . *Is he a good farmer? Sa-heeb! If an Amritsar Sikh isn't a good farmer, a hen doesn't know an egg. . . . Is he honest? As my own pet yoke of bullocks. He is only a fool. My belly is on fire now with knowledge I never had before, and I wish to impart it to him—to the village elders—to all people. Yes, that is true, too. If I keep calling him a fool, he will not gain any knowledge. . . . Let me think it over on all sides! Aha! Now that I have a bazar-writer of my own I will write a book—a very book of a letter to my fool of a brother. . . . And now we will begin. Take down my words from my lips to my foolish old farmer-brother:*

YOU will have received the notification of my wounds which I took in Franceville. Now that I am better of my wounds, I have leisure to write with a long hand. Here we have paper and ink at command. Thus it is easy to let off the fumes of our hearts. Send me all the news of all the crops and what is being done in our village. This poor parrot is always thinking of Kashmir.

“As to my own concerns, the trench in which I sat was broken by a *bomb-golee* as large as our smallest grain-chest.” [*He'll go off and measure it at once!*] “It dropped out of the air. It burst, the ground was opened and replaced upon seven of us. I and two others took wounds. Sweetmeats

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are not distributed in war-time. God permitted my soul to live, by means of the doctors' strong medicines. I have inhabited six hospitals before I came here to England. This hospital is like a temple. It is set in a garden beside the sea. We lie on iron cots beneath a dome of gold and colours and glittering glass work, with pillars." [*You know that's true, Sahib. We can see it—but d'you think he'll believe? Never! Never!*] "Our food is cooked for us according to our creeds—Sikh, or Brahmin, or Mussulman and all the rest—— When a man dies he is also buried according to his creed. Though he has been a groom or a sweeper, he is buried like some great land-owner. Do not let such matters trouble you henceforth. Living or dying, all is done in accordance with the ordinance of our faiths. Some low-caste men, such as sweepers, counting upon the ignorance of the doctors here, make a claim to be of reputable caste in order that they may get consideration. If a sweeper in this hospital says he is forbidden by his caste to do certain things he is believed. He is not beaten." [*Now, why is that, Sahib? They ought to be beaten for pretending to have caste, and making a mock of the doctors. I should slipper them publicly—but—I'm not the Government. We will go on.*]

"The English do not despise any sort of work. They are of many castes, but they are all one kind in this. On account of my wounds, I have not yet

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gone abroad to see English fields or towns." [*It is true I have been out twice in a motor-carriage, Sahib, but that goes too quickly for a man to see shops, let alone faces. We will not tell him that. He does not like motor-cars.*] "The French in Franceville work continually without rest. The French and the Phlahamahnds [Flamands], who are a caste of French, are Kings among cultivators. As to cultivation—" [*Now, I pray, Sahib, write quickly for I am as full of this matter as a buffalo of water*] "their fields are larger than ours, without any divisions, and they do not waste anything except the width of the footpath. Their land descends securely from father to son upon payment of tax to the Government, just as in civilised countries. I have observed that they have their land always at their hearts and in their mouths, just as in civilised countries. They do not grow more than one crop a year, but this is recompensed to them because their fields do not need irrigation. The rain in Franceville is always sure and abundant and in excess. They grow all that we grow such as peas, onions, garlic, spinach, beans, cabbages and wheat. They do not grow small grains or millet, and their only spice is mustard. They do not drink water, but the juice of apples which they squeeze into barrels for that purpose. A full bottle is sold for two pice. They do not drink milk but there is abundance of it. It is all cow's milk, of which they make

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butter in a churn which is turned by a dog." [*Now, how shall we make my brother believe that? Write it large.*] "In Franceville, the dogs are both courteous and industrious. They play with the cat, they tend the sheep, they churn the butter, they draw a cart and guard it too. When a regiment meets a flock, the dogs of their own wisdom order the sheep to step to one side of the road. I have often seen this." [*Not one word of this will he or anyone in the villages believe, Sahib. What can you expect? They have never even seen Lahore City! We will tell him what he can understand.*] "Ploughs and carts are drawn by horses. Oxen are not used for these purposes in these villages. The field work is wholly done by old men and women and children, who can all read and write. The young men are all at the war. The war comes also to the people in the villages, but they do not regard the war because they are cultivators. I have a friend among the French—an old man in the village where the Regiment was established, who daily fills in the holes made in his fields by the enemy's shells with dirt from a long-handled spade. I begged him once to desist when we were together on this work, but he said that idleness would cause him double work for the day following. His grandchild, a very small maiden, grazed a cow behind a wood where the shells fell, and was killed in that manner. Our Regiment was told the news and

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they took an account of it, for she was often among them, begging buttons from their uniforms. She was small and full of laughter, and she had learned a little of our tongue." [*Yes. That was a very great shame, Sahib. She was the child of us all. We exacted a payment, but she was slain—slain like a calf for no fault. A black shame! . . . We will write about other matters.*]

"As to cultivation, there are no words for its excellence or for the industry of the cultivators. They esteem manure most highly. They have no need to burn cow-dung for fuel. There is abundance of charcoal. Thus, not irrigating nor burning dung for fuel, their wealth increases of itself. They build their houses from ancient times round about mountainous dung-heaps, upon which they throw all things in season. It is a possession from father to son, and increase comes forth. Owing to the number of Army horses in certain places there arises very much horse-dung. When it is excessive, the officers cause a little straw to be lit near the heaps. The French and the Phlahamahnds, seeing the smoke, assemble with carts, crying:—'What waste is this?' The officers reply: 'None will carry away this dung. Therefore, we burn it.' All the cultivators then entreat for leave to carry it away in their carts, be it only as much as two dogs can draw. By this device horse-lines are cleaned.

"Listen to one little thing. The women and the

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girls cultivate as well as the men in all respects.”
[*That is a true tale, Sahib. We know—but my brother knows nothing except the road to market.*]
“They plough with two and four horses as great as hills. The women of Franceville also keep the accounts and the bills. They make one price for everything. No second price is to be obtained by *any* talking. They cannot be cheated over the value of one grain. Yet of their own will they are generous beyond belief. When we come back from our work in the trenches, they arise at any hour and make us warm drinks of hot coffee and milk and bread and butter. May God reward these ladies a thousand times for their kindness!

“But do not throw everything upon God. I desire you will get me in Amritsar City a carpet, at the shop of Davee Sahai and Chumba Mall—one yard in width and one yard and a half in length, of good colour and quality to the value of forty rupees. The shop must send it with *all* charges paid, to the address which I have had written in English character on the edge of this paper. She is the lady of the house in which I was billeted in a village for three months. Though she was advanced in years and belonged to a high family, yet in the whole of those three months I never saw this old lady sit idle. Her three sons had gone to the war. One had been killed; one was in hospital, and a third, at that time, was in the trenches. She did not weep nor

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wail at the death or the sickness but accepted the dispensation. During the time I was in her house, she ministered to me to such an extent that I cannot adequately describe her kindness. Of her own free-will she washed my clothes, arranged my bed, and polished my boots daily for three months. She washed down my bedroom daily with hot water, having herself heated it. Each morning she prepared me a tray with bread, butter, milk and coffee. When we had to leave that village that old lady wept on my shoulder. It is strange that I had never seen her weep for her dead son, but she wept for me. Moreover, at parting she would have had me take a *fi-farang* [five franc] note for expenses on the road." [*What a woman! What a woman! I had never believed such women existed in this Black Age.*]

"If there be any doubt of the quality or the colour of the carpet, ask for an audience of the Doctor Linley Sahib if he be still in Amritsar. He knows carpets. Tell him all I have written concerning this old lady—may God keep her and her remaining household!—and he will advise. I do not know the Doctor Sahib, but this he will overlook in wartime. If the carpet is even fifty rupees, I can securely pay out of the monies which our lands owe me. She is an old lady. It must be soft to her feet, and not inclined to slide upon the wooden floor. She

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is well-born and educated." [*And now we will begin to enlighten him and the elders!*]

"We must cause our children to be educated in the future. That is the opinion of all the Regiment, for by education, even women accomplish marvels, like the women of Franceville. Get the boys and girls taught to read and write well. Here teaching is by Government order. The men go to the war daily. It is the women who do all the work at home, having been well taught in their childhood. We have only yoked one buffalo to the plough up till now. It is now time to yoke up the milch-buffaloes. Tell the village elders this and exercise influence." [*Write that down strongly, Sahib. We who have seen Franceville all know it is true.*]

"But as to cultivation. The methods in Franceville are good. All tools are of iron. They do not break. A man keeps the tools he needs for his work and his repairs in his house under his own hand. He has not to go back to the village a mile away if anything breaks. We never thought, as these people do, that all repairs to tools and ploughs can be done on the very spot. All that is needed when a strap breaks is that each ploughman should have an awl and a leather-cutter to stitch the leather. How is it with us in our country? If leather breaks, we farmers say that leather is unclean, and we go back from the fields into the village to the village

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cobbler that he may mend it. Unclean? Do not we handle that same thing with the leather on it after it has been repaired? Do we not even drink water all day with the very hand that has sweated into the leather? Meantime, we have surely lost an hour or two in coming and going from the fields.”

[*He will understand that. He chatters like a monkey when the men waste time. But the village cobbler will be very angry with me!*] “The people of Franceville are astonished to learn that all our land is full of dogs which do no work—not even to keep the cattle out of the tilled fields. Among the French, both men and women and little children occupy themselves with work at all times on the land. The children wear no jewelry, but they are more beautiful than I can say. It is a country where the women are not veiled. Their marriage is at their own choice, and takes place between their twentieth and twenty-fifth year. They seldom quarrel or shout out. They do not pilfer from each other. They do not tell lies at all. When calamity overtakes them there is no ceremonial of grief such as tearing the hair or the like. They swallow it down and endure silently. Doubtless, this is the fruit of learning in youth.”

[*Now we will have a word for our Guru at home. He is a very holy man. Write this carefully, Sahib.*] “It is said that the French worship idols. I have spoken of this with my old lady and her *guru*

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[priest]. It is *not* true in any way. There are certainly images in their shrines and *deotas* [local gods] to whom they present petitions as we do in our home affairs, but the prayer of the heart goes to the God Himself. I have been assured this by the old priests. All the young priests are fighting in the war. The French men uncover the head but do not take off the shoes at prayer. They do not speak of their religion to strangers, and they do not go about to make converts. The old priest in the village where I was billeted so long said that all roads, at such times as these, return to God." [*Our Guru at home says that himself; so he cannot be surprised if there are others who think it.*] "The old priest gave me a little medal which he wished me to wear round my neck. Such medals are reckoned holy among the French. He was a very holy man and it averts the Evil Eye. The women also carry holy beads to help keep count of their prayers.

"Certain men of our Regiment divided among themselves as many as they could pick up of the string of such beads that used to be carried by the small maiden whom the shell slew. It was found forty yards distant from the hands. It was that small maiden who begged us for our buttons and had no fear. The Regiment made an account of it, reckoning one life of the enemy for each bead. They deposited the bead as a pledge with the regimental clerk. When a man of the guarantors be-

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came killed, the number of his beads which remained unredeemed was added to the obligation of the other guarantors, or they elected an inheritor of the debt in his place." [*He will understand that. It was all very correct and business-like, Sahib. Our Pathan Company arranged it.*] "It was seven weeks before all her beads were redeemed because the weather was bad and our guns were strong and the enemy did not stir abroad after dark. When all the account was cleared, the beads were taken out of pawn and returned to her grandfather, with a certificate, and he wept.

"This war is not a war. It is a world-destroying battle. All that has gone before this war in this world till now has been only boys throwing coloured powder at each other. No man could conceive it! What do you or the Mohmunds or anyone who has not been here know of war? When the ignorant in future speak of war, I shall laugh, even though they be my elder brethren. Consider what things are done here and for what reasons.

"A little before I took my wounds, I was on duty near an officer who worked in wire and wood and earth to make traps for the enemy. He had acquired a tent of green cloth upon sticks, with a window of soft glass that could not be broken. All coveted the tent. It was three paces long and two wide. Among the covetous was an Officer of Artillery in charge of a gun that shook mountains. It

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gave out a shell of ten maunds or more [eight hundred pounds]. But those who have never seen even a rivulet cannot imagine the Indus. He offered many rupees to purchase the tent. He would come at all hours increasing his offer. He overwhelmed the owner with talk about it." [*I heard them often, Sahib.*] "At last, and I heard this also, that tent-owner said to that Artillery Officer:—'I am wearied with your importunity. Destroy to-day a certain house that I shall show you, and I will give you the tent for a gift. Otherwise, have no more talk.' He showed him the roof of a certain white house which stood back three *kos* [six miles] in the enemy country, a little underneath a hill with woods on each side. Consider this, measuring three *kos* in your mind along the Amritsar Road. The Gunner Officer said:—'By God, I accept this bargain.' He issued orders and estimated the distance. I saw him going back and forth as swiftly as a lover. Then fire was delivered and at the fourth discharge the watchers through their glasses saw the house spring high and spread abroad and lie upon its face. It was as a tooth taken out by a barber. Seeing this, the Gunner Officer sprang into the tent and looked through the window and smiled because the tent was now his. But the enemy did not understand the reasons. There was a great gunfire all that night, as well as many enemy-regiments moving about. The prisoners taken afterwards told us

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their commanders were disturbed at the fall of the house, ascribing it to some great design on our part, so that their men had no rest for a week. Yet it was all done for a little green tent's sake!

"I tell you this that you may understand the meaning of things. This is a world where the very hills are turned upside down, with the cities upon them. He who comes alive out of this business will forever after be as a giant. If anyone wishes to see it let him come here or remain disappointed all his life."

[We will finish with affection and sweet words. After all, a brother is a brother.] "As for myself, why do you write to me so many complaints? Are you fighting in this war or I? You know the saying: 'A soldier's life is for his family: his death is for his country: his discomforts are for himself alone.' I joined to fight when I was young. I have eaten the government's salt till I am old. I am discharging my obligation. When all is at an end, the memory of our parting will be but a dream.

"I pray the Guru to bring together those who are separated.

"God alone is true. Everything else is but a shadow."

[That is poetry. Oh—and add this, Sahib.]

"Let there be no delay about the carpet. She would not accept anything else."

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Scene: Three and a half miles across the Border—

Kohat way. *Time:* The edge of sunset. Single room in a stone built tower house reached by a ladder from the ground. An Afghan woman, wrapped in a red cotton quilt, squats on the floor trimming a small kerosene lamp. Her husband, an elderly Afghan with a purple dyed beard, lies on a native cot, covered by a striped blue and white cloth. He is wounded in the knee and hip. A Government rifle leans against the cot. Their son, aged twenty, kneels beside him, unfolding a letter. As the mother places the lighted lamp in a recess in the wall, the son picks up the rifle and pushes the half-opened door home with the butt. The wife passes her husband a filled pipe of tobacco, blowing on the charcoal ball in the bowl.

SON [*as he unfolds letter*]. It is from France. His Regiment is still there.

FATHER. What does he say about the money?

SON [*reading*]. He says: "I am made easy by the news that you are now receiving my pay-allotment regularly. You may depend upon its coming every month henceforward. I have also

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sent eleven rupees over and above the allotment. It is a gift towards the purchase of the machine needed in your business.”

FATHER [*drawing a cheap nickel-plated revolver from his breast*]. It is a good machine, and he is a good son. What else?

SON. He says: “You tell me our enemies have killed my uncle and my brother, beside wounding our father. I am very far away and can give no help whatever. It is a matter for great regret. Our enemies are now two lives to the good against us in the account. We must take our revenge quickly. The responsibility, I suppose, is altogether on the head of my youngest brother.”

FATHER. But I am still good for sitting-shots.

MOTHER [*soothingly*]. Ah! But he means, to think over all the arrangements. Wounded men cannot think clearly till the fever is out of the wound.

SON [*reading*]. “My youngest brother said he would enlist after me when the harvest was gathered. That is now out of the question. Tell him he must attend to the work in hand.” (That is true, I cannot enlist now.) “Tell him not to wander about after the people who did the actual killing. They will probably have taken refuge on the Government side of the Border.” (That is true, too. It is exactly

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what they did.) “Even up the account from the nearest household of our enemies. This will force the murderers for their honour’s sake to return and attend to their proper business when—God willing—they can be added as a bonus. Take our revenge quickly.”

FATHER [*stroking beard*]. This is all wisdom. I have a man for a son. What else does he say, Akbar?

SON. He says: “I have a letter from Kohat telling me that a certain man of a family that we know is coming out here with a draft in order to settle with me for an account which he says I opened.”

MOTHER [*quickly*]. Would that be Gul Shere Khan—about the Peshawari girl?

SON. Perhaps. But Ahmed is not afraid. Listen! He says: “If that man or even his brothers wish to come to France after me I shall be very pleased. If, in fact, anyone wishes to kill me, let them by all means come out. I am here present in the field of battle. I have placed my life on a tray. The people in our country who talk about killing are children. They have not seen the reality of things. *We* do not turn our heads when forty are killed at a breath. Men are swallowed up or blown apart here as one divides meat. When we are in the trenches, there is no time to strike a

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blow on the private account. When we are at rest in the villages, one's lust for killing has been satisfied. Two men joined us in the draft last month to look after a close friend of mine with whom they had a private account. They were great swash-bucklers at first. They even volunteered to go into the trenches though it was not their turn of duty. They expected that their private account could be settled during some battle. Since that turn of duty they have become quite meek. They had, till then, only seen men killed by ones and twos, half a mile separating them. *This* business was like killing flies on sugar. Have no fear for me, therefore, no matter who joins the Regiment. It needs a very fierce stomach to add anything to our Government rations."

MOTHER. He writes like a poet, my son. That is wonderful writing.

FATHER. All the young men write the same with regard to the war. It *quite* satisfies all desires. What else does he say?

SON [*summarizing*]. He says that he is well fed and has learned to drink the French coffee. He says there are two sorts of French tobacco—one yellow, one blue. The blue, he says, is the best. They are named for the papers they are wrapped in. He says that on no account must we send him any opium or drugs, because

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the punishment for drugging is severe and the doctors are quick to discover. He desires to be sent to him some strong hair-dye of the sort that our father uses.

MOTHER [*with a gesture*]. Hair-dye! He is a child. What's he been doing?

SON. He says he wishes to win favour from his native officer whose white hairs are showing and who has no proper dye. He says he will repay the cost and that no charges are made for the parcel. It must be very strong henna-dye.

MOTHER [*laughing*]. It shall be. I will make it myself. A start it gave me to hear *him* ask for dyes! They are not due for another twenty years.

FATHER [*fretfully*]. Read it. Read it all as it is written, word for word. What else does he say?

SON. He speaks of the country of the French. Listen! He says: "This country is full of precious objects, such as grain, ploughs, and implements, and sheep which lie about the fields by day with none to guard them. The French are a virtuous people and do not steal from each other. If a man merely approaches towards anything there are eyes watching him. To take one chicken is to loosen the tongues of fifty old women. I was warned on joining that the testimony of one such would outweigh

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the testimony of six honourable Pathans. It is true. Money and valuables are, therefore, left openly in houses. None dare even to look at them with a covetous eye. I have seen two hundred rupees' worth of clothing hung up on a nail. None knew the owner, yet it remained till her return."

MOTHER. That is the country for me! Dresses worth two hundred rupees hanging on nails! Princesses all they must be.

SON [*continuing*]. Listen to these fresh marvels. He says: "We reside in brick houses with painted walls of flowers and birds; we sit upon chairs covered with silks. We sleep on high beds that cost a hundred rupees each. There is glass in all the doors and windows; the abundance of iron and brass, pottery, and copper kitchen-utensils is not to be estimated. Every house is a palace of entertainment filled with clocks, lamps, candlesticks, gildings, and images."

FATHER. What a country! What a country! How much will he be able to bring back of it all?

SON. He says: "The inhabitants defend their possessions to the uttermost—even down to the value of half a chicken or a sheep's kidney. They do not keep their money in their houses, but send it away on loan. Their rates of in-

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terest are very low. They talk among themselves of loans and pledges and the gaining of money, just as we do. We Indian troops are esteemed and honoured by all, by the children specially. These children wear no jewelry. Therefore, there are no murders committed for the sake of ornaments except by the enemy. These children resemble small moons. They make mud figures in their play of men and horses. He who can add figures of oxen, elephants and palanquins is highly praised. Do you remember when I used to make them?"

MOTHER. Do I remember? Am I a block of wood or an old churn? Go on, Akbar. What of my child?

SON. He says: "When the children are not in the school they are at work in the fields from their earliest years. They soon lose all fear of us soldiers, and drill us up and down the streets of the villages. The smallest salute on all occasions. They suffer little from sickness. The old women here are skilful in medicines. They dry the leaves of trees and give them for a drink against diseases. One old woman gave me an herb to chew for a worm in my tooth [toothache] which cured me in an hour."

MOTHER. God reward that woman! I wonder what she used.

SON. He says: "She is my French mother."

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MOTHER. What-t! How many mothers has a man? But God reward her none the less! It must have been that old double-tooth at the back on the left lower side, for I remember——

FATHER. Let it wait. It is cured now. What else does he write?

SON. He writes, making excuses for not having written. He says: "I have been so occupied and sent from one place to another that on several occasions I have missed the post. I know you must have experienced anxiety. But do not be displeased. Let my mother remember that I can only write when I have opportunity, and the only remedy for helplessness is patience."

FATHER [*groaning*]. Ah! He has not yet been wounded, and he sets himself up for a physician.

MOTHER. He speaks wisely and beautifully. But what of his "French mother"—burn her!

SON. He says: "Moreover, this French mother of mine in France is displeased with me if I do not write to her about my welfare. My mother, like you, my French mother does all she can for my welfare. I cannot write sufficiently in praise of what she does for me. When I was in the village behind the trench if, on any day, by reason of duty, I did not return till evening, she, herself, would come

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in search of me and lead me back to the house.

MOTHER. Aha! *She* knew! I wish I could have caught him by the other ear!

SON. He says: "And when I was sent away on duty to another village, and so could not find time to write either to you or to her, she came close to the place where I was and where no one is permitted to come and asked to see her boy. She brought with her a great parcel of things for me to eat. What more am I to say for the concern she has for my welfare?"

MOTHER. Fools all old women are! May God reward that Kafir woman for her kindness, and her children after her. . . . As though any orders could keep out a mother! Does he say what she resembles in the face?

SON. No. He goes on to speak more about the customs of the French. He says: "The new men who join us come believing they are in the country of the Rakshas [Demons]. They are told this by the ignorant on their departure. It is always cold here. Many clothes are worn. The sun is absent. The wet is present. Yet this France is a country created by Allah, and its people are manifestly a reasonable people with reason for all they do. The windows of their houses are well barred. The

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doors are strong, with locks of a sort I have never before tried. Their dogs are faithful. They gather in and keep their kine and their asses and their hens under their hands at night. Their cattle graze and return at the proper hour in charge of the children. They prune their fruit trees as carefully as our barbers attend to men's nostrils and ears. The old women spin, walking up and down. Scissors, needles, threads, and buttons are exposed for sale on stalls in a market. They carry hens by the feet. Butchers sell dressed portions of fowls and sheep ready to be cooked. There is aniseed, coriander, and very good garlic."

MOTHER. But all this—but all this is our very own way——

SON. He says so. He says: "Seeing these things, the new men are relieved in their minds. Do not be anxious for me. These people precisely resemble all mankind. They are, however, idolaters. They do not speak to any of us about their religion. Their Imams [priests] are old men of pious appearance, living in poverty. They go about their religious offices, even while the shells fall. Their God is called Bandoo [Bon Dieu?]. There is also the Bibbee Miriam [the Virgin Mary]. She

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is worshipped on account of the ontelligence and capacity of the women."

FATHER. Hmm! Ah! This travelling about is bad for the young. Women are women—world over. What else, Akbar?

SON [*reading*]. "There are holy women in this country, dressed in black who wear horns of white cloth on their heads. They too are without any sort of fear of death from the falling shells. I am acquainted with one such who often commands me to carry vegetables from the market to the house which they inhabit. It is filled with the fatherless. She is very old, very high-born, and of irascible temper. All men call her Mother. The Colonel himself salutes her. Thus are all sorts mingled in this country of France."

MOTHER. Ha! Well, at least that holy woman was well-born, but she is too free with her tongue. Go on!

SON. He says: "Through my skill with my rifle, I have been made a sharpshooter. A special place is given to me to shoot at the enemy singly. This was old work to me. This country was flat and open at the beginning. In time it became all *kandari-kauderi*—cut up—with trenches, *sungars* and byeways in the earth. Their faces show well behind the loop-holes of

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their *sungars*. The distance was less than three hundred yards. Great cunning was needed. Before they grew careful, I accounted for nine in five days. It is more difficult by night. They then send up fireballs which light all the ground. This is a good arrangement to reveal one's enemy, but the expense would be too great for poor people."

FATHER. He thinks of everything—everything! Even of the terrible cost for us poor people.

SON [*reading*]. "I attended the funeral of a certain French child. She was known to us all by the name of 'Marri' which is Miriam. She would openly claim the Regiment for her own regiment in the face of the Colonel walking in the streets. She was slain by a shell while grazing cattle. What remained was carried upon a litter precisely after our custom. There were no hired mourners. All mourners walked slowly behind the litter, the women with the men. It is not their custom to scream or beat the breast. They recite all prayers above the grave itself for they reckon the burial-ground to be holy. The prayers are recited by the Imam of the village. The grave is not bricked and there is no recess. They do not know that the Two Angels visit the dead. They say at the end, 'Peace and Mercy be on you.'"

MOTHER. One sees as he writes! He would have

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made a great priest, this son of ours. So they pray over their dead, out yonder, those foreigners?

FATHER. Even a Kafir may pray, but—they are manifestly Kafirs or they would not pray in a grave-yard. Go on!

SON. “When their prayers were done, our Havildar-Major, who is orthodox, recited the appropriate verse from the Koran, and cast a little mud into the grave. The Imam of the village then embraced him. I do not know if this is the custom. The French weep very little. The French women are small-handed and small-footed. They bear themselves in walking as though they were of birth and descent. They commune with themselves, walking up and down. Their lips move. This is on account of their dead. They are never abashed or at a loss for words. They forget nothing. Nothing either do they forgive.”

MOTHER. Good. Very good. That is the right honour.

SON. Listen! He says: “Each village keeps a written account of all that the enemy has done against it. If a life—a life, whether it be man or priest, or hostage, or woman or babe. Every horn driven off; and every feather; all bricks and tiles broken, all things burned, and their price, are written in the account. The shames

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and the insults are also written. There is no price set against them."

FATHER. This is without flaw! This is a people! There is never any price for shame offered. And they write it all down. Marvellous!

SON. Yes. He says: "Each village keeps its own tally and all tallies go to their Government to be filed. The whole of the country of France is in one great account against the enemy—for the loss, for the lives, and for the shames done. It has been kept from the first. The women keep it with the men. All French women read, write, and cast accounts from youth. By this they are able to keep the great account against the enemy. I think that it is good that our girls should get schooling like this. Then we shall have no more confusion in our accounts. It is only to add up the sums lost and the lives. We should teach our girls. We are fools compared with these people."

MOTHER. But a Pathani girl remembers without all this book-work. It is waste. Who of any decent descent ever forgot a blood-debt? He must be sickening for illness to write thus.

FATHER. One should not forget. Yet we depend on songs and tales. It is more secure—certainly, it is more businesslike—that a written account should be kept. Since it is the men

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who must pay off the debt, why should not the women keep it?

MOTHER. They can keep tally on a stick or a distaff. It is unnecessary for a girl to scribble in books. They never come to good ends. They end by——

SON. Sometimes, my mother, sometimes. On the Government side of the Border, women are taught to read, and write, and cast accounts, and——

MOTHER [*with intention*]. Far be the day when such an one is brought to *my* house as a bride. For *I* say——

FATHER. No matter. What does *he* say about those French women?

SON. He says: "They are not divided in opinion as to which of their enemies shall be sought after first. They say: 'Let us even the account every day and night out of the nearest assembly of the enemy and when we have brought all the enemy into the right way of thinking we can demand the very people who did the shame and offences. In the meantime, let it be any life.' This is good counsel for *us* in our account, oh my mother."

FATHER [*after a pause*]. True! True! It is good advice. Let it be any life. . . . Is that all?

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SON. That is all. He says: "Let it be *any* life."
And I think so too.

MOTHER. "*Any* life." Even so! And then we can write to him quickly that we have taken our revenge quickly. [*She reaches for her husband's rifle which she passes over to her son, who stretches his hand towards it with a glance at his father.*]

FATHER. On your head, Akbar, our account must lie—at least till I am better. Do you try to-night?

SON. May be! I wish we had the high-priced illuminating fireballs he spoke of. [*Half rises.*]

MOTHER. Wait a little. There is the call for the Ishr [the evening prayer].

MUEZZIN [*in the village mosque without as the first stars show*]. God is great! God is great!
God is great! I bear witness, etc.

[*The family compose themselves for evening prayer.*]

A TROOPER OF HORSE

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To the sister of the pensioned Risaldar Major Abdul Qadr Khan, at her own house behind the shrine of Gula Shah near by the village of Korake in the Pasrur Tehsil of the Sialkot District in the Province of the Punjab. Sent out of the country of France on the 23rd of August 1916, by Duffadar Abdul Rahman of the 132nd (Pakpattan) Cavalry—late Lambart's Horse.

MOTHER! The news is that once only in five months I have not received a letter from you. My thoughts are always with you. Mother, put your ear down and listen to me. Do not fret; I will soon be with you again. Imagine that I have merely gone to Lyallpur [the big recruiting-dépôt in India]; think that I have been delayed there by an officer's order, or that I am not yet ready to come back. Mother, think of me always as though I were sitting near by, just as I imagine you always beside me. Be of good cheer, Mother, there is nothing that I have done which is hidden from you. I tell you truly, Mother, I will salute you again. Do not grieve. I tell you confidently I shall bow before you again in salutation. It will be thus, Mother. I shall come in the dead of the night and

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knock at your door. Then I will call loudly that you may wake and open the door to me. With great delight you will open the door and fold me to your breast, my Mother. Then I will sit down beside you and tell you what has happened to me—good and evil. Then having rested the night in comfort I will go out after the day has come and I will salute all my brethren at the mosque and in the village. Then I will return and eat my bread in pleasure and happiness. You, Mother, will say to me: “Shall I give you some *ghi*?” [native butter]. I will say at first proudly, like one who has travelled—“No, I want none.” You will press me, and I will softly push my plate over to you and you will fill it with *ghi*, and I shall dip my cake in it with delight. Believe me, Mother, this homecoming will take place just as I have described it. I see you before me always. It seems to me only yesterday that I bent to your feet when I made salutation and you put your hand upon my head.

Mother, put your trust in God to guard my head. If my grave lies in France it can never be in the Punjab, though we try for a thousand years. If it be in the Punjab then I shall certainly return to it to that very place. Meantime, Mother, consider what I have to eat. This is the true list. I eat daily sugar and *ghi* and flour, salt, meat, red peppers, some almonds and dates, sweets of various kinds as well as raisins and cardamoms. In the

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morning I eat tea and white biscuits. An hour after, halwa and puri [native dishes]. At noon, tea and bread; at seven o'clock of the evening, vegetable curry. At bedtime I drink milk. There is abundance of milk in this country. I am more comfortable here, I swear it to you, Mother, than any high officer in India. As for our clothing, there is no account kept of it. You would cry out, Mother, to see the thick cloth expended. So I beg you, Mother, to take comfort concerning your son. Do not tear my heart by telling me your years. Though we both lived to be as old as elephants I am your son who will come asking for you as I said, at your door.

As to the risk of death, who is free from it anywhere? Certainly not in the Punjab. I hear that all those religious mendicants at Zilabad have proclaimed a holy fair this summer in order that pious people may feed them, and now, having collected in thousands beside the river in hot weather, they have spread cholera all over the district. There is trouble raging throughout all the world, Mother, and yet these sons of mean fathers must proclaim a beggars' festival in order to add to it! There should be an order of the Government to take all those lazy rascals out of India into France and put them in our front-line that their bodies may be sieves for the machine guns. Why cannot they blacken their faces and lie in a corner with a crust of bread? It is certainly right to feed the family priests, Mother,

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but when the idle assemble in thousands begging and making sickness and polluting the drinking-water, punishment should be administered.

Very much sickness, such as cholera and dysentery, is caused by drinking foul water. Therefore, it is best to have it boiled, Mother, no matter what is said. When clothes are washed in foul water, sickness also spreads. You will say, Mother, that I am no longer a trooper but a washerwoman or an apothecary, but I swear to you, my Mother, what I have said is true. Now, I have two charges to deliver to you as to the household under you. I beg you, my Mother, to give order that my son drink water which is boiled, at least from the beginning of the hot weather till after the Rains. That is one charge. The second is that when I was going down to the sea with the Regiment from home, the Lady Doctor Sahiba in the Civil Lines asked of our Colonel's lady whether any of us desired that their households should take the charm against the small-pox [be vaccinated]. I was then busy with my work and I made no reply. Now let that Doctor Sahiba know that I desire by her favour that my son take the charm as soon as may be. I charge you, Mother, upon *his* head that it is done soon. I beg you respectfully to take this charge upon you.

Oh, my Mother, if I could now see you for but half of one watch in the night or at evening preparing food! I remember the old days in my

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dreamings but when I awake—there is the sleeper and there is the bedding and it is more far off than Delhi. But God will accomplish the meetings and surely arrange the return.

Mother, before going out to the attack the other day, I had a dream. I dreamed that a great snake appeared in our trenches in France and at the same time our Pir Murshid [our family priest] whose face I saw quite clearly, appeared with a stick and destroyed it. Well then, Mother, our lot went in to the attack and returned from it safely. Those who were fated to be the victims of death were taken and those who were fated to be wounded were wounded; and all our party returned safely. At the same time, the Government secured a victory and the Regiment obtained renown. It was *our* horse that went out over the trenches, Mother, and the Germans, being alarmed, fled. We were forbidden to pursue because of hidden guns. This was trouble to us. We owed them much blood on our brethren's account. Tell the Murshid my dream and ask him for a full interpretation. I have also seen our Murshid twice before in my dreams. Ask him why he comes to me thus. I am not conscious of any wrongdoing, and if it is a sign of favour to me, then the shape should speak.

I am quite aware how God rewards the unwilling. He is all powerful. Look at the case of that man of our own family who was ordered to the

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front with a higher rank. He refused promotion in order to stay behind, and in a month's time he died of the plague in his own village. If he had gone to the front his family would have received the war pension. An atheist never achieves honour, Mother. He is always unsettled and has no consolations. Do we Mussulmans think that the Prophet will spend all his time in asking God to forgive our transgressions? Tell the Pir Murshid what I have written.

Mother, put down your ear and listen to me in this matter, my Mother. There is one thing I wish to impress earnestly on you. You must know that among recruits for the Regiment there are too few of our kind of Mussulmans. They are sending recruits from the Punjab who were formerly labourers and common workmen. The consequence of this is, in the Regiment, that we Mussulmans are completely outnumbered by these low people, and the promotions go accordingly. Each of our troops, my Mother, has been divided into two; that is to say there are four troops to a squadron. We Mussulmans should have at least two troops out of the four, but owing to the lack of recruits we have not sufficient men of our faith to form more than one. Now, Mother, as it was in our fathers' time, he who supplies the men gets the promotion. Therefore, if our friends at home, and especially our Pir Murshid, would exert themselves to supply fifteen or

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twenty recruits, I could approach my Colonel Sahib in regard to promotion. If my Colonel received my request favourably then you at home would only have the trouble to provide the men. But I do not think, Mother, there would be any trouble if our Pir Murshid exerted himself in the matter and if my father's brother also exerted himself. A family is a family even [if it be] scattered to the ends of the earth, Mother. My father's brother's name is still remembered in the Regiment on account of his long service and his great deeds of old. Tell him, my Mother, that the men talk of him daily as though he had only resigned yesterday. If he rides out among the villages with his medals he will certainly fetch in many of our class. If it were fifty it would mean much more influence for me with my Colonel. He is very greedy for our class of Mahommedans.

Mother, our Pir Murshid, too, is a very holy man. If he preached to them after harvest he would fetch in many and I should be promoted, and the pensions go with the promotion. In a short time by God's assistance, I might command a troop if sufficient recruits were attained by the exertions of my friends and well-wishers. The honour of one is the honour of all. Lay all this before the Murshid and my uncle.

None of the Cavalry have yet done anything to compare with our Regiment. This may be because

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of fate or that their nature is not equal to ours. There is great honour to be got out of a lance before long. The war has become loosened and cavalry patrols are being sent forward. We have driven Mama Lumra [a nickname for the enemy] several miles across country. He has planted his feet again but it is not the same Mama Lumra. His arrogance is gone. Our guns turn the earth upside down upon him. He has made himself houses underground which are in all respects fortresses with beds, chairs and lights. Our guns break these in. There is little to see because Mama Lumra is buried underneath. These days are altogether different from the days when all our Army was here and Mama Lumra's guns overwhelmed us by day and by night. Now Mama Lumra eats his own stick. Fighting goes on in the sky, on earth and under earth. Such a fighting is rarely vouchsafed anyone to behold. Yet if one reflects upon God it is no more than rain on a roof. Mother, once I was reported "missing, killed or believed taken prisoner." I went with a patrol to a certain place beyond which we went forward to a place which had recently been taken by the English infantry. Suddenly the enemy's fire fell upon us and behind us like water. Seeing we could not go back, we lay down in the holes made by the shells. The enemy exerted himself to the utmost, but our guns having found him bombarded him and he ceased. In the evening we retired out

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of our shell-holes. We had to walk; it was fasting time and we suffered from thirst. So our hearts were relieved when we returned to the Regiment. We had all been reported to Divisional Headquarters as lost. This false report was then cancelled. The shell-holes in the ground are the size of our goat-pen and as deep as my height with the arm raised. They are more in number than can be counted, and of all colours. It is like small-pox upon the ground.

We have no small-pox or diseases here. Our doctors are strict, and refuse is burned by the sweepers. It is said there is no physician like fire. He leaves nothing to the flies. It is said that flies produce sicknesses, especially when they are allowed to sit on the nostrils and the corners of the eyes of the children or to fall into their milk-pots. The young children of this country of France are beautiful and do not suffer from sickness. Their women do not die in childbed. This is on account of physicians and midwives who abound in knowledge. It is a Government order, Mother, that none can establish as a midwife till she has shown her ability. These people are idolaters. When there is a death which is not caused by war, they instantly ascribe it to some fault in eating or drinking or the conduct of life on the part of the dead. If one dies without manifest cause the physicians at once mutilate the body to ascertain what evil was hidden inside it.

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If anything is discovered there is a criminal trial. Thus the women-folk do not traffic in poisons and wives have no suspicion one against the other. Truly, Mother, people are only defective on account of ignorance. Learning and knowledge are the important things.

Your letters come to me with every mail exactly as if we were at headquarters. This is accomplished solely by knowledge. There are hundreds of women behind our lines who make clean and repair the dirty clothes of the troops. Afterwards, they are baked in very hot ovens which utterly destroy the vermin and also, it is said, diseases. We have, too, been issued iron helmets to protect the head against falling shots. It was asked of us all if any had an objection. The Sikhs reported that they had not found any permission in their Law to wear such things. They, therefore, go uncovered. It was reported by our priests for us Mahommedans that our Law neither forbids nor enjoins. It is a thing indifferent. They are heavier than the pagri [turban], but they turn falling iron. Doubtless, it is Allah's will that the lives of His Faithful should be prolonged by these hats. The sons of mothers who go to foreign parts are specially kept under His Eye.

We know very well how the world is made. To earn a living and bear trouble is the duty of man. If I send you a report that I have won promotion in

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the Regiment, do not forget to distribute alms to the extent of fifteen rupees and to feed the poor.

Mother, put down your ear and listen to me. There is no danger whatever in box-pictures [snapshot-photographs]. Any one submitted to them is in all respects as he was before. Nothing is taken out of his spirit. I, myself, Mother, have submitted myself to many box-pictures, both mounted and standing beside my horse. If at any time again the Zenana Doctor Sahiba desires to make a box-picture of *him* do not snatch the child away but send the picture to me. I cannot see him in my dreams because at his age he changes with each month. When I went away he was still on all fours. Now you tell me he stands up holding by the skirts. I wish to see a box-picture of this very greatly indeed. I can read box-pictures now as perfectly as the French. When I was new to this country I could not understand their meaning in the least. This is on account of knowledge which comes by foreign travel and experience. Mother, this world abounds in marvels beyond belief. We in India are but stones compared to these people. They do not litigate among themselves; they speak truth at first answer; their weddings are not [performed] till both sides are at least eighteen, and no man has authority here to beat his wife.

I have resided in billets with an old man and his wife, who possess seven hens, an ass, and a small

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field of onions. They collect dung from our horse-lines upon their backs, a very little at a time but continuously. They are without means of maintenance, yet they do not lay a finger upon any food except through invitation. They exhibit courtesy to each other in all things.

They call me *Sia* [monsieur?] which is Mian [Mahommedan title of respect] and also *man barah* [mon brave?] which signifies hero. I have spoken to them many times of you, my Mother, and they desire I send you their salutations. She calls me to account strictly for my doings each day. At evening tide I am fetched in with the hens. My clothes are then inspected and repaired when there is need. She turns me back and forth between her hands. If I exhibit impatience, she hits me upon the side of the head, and I say to my heart it is your hands.

Now this is the French language, Mother.

(1) *Zuur mononfahn*. The morning salutation.

(2) *Wasi lakafeh*. Coffee is prepared.

(3) *Abil towah mononfahn*. Rise and go to parade.

(4) *Dormeh beeahn mon fiz nublieh pahleh Bondihu*. This is their dismissal at night, invoking the blessing of their God. They use a *Tasbih* [rosary] in form like ours but of more beads. They recite prayers both sitting and walking. Having seen my *Tasbih* these old people become curious concerning the Faith. Certainly they are idolaters. I have

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seen the images by the roadside which they worship. Yet they are certainly not Kafirs, who hide the truth and the mercy of Allah is illimitable. They two send you their salutations thus:—*Onvoyeh no zalutazioun zempresseh ar zmadam vot mair*. It is their form of blessing.

She has borne three sons. Two are already dead in this war and of the third no information since the spring-time. There remains in the house the son of the eldest son. He is three years old. His name is Pir, which in their language also means a holy man. He runs barefoot in summer and wears only one garment. He eats all foods and specially dates. In this country it is not allowed to give children pepper or cardamoms. He has learned to speak our tongue and bears a wooden sword which was made for him and a turban of our sort. When he is weary he repairs to the centre of my bed which is forbidden to him by his grandmother of whom he has no fear. He fears nothing. My Mother, he is almost the same sort as my own. He sends his salutations to him. He calls him "My brother who is in India." He also prays for him aloud before an idol which he is taken to worship. On account of his fatness he cannot yet kneel long, but falls over sideways. The idol is of Bibbee Miriam [the Virgin Mary] whom they, in this country, believe to watch over children. He has also a small idol of his own above his bed which represents a certain

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saint called Pir. He rides upon the ass and says he will become a trooper. I take delight in his presence and his conversation.

The children in this country are learned from their very birth. They go to the schools even when the shells fall near by. They know all the countries in the world, and to read and write in their language and to cast accounts. Even the girls of eight years can cast accounts and those that are marriageable have complete knowledge of cookery, accounts, and governments, and washing of clothes, agriculture and the manufacture of garments and all other offices: otherwise they are reckoned infirm-minded. Each girl is given a dowry to which she adds with her own hands. No man molests any woman here on any occasion. They come and go at their pleasure upon their business. There is one thing I should like to see, Mother. I should like to see all the men of India with all their wives brought to France in order to see the country and profit by their experiences. Here are no quarrels or contentions, and there is no dishonesty. All day long men do their work and the women do theirs. Compared with these people the people of India do not work at all, but all day long are occupied with evil thoughts and our women all day long they do nothing but quarrel. Now I see this. The blame for this state of affairs, Mother, lies upon the men of India, for

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if the men were to educate the women they would give up quarrelling.

When a man goes out into the world his understanding is enlarged and he becomes proficient in different kinds of work. All that is needed is to show courage. At the present time, one's bravery or one's cowardice is apparent. The opportunities for advancement come quickly. Such opportunities will not occur again.

As for any marriage proposed [for me?] when I return, those things can wait till I return. It is no gain to take into the house a child or a sickly one who, through no fault of her own, dies in bringing forth. If there be any talk between our house and any other family upon this subject they should understand that I desire knowledge more than dowry. There are schools where girls are educated by English ladies. I am not of the sort to make a wedding outside my clan or country, but if I fight to keep Mama Lumra out of the Punjab I will choose my wives out of the Punjab. I desire nothing that is contrary to the Faith, Mother, but what was ample yesterday does not cover even the palm of the hand to-day. This is owing to the spread of enlightening matters which they had never before known to exist.

In this country when one of them dies, the tomb

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is marked and named and kept like a garden so that the others may go to mourn over her. Nor do they believe a burial-ground to be inhabited by evil spirits or ghouls. When I was upon a certain duty last month, I lay three nights in a grave-yard. None troubled me, even though the dead had been removed from their graves by the violence of shells bursting. One was a woman of this country, newly dead, whom we reburied for the sake of the Pity of Allah, and made the prayer. Tell the Pir Murshid this, and that I performed *Tayamummum* [the shorter purification with sand or dust] afterwards. There was no time for the full purification.

Oh, my Mother, my Mother, I am your son, your son; and as I have said at the beginning I will return to your arms from out of this country, when God shall permit!

POEMS

THE ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR

WHEN you've shouted "Rule Britannia," when
you've sung "God save the Queen,"
When you've finished killing Kruger with your
mouth,

Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine
For a gentleman in *khaki* ordered South?

He's an absent-minded beggar, and his weaknesses are
great—

And he's left a lot of little things behind him!
He is out on active service, wiping something off a
slate—

And he's left a lot of little things behind him!
Duke's son—cook's son—son of a hundred kings—
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table
Bay!)

Each of 'em doing his country's work
(and who's to look after their things?)

Pass that hat for your credit's sake,
and pay—pay—pay!

There are girls he married secret, asking no permis-
sion to,

For he knew he wouldn't get it if he did.

There is gas and coals and vittles, and the house-rent
falling due,

And it's more than rather likely there's a kid.

There are girls he walked with casual. They'll be sorry
now he's gone,

THE ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR

For an absent-minded beggar they will find him,
But it ain't the time for sermons with the winter coming on.

We must help the girl that Tommy's left behind him!

Cook's son—Duke's son—son of a belted Earl—

Son of a Lambeth publican—it's all the same to-day!
Each of 'em doing his country's work

(and who's to look after the girl?)

Pass the hat for your credit's sake,
and pay—pay—pay!

There are families by thousands, far too proud to beg or speak,

And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the spout,
And they'll live on half o' nothing, paid 'em punctual once a week,

'Cause the man that earns the wage is ordered out.
He's an absent-minded beggar, but he heard his country call,

And his reg'ment didn't need to send to find him!
He chucked his job and joined it—so the job before us all

Is to help the home that Tommy's left behind him!
Duke's job—cook's job—gardener, baronet, groom,
Mews or palace or paper-shop, there's someone gone away!

Each of 'em doing his country's work
(and who's to look after the room?)

Pass the hat for your credit's sake,
and pay—pay—pay!

THE ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR

Let us manage so as, later, we can look him in the face,
And tell him—what he'd very much prefer—
That, while he saved the Empire, his employer saved
his place,
And his mates (that's you and me) looked out for
her.

THE BALLAD OF THE RED EARL

1891

(It is not for them to criticise too minutely the methods the Irish followed, though they might deplore some of their results. During the past few years Ireland had been going through what was tantamount to a revolution.

—EARL SPENCER.)

RED EARL, and will ye take for guide
The silly camel-birds,
That ye bury your heads in an Irish thorn,
On a desert of drifting words?

Ye have followed a man for a God, Red Earl,
As the Lord o' Wrong and Right;
But the day is done with the setting sun—
Will ye follow into the night?

He gave you your own old words, Red Earl,
For food on the wastrel way;
Will ye rise and eat in the night, Red Earl,
That fed so full in the day?

Ye have followed fast, ye have followed far,
And where did the wandering lead?
From the day that ye praised the spoken word
To the day ye must gloss the deed.

And as ye have given your hand for gain,
So must ye give in loss;
And as ye ha' come to the brink of the pit,
So must ye loup across.

THE BALLAD OF THE RED EARL

For some be rogues in grain, Red Earl.

And some be rogues in fact,
And rogues direct and rogues elect;
But all be rogues in pact.

Ye have cast your lot with these, Red Earl;

Take heed to where ye stand.

Ye have tied a knot with your tongue, Red Earl,

That ye cannot loose with your hand.

Ye have travelled fast, ye have travelled far,

In the grip of a tightening tether,

Till ye find at the end ye must take for friend

The quick and their dead together.

Ye have played with the Law between your lips,

And mouthed it daintilee;

But the gist o' the speech is ill to teach,

For ye say: "Let wrong go free."

Red Earl, ye wear the Garter fair,

And gat your place from a King:

Do ye make Rebellion of no account,

And Treason a little thing?

And have ye weighed your words, Red Earl,

That stand and speak so high?

And it is good that the guilt o' blood,

Be cleared at the cost of a sigh?

And it is well for the sake of peace,

Our tattered Honour to sell,

And higgle anew with a tainted crew—

Red Earl, and is it well?

THE BALLAD OF THE RED EARL

Ye have followed fast, ye have followed far,
On a dark and doubtful way,
And the road is hard, is hard, Red Earl,
And the price is yet to pay.

Ye shall pay that price as ye reap reward
For the toil of your tongue and pen—
In the praise of the blamed and the thanks of the
shamed,
And the honour o' knavish men.

They scarce shall veil their scorn, Red Earl,
And the worst at the last shall be,
When you tell your heart that it does not know
And your eye that it does not see.

“BOBS”

1898

(Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar: died 1918)

THERE'S a little red-faced man,
Which is Bobs,
Rides the tallest 'orse 'e can—
Our Bobs.

If it bucks or kicks or rears,
'E can sit for twenty years
With a smile round both 'is ears—
Can't yer, Bobs?

Then 'ere's to Bobs Bahadur—little Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!
'E's our pukka Kandahader—
Fightin' Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!
'E's the Dook of *Aggy Chel*,¹
'E's the man that done us well,
An' we'll follow 'im to 'ell—
Won't we, Bobs?

If a limber's slipped a trace,
'Ook on Bobs.
If a marker's lost 'is place,
Dress by Bobs.
For 'e's eyes all up 'is coat,
An' a bugle in 'is throat,
An' you will not play the goat
Under Bobs.

¹ Get ahead.

“BOBS”

'E's a little down on drink,
 Chaplain Bobs ;
But it keeps us outer Clink—
 Don't it, Bobs?
So we will not complain
Tho' 'e's water on the brain,
If 'e leads us straight again—
 Blue-light Bobs.

If you stood 'im on 'is head,
 Father Bobs,
You could spill a quart of lead
 Outer Bobs.
'E's been at it thirty years,
An-amassin' souveneers
In the way o' slugs an' spears—
 Ain't yer, Bobs?

What 'e does not know o' war,
 Gen'ral Bobs,
You can arst the shop next door—
 Can't they, Bobs?
Oh, 'e's little but he's wise,
'E's a terror for 'is size,
An'—'e—does—not—advertise—
 Do yer, Bobs?

Now they've made a bloomin' Lord
 Outer Bobs,
Which was but 'is fair reward—
 Weren't it, Bobs?

“BOBS”

So 'e'll wear a coronet
Where 'is 'elmet used to set;
But we know you won't forget—
 Will yer, Bobs?

Then 'ere's to Bobs Bahadur—little Bobs, Bobs, Bobs,
Pocket-Wellin'ton 'an *arder*¹—
 Fightin' Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!

This ain't no bloomin' ode,
But you've 'elped the soldier's load,
An' for benefits bestowed,
 Bless yer, Bobs!

¹ And a half.

A BOY SCOUTS' PATROL SONG

1913

THESE are *our* regulations—

There's just one law for the Scout
And the first and the last, and the present and the
past,

And the future and the perfect is "Look out!"

I, thou and he, look out!

We, ye and they, look out!

Though you didn't or you wouldn't

Or you hadn't or you couldn't;

You jolly well *must* look out!

Look out, when you start for the day

That your kit is packed to your mind;

There is no use going away

With half of it left behind.

Look out that your laces are tight,

And your boots are easy and stout,

Or you'll end with a blister at night.

(*Chorus*) All Patrols look out!

Look out for the birds of the air,

Look out for the beasts of the field—

They'll tell you how and where

The other side's concealed.

When the blackbird bolts from the copse,

Or the cattle are staring about,

The wise commander stops

And (*chorus*) All Patrols look out!

A BOY SCOUTS' PATROL SONG

Look out when your front is clear,
And you feel you are bound to win.
Look out for your flank and your rear—
That's where surprises begin.
For the rustle that isn't a rat,
For the splash that isn't a trout,
For the boulder that may be a hat
(*Chorus*) All Patrols look out!

For the innocent knee-high grass,
For the ditch that never tells,
Look out! Look out ere you pass—
And look out for everything else!
A sign mis-read as you run—
May turn retreat to a rout—
For all things under the sun
(*Chorus*) All Patrols look out!

Look out when your temper goes
At the end of a losing game;
When your boots are too tight for your toes;
And you answer and argue and blame.
It's the hardest part of the Law,
But it has to be learnt by the Scout—
For whining and shirking and "jaw"
(*Chorus*) All Patrols look out!

BEAST AND MAN IN INDIA¹

THEY killed a Child to please the Gods
In earth's young penitence,
And I have bled in that Babe's stead
Because of innocence.

I bear the sins of sinful men
That have no sin of my own,
They drive me forth to Heaven's wrath
Unpastured and alone.

I am the meat of sacrifice,
The ransom of man's guilt,
For they give my life to the altar-knife
Wherever shrine is built.

The Goat.

Between the waving tufts of jungle-grass,
Up from the river as the twilight falls,
Across the dust-beclouded plain they pass
On to the village walls.

Great is the sword and mighty is the pen,
But over all the labouring ploughman's blade—
For on its oxen and its husbandmen
An Empire's strength is laid.

The Oxen.

¹ By John Lockwood Kipling

BEAST AND MAN IN INDIA

The torn boughs trailing o'er the tusks aslant,
The saplings reeling in the path he trod,
Declare his might—our lord the Elephant,
Chief of the ways of God.

The black bulk heaving where the oxen pant,
The bowed head toiling where the guns careen,
Declare our might—our slave the Elephant,
And servant of the Queen.

The Elephant.

Dark children of the mere and marsh,
Wallow and waste and lea,
Outcaste they wait at the village gate
With folk of low degree.

Their pasture is in no man's land,
Their food the cattle's scorn;
Their rest is mire and their desire
The thicket and the thorn.

But woe to those that break their sleep,
And woe to those that dare
To rouse the herd-bull from his keep,
The wild boar from his lair!

Pigs and Buffaloes.

The beasts are very wise,
Their mouths are clean of lies,
They talk one to the other,
Bullock to bullock's brother
Resting after their labours,

BEAST AND MAN IN INDIA

Each in stall with his neighbours.
But man with goad and whip,
Break up their fellowship,
Shouts in their silky ears
Filling their soul with fears.
When he has ploughed the land,
He says: "They understand."
But the beasts in stall together,
Freed from the yoke and tether,
Say as the torn flanks smoke:
"Nay, 'twas the whip that spoke."

CHARTRES WINDOWS

1925

COLOUR fulfills where Music has no power :
By each man's light the unjudging glass betrays
All men's surrender, each man's holiest hour
And all the lit confusion of our days—
Purpled with iron, traced in dusk and fire,
Challenging ordered Time who, at the last,
Shall bring it, grozed and leaded and wedged fast,
To the cold stone that curbs or crowns desire.
Yet on the pavement that all feet have trod—
Even as the Spirit, in her deeps and heights,
Turns only, and that voiceless, to her God—
There falls no tincture from those anguished lights.
And Heaven's one light, behind them, striking through
Blazons what each man dreamed no other knew.

CUCKOO SONG

(Spring begins in Southern England on the 14th April, on which date the Old Woman lets the Cuckoo out of her basket at Heathfield Fair—locally known as Heffle Cuckoo Fair.)

TELL it to the locked-up trees,
Cuckoo, bring your song here!
Warrant, Act and Summons, please,
For Spring to pass along here!
Tell old Winter, if he doubt,
Tell him squat and square—a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair—a!

March has searched and April tried—
'Tisn't long to May now.
Not so far to Whitsuntide
And Cuckoo's come to say now!
Hear the valiant fellow shout
Down the orchard bare—a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair—a!

When your heart is young and gay
And the season rules it—
Work your works and play your play

CUCKOO SONG

'Fore the Autumn cools it!
Kiss you turn and turn-about,
But my lad, beware—a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair—a!

THE EXILES' LINE

1890

Now the new year reviving old desires,
The restless soul to open sea aspires,
Where the Blue Peter flickers from the fore,
And the grimed stoker feeds the engine-fires.

Coupons, alas, depart with all their rows,
And last year's sea-met loves where Grindlay knows;
But still the wild wind wakes off Gardafui,
And hearts turn eastward with the P. and O's.

Twelve knots an hour, be they more or less—
Oh slothful mother of much idleness,
Whom neither rivals spur nor contracts speed!
Nay, bear us gently! Wherefore need we press?

The Tragedy of all our East is laid
On those white decks beneath the awning shade—
Birth, absence, longing, laughter, love and tears,
And death unmaking ere the land is made.

And midnight madneses of souls distraught
Whom the cool seas call through the open port,
So that the table lacks one place next morn,
And for one forenoon men forego their sport.

The shadow of the rigging to and fro
Sways, shifts, and flickers on the spar-deck's snow,
And like a giant trampling in his chains,
The screw-blades gasp and thunder deep below;

THE EXILES' LINE

And, leagued to watch one flying-fish's wings,
Heaven stoops to sea, and sea to Heaven clings ;
 While, bent upon the ending of his toil,
The hot sun strides, regarding not these things :

For the same wave that meets our stem in spray
Bore Smith of Asia eastward yesterday,
 And Delhi Jones and Brown of Midnapore
To-morrow follow on the self-same way.

Linked in the chain of Empire one by one,
Flushed with long leave, or tanned with many a sun,
 The Exiles' Line brings out the exiles' line,
And ships them homeward when their work is done.

Yea, heedless of the shuttle through the loom,
The flying keels fulfil the web of doom.
 Sorrow or shouting—what is that to them?
Make out the cheque that pays for cabin room !

And how so many score of times ye flit
With wife and babe and caravan of kit,
 Not all thy travels past shall lower one fare,
Not all thy tears abate one pound of it.

And how so high thine earth-born dignity,
Honour and state, go sink it in the sea,
 Till that great one upon the quarter-deck,
Brow-bound with gold, shall give thee leave to be.

THE EXILES' LINE

Indeed, indeed from that same line we swear
Off for all time, and mean it when we swear ;
 And then, and then we meet the Quartered Flag,
And, surely for the last time, pay the fare.

And Green of Kensington, estrayed to view
In three short months the world he never knew,
 Stares with blind eyes upon the Quartered Flag
And sees no more than yellow, red and blue.

But we, the gipsies of the East, but we—
Waifs of the land and wastrels of the sea—
 Come nearer home beneath the Quartered Flag
Than ever home shall come to such as we.

The camp is struck, the bungalow decays,
Dead friends and houses desert mark our ways,
 Till sickness send us down to Prince's Dock
To meet the changeless use of many days.

Bound in the wheel of Empire, one by one,
The chain-gangs of the East from sire to son,
 The Exiles' Line takes out the exiles' line
And ships them homeward when their work is done.

How runs the old indictment? "Dear and slow,"
So much and twice so much. We gird, but go.
 For all the soul of our sad East is there,
Beneath the house-flag of the P. and O.

THE FIRES

(Prelude to Collected Verse)

*Men make them fires on the hearth
Each under his roof-tree,
And the Four Winds that rule the earth
They blow the smoke to me.*

*Across the high hills and the sea
And all the changeful skies,
The Four Winds blow the smoke to me
Till the tears are in my eyes.*

*Until the tears are in my eyes
And my heart is wellnigh broke
For thinking on old memories
That gather in the smoke.*

*With every shift of every wind
The homesick memories come,
From every quarter of mankind
Where I have made me a home.*

*Four times a fire against the cold
And a roof against the rain—
Sorrow fourfold and joy fourfold
The Four Winds bring again!*

*How can I answer which is best
Of all the fires that burn?
I have been too often host or guest
At every fire in turn.*

THE FIRES

*How can I turn from any fire,
On any man's hearthstone?
I know the wonder and desire
That went to build my own!*

*How can I doubt man's joy or woe
Where'er his house-fires shine,
Since all that man must undergo
Will visit me at mine?*

*Oh, you Four Winds that blow so strong
And know that this is true,
Stoop for a little and carry my song
To all the men I knew!*

*Where there are fires against the cold,
Or roofs against the rain—
With love fourfold and joy fourfold,
Take them my songs again!*

FOX-HUNTING
(THE FOX MEDITATES)

WHEN Samson set my brush afire
 To spoil the Timnite's barley,
I made my point for Leicestershire
 And left Philistia early.
Through Gath and Rankesborough Gorse I fled,
 And took the Coplow Road, sir!
And was a gentleman in Red
 When all the Quorn wore woad, sir!

When Rome lay massed on Hadrian's Wall,
 And nothing much was doing,
Her bored Centurions heard my call
 O' nights when I went wooing.
They raised a pack—they ran it well
 (For I was there to run 'em)
From Aescia to Carter Fell,
 And down North Tyne to Hunnum.

When William landed hot for blood,
 And Harold's hosts were smitten,
I lay at earth in Battle Wood
 While Domesday Book was written.
Whatever harm he did to man,
 I owe him pure affection;
For in his righteous reign began
 The first of Game Protection.

FOX-HUNTING

When Charles, my namesake, lost his mask,
 And Oliver dropped his'n,
I found those Northern Squires a task,
 To keep 'em out of prison.
In boots as big as milking-pails,
 With holsters on the pommel,
They chevied me across the Dales
 Instead of fighting Cromwell.

When thrifty Walpole took the helm,
 And hedging came in fashion,
The March of Progress gave my realm
 Enclosure and Plantation.
'Twas then, to soothe their discontent,
 I showed each pounded Master,
However fast the Commons went,
 I went a little faster!

When Pigg and Jorrocks held the stage,
 And Steam had linked the Shires,
I broke the staid Victorian age
 To posts, and rails, and wires.
Then fifty mile was none too far
 To go by train to cover,
Till some dam' sutler pupped a car,
 And decent sport was over!

When men grew shy of hunting stag,
 For fear the Law might try 'em,
The Car put up an average bag
 Of twenty dead *per diem*.

FOX-HUNTING

Then every road was made a rink
For Coroners to sit on;
And so began, in skid and stink,
The real blood-sport of Britain!

THE GIPSY TRAIL

THE white moth to the closing bine,
The bee to the opened clover,
And the gipsy blood to the gipsy blood
Ever the wide world over.

Ever the wide world over, lass,
Ever the trail held true,
Over the world and under the world,
And back at the last to you.

Out of the dark of the gorgio camp,
Out of the grime and the gray
(Morning waits at the end of the world),
Gipsy, come away!

The wild boar to the sun-dried swamp,
The red crane to her reed,
And the Romany lass to the Romany lad
By the tie of a roving breed.

The pied snake to the rifted rock,
The buck to the stony plain,
And the Romany lass to the Romany lad
And both to the road again.

Both to the road again, again!
Out on a clean sea-track—
Follow the cross of the gipsy trail
Over the world and back!

THE GIPSY TRAIL

Follow the Romany patteran
North where the blue bergs sail,
And the bows are gray with the frozen spray,
And the masts are shod with mail.

Follow the Romany patteran
Sheer to the Austral Light,
Where the besom of God is the wild South wind,
Sweeping the sea-floors white.

Follow the Romany patteran
West to the sinking sun,
Till the junk-sails lift through the houseless drift,
And the east and the west are one.

Follow the Romany patteran
East where the silence broods
By a purple wave on an opal beach
In the hush of the Mahim woods.

“The wild hawk to the wind-swept sky,
The deer to the wholesome wold
And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
As it was in the days of old.”

The heart of a man to the heart of a maid—
Light of my tents, be fleet.
Morning waits at the end of the world,
And the world is all at our feet!

THE GODS OF THE COPYBOOK HEADINGS

(1919)

AS I PASS through my incarnations in every age and
race,
I make my proper prostrations to the Gods of the
Market Place.
Peering through reverent fingers I watch them flourish
and fall,
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings, I notice,
outlast them all.

We were living in trees when they met us. They showed
us each in turn
That Water would certainly wet us, as Fire would
certainly burn:
But we found them lacking in Uplift, Vision and
Breadth of Mind,
So we left them to teach the Gorillas while we followed
the March of Mankind.

We moved as the Spirit listed. *They* never altered their
pace,
Being neither cloud nor wind-borne like the Gods of
the Market Place,
But they always caught up with our progress, and
presently word would come
That a tribe had been wiped off its icefield, or the lights
had gone out in Rome.

THE GODS OF THE COPYBOOK

With the Hopes that our World is built on they were
utterly out of touch,
They denied that the Moon was Stilton; they denied
she was even Dutch;
They denied that Wishes were Horses; they denied
that a Pig had Wings;
So we worshipped the Gods of the Market Who
promised these beautiful things.

When the Cambrian measures were forming, They
promised perpetual peace.
They swore, if we gave them our weapons, that the
wars of the tribes would cease.
And when we disarmed They sold us and delivered us
bound to our foe,
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: "*Stick
to the Devil you know.*"

On the first Feminian Sandstones we were promised
the Fuller Life
(Which started by loving our neighbour and ended by
loving his wife)
Till our women had no more children and the men lost
reason and faith,
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: "*The
Wages of Sin is Death.*"

In the Carboniferous Epoch we were promised abun-
dant for all,
By robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul;

THE GODS OF THE COPYBOOK

But, though we had plenty of money, there was nothing our money could buy,
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: "*If you don't work you die.*"

Then the Gods of the Market tumbled, and their smooth-tongued wizards withdrew,
And the hearts of the meanest were humbled and began to believe it was true
That All is not Gold that Glitters, and Two and Two make Four—
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings limped up to explain it once more.

.

As it will be in the future, it was at the birth of Man—
There are only four things certain since Social Progress began:—
That the Dog returns to his Vomit and the Sow returns to her Mire,
And the burnt Fool's bandaged finger goes wabbling back to the Fire;

And that after this is accomplished, and the brave new world begins
When all men are paid for existing and no man must pay for his sins,
As surely as Water will wet us, as surely as Fire will burn,
The Gods of the Copybook Headings with terror and slaughter return!

GREAT-HEART

(THEODORE ROOSEVELT)

"The interpreter then called for a man-servant of his, one Great-Heart."—BUNYAN'S Pilgrim's Progress.

CONCERNING brave Captains
Our age hath made known
For all men to honour,
One standeth alone,
Of whom, o'er both oceans
Both peoples may say:
"Our realm is diminished
With Great-Heart away."

In purpose unsparing,
In action no less,
The labours he praised
He would seek and profess
Through travail and battle,
At hazard and pain. . . .
And our world is none the braver
Since Great-Heart was ta'en!

Plain speech with plain folk,
And plain words for false things,
Plain faith in plain dealing
'Twixt neighbours or kings,
He used and he followed,
However it sped. . . .
Oh, our world is none more honest
Now Great-Heart is dead!

GREAT-HEART

The heat of his spirit
Struck warm through all lands;
For he loved such as showed
'Emselves men of their hands;
In love, as in hate,
Paying home to the last. . . .
But our world is none the kinder
Now Great-Heart hath passed!

Hard-schooled by long power,
Yet most humble of mind
Where aught that he was
Might advantage mankind.
Leal servant, loved master,
Rare comrade, sure guide. . . .
Oh, our world is none the safer
Now Great-Heart hath died!

Let those who would handle
Make sure they can wield
His far-reaching sword
And his close-guarding shield;
For those who must journey
Henceforward alone
Have need of stout convoy
Now Great-Heart is gone.

THE HERITAGE

OUR Fathers in a wondrous age,
Ere yet the Earth was small,
Ensured to us an heritage,
And doubted not at all
That we, the children of their heart,
Which then did beat so high,
In later time should play like part
For our posterity.

A thousand years they steadfast built,
To 'vantage us and ours,
The Walls that were a world's despair,
The sea-constraining Towers :
Yet in their midmost pride they knew,
And unto Kings made known,
Not all from these their strength they drew,
Their faith from brass or stone.

Youth's passion, manhood's fierce intent,
With age's judgment wise,
They spent, and counted not they spent,
At daily sacrifice.
Not lambs alone nor purchased doves
Or tithe of trader's gold—
Their lives most dear, their dearer loves,
They offered up of old.

THE HERITAGE

Refraining e'en from lawful things,
They bowed the neck to bear
The unadornèd yoke that brings
Stark toil and sternest care.
Wherefore through them is Freedom sure;
Wherefore through them we stand,
From all but sloth and pride secure,
In a delightsome land.

Then fretful, murmur not they gave
So great a charge to keep,
Nor dream that awestruck Time shall save
Their labour while we sleep.
Dear-bought and clear, a thousand year,
Our fathers' tide still runs.
Make me likewise their sacrifice,
Defrauding not our sons.

“HIS APOLOGIES”

1932

MASTER, this is Thy Servant. He is rising eight weeks old.

He is mainly Head and Tummy. His legs are uncontrolled.

But Thou hast forgiven his ugliness, and settled him on Thy knee . . .

Art Thou content with Thy Servant? He is *very* comfy with Thee.

Master, behold a Sinner! He hath committed a wrong. He hath defiled Thy Premises through being kept in too long.

Wherefore his nose has been rubbed in the dirt, and his self-respect has been bruised,

Master, pardon Thy Sinner, and see he is properly loosèd.

Master—again Thy Sinner! This that was once Thy Shoe,

He has found and taken and carried aside, as fitting matter to chew.

Now there is neither blacking nor tongue, and the Housemaid has us in tow.

Master, remember Thy Servant is young, and tell her to let him go!

“HIS APOLOGIES”

Master, extol Thy Servant, he has met a most Worthy
Foe!

There has been fighting all over the Shop—and into
the Shop also!

Till cruel umbrellas parted the strife (or I might have
been choking him yet)

But Thy Servant has had the Time of his Life—and
now shall we call on the vet?

Master, behold Thy Servant! Strange children came
to play,

And because they fought to caress him, Thy Servant
wentest away.

But now that the Little Beasts have gone, he has re-
turned to see

(Brushed—with his Sunday collar on) what they left
over from tea.

.

Master, pity Thy Servant! He is deaf and three parts
blind.

He cannot catch Thy Commandments. He cannot read
Thy Mind.

Oh, leave him not to his loneliness; nor make him that
kitten's scorn.

He hath had none other God than Thee since the year
that he was born.

Lord, look down on Thy Servant! Bad things have
come to pass.

“HIS APOLOGIES”

There is no heat in the midday sun, nor health in the
wayside grass.

His bones are full of an old disease—his torments run
and increase.

Lord, make haste with Thy Lightnings and grant him
a quick release!

IN THE MATTER OF ONE COMPASS

1892

WHEN, foot to wheel and back to wind,
The helmsman dare not look behind,
But hears beyond his compass-light,
The blind bow thunder through the night,
And, like a harpstring ere it snaps,
The rigging sing beneath the caps ;
 Above the shriek of storm in sail
 Or rattle of the blocks blown free,
Set for the peace beyond the gale,
 This song the Needle sings the Sea :

*Oh, drunken Wave! Oh, driving Cloud!
 Rage of the Deep and sterile Rain,
By Love upheld, by God allowed,
 We go, but we return again!*

When leagued about the 'wilder'd boat
The rainbow Jellies fill and float,
And, liling where the laver lingers,
The Starfish trips on all her fingers ;
Where, 'neath his myriad spines ashock,
The Sea-egg ripples down the rock,
An orange wonder dimly guessed
From darkness where the Cuttles rest,
Moored o'er the darker deeps that hide
The blind white Sea-snake and his bride,

IN THE MATTER OF ONE COMPASS

Who, drowsing, nose the long-lost Ships
Let down through darkness to their lips—
Safe-swung above the glassy death,
Hear what the constant Needle saith :

*Oh, lisp'ing Reef! Oh, listless Cloud,
In slumber on a pulseless main!
By Love upheld, by God allowed,
We go, but we return again!*

E'en so through Tropic and through Trade,
Awed by the shadow of new skies,
As we shall watch old planets fade
And mark the stranger stars arise,
So, surely, back through Sun and Cloud,
So, surely, from the outward main
By Love recalled, by God allowed,
Shall we return—return again!
Yea, we return—return again!

THE JESTER

THERE are three degrees of bliss
At the foot of Allah's Throne
And the highest place is his
Who saves a brother's soul
At peril of his own.
There is the Power made known!

There are three degrees of bliss
In the Gardens of Paradise,
And the second place is his
Who saves his brother's soul
By excellent advice.
For there the Glory lies!

There are three degrees of bliss
And three abodes of the Blest,
And the lowest place is his
Who has saved a soul by a jest
And a brother's soul in sport . . .
But there do the Angels resort!

THE KING'S PILGRIMAGE

King George's Visit to War Cemeteries in France

1922

OUR King went forth on pilgrimage
His prayers and vows to pay
To them that saved our heritage
And cast their own away.

And there was little show of pride,
Or prows of belted steel,
For the clean-swept oceans every side
Lay free to every keel.

And the first land he found, it was shoal and banky
ground—
Where the broader seas begin,
And a pale tide grieving at the broken harbour-mouth
Where they worked the death-ships in.

And there was neither gull on the wing,
Nor wave that could not tell
Of the bodies that were buckled in the life-buoy's
ring
That slid from swell to swell.

*All that they had they gave—they gave; and they shall
not return,
For these are those that have no grave where any heart
may mourn.*

THE KING'S PILGRIMAGE

And the next land he found, it was low and hollow
ground—

Where once the cities stood,
But the man-high thistle had been master of it all,
Or the bulrush by the flood.

And there was neither blade of grass,
Nor lone star in the sky
But shook to see some spirit pass
And took its agony.

And the next land he found, it was bare and hilly
ground—

Where once the bread-corn grew,
But the fields were cankered and the water was defiled,
And the trees were riven through.

And there was neither paved highway,
Nor secret path in the wood,
But had borne its weight of the broken clay
And darkened 'neath the blood.

*Father and mother they put aside, and the nearer love
also—*

*An hundred thousand men who died whose graves
shall no man know.*

And the last land he found, it was fair and level ground
About a carven stone,
And a stark Sword brooding on the bosom of the Cross
Where high and low are one.

THE KING'S PILGRIMAGE

And there was grass and the living trees,
And the flowers of the spring,
And there lay gentlemen from out of all the seas
That ever called him King.

*'Twixt Nieuport sands and the eastward lands where
the Four Red Rivers spring,
Five hundred thousand gentlemen of those that served
their King.*

All that they had they gave—they gave—
In sure and single faith.
There can no knowledge reach the grave
To make them grudge their death
Save only if they understood
That, after all was done,
We they redeemed denied their blood
And mocked the gains it won.

THE LAST OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

1891

THERE were thirty million English who talked of Eng-
land's might,
There were twenty broken troopers who lacked a bed
for the night.
They had neither food nor money, they had neither
service nor trade;
They were only shiftless soldiers, the last of the Light
Brigade.

They felt that life was fleeting; they knew not that art
was long,
That though they were dying of famine, they lived in
deathless song.
They asked for a little money to keep the wolf from
the door;
And the thirty million English sent twenty pounds and
four!

They laid their heads together that were scarred and
lined and gray;
Keen were the Russian sabres, but want was keener
than they;
And an old Troop Sergeant muttered, "Let us go to
the man who writes
The things on Balaclava the kiddies at school recites."

THE LAST OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

They went without bands or colours, a regiment ten-
file strong,
To look for the Master-singer who had crowned them
all in his song ;
And, waiting his servant's order, by the garden gate
they stayed,
A desolate little cluster, the last of the Light Brigade.

They strove to stand to attention, to straighten the toil-
bowed back ;
They drilled on an empty stomach, the loose-knit files
fell slack ;
With stooping of weary shoulders, in garments tattered
and frayed,
They shambled into his presence, the last of the Light
Brigade.

The old Troop Sergeant was spokesman, and "Beggin'
your pardon," he said,
"You wrote o' the Light Brigade, sir. Here's all that
isn't dead.
An' it's all come true what you wrote, sir, regardin' the
mouth of hell ;
For we're all of us nigh to the workhouse, an' we
thought we'd call an' tell.

"No, thank you, we don't want food, sir ; but couldn't
you take an' write
A sort of 'to be continued' and 'see next page' o' the
fight ?
We think that someone has blundered, an' couldn't you
tell 'em how ?

THE LAST OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

You wrote we were heroes once, sir. Please, write we
are starving now."

The poor little army departed, limping and lean and
forlorn.

And the heart of the Master-singer grew hot with "the
scorn of scorn."

And he wrote for them wonderful verses that swept
the land like flame,

Till the fatted souls of the English were scourged with
the thing called Shame.

O thirty million English that babble of England's
might,

Behold there are twenty heroes who lack their food
to-night;

Our children's children are lisping to "honour the
charge they made—"

And we leave to the streets and the workhouse the
charge of the Light Brigade!

LONDON STONE

NOV. 11, 1923

WHEN you come to London Town,
(Grieving—grieving!)
Bring your flowers and lay them down
At the place of grieving.

When you come to London Town,
(Grieving—grieving!)
Bow your head and mourn your own,
With the others grieving.

For those minutes, let it wake
(Grieving—grieving!)
All the empty-heart and ache
That is not cured by grieving.

For those minutes, tell no lie:
(Grieving—grieving!)
“Grave, this is thy victory;
And the sting of death is grieving.”

Where’s our help, from earth or heaven,
(Grieving—grieving!)
To comfort us for what we’ve given,
And only gained the grieving.

Heaven’s too far and earth too near,
(Grieving—grieving!)
But our neighbour’s standing here,
Grieving as we’re grieving.

LONDON STONE

What's his burden every day?

(Grieving—grieving!)

Nothing man can count or weigh,

But loss and love's own grieving.

What is the tie betwixt us two

(Grieving—grieving!)

That must last our whole lives through?

"As I suffer, so do you."

That may ease the grieving.

THE LOWESTOFT BOAT

(East Coast Patrols)

1914-18

IN Lowestoft a boat was laid,
Mark well what I do say!
And she was built for the herring-trade,
But she has gone a-rovin', a-rovin', a-rovin',
The Lord knows where!

They gave her Government coal to burn,
And a Q.F. gun at bow and stern,
And sent her out a-rovin', etc.

Her skipper was mate of a bucko ship
Which always killed one man per trip,
So he is used to rovin', etc.

Her mate was skipper of a chapel in Wales,
And so he fights in topper and tails—
Religi-ous tho' rovin', etc.

Her engineer is fifty-eight,
So *he's* prepared to meet his fate,
Which ain't unlikely rovin', etc.

Her leading-stoker's seventeen,
So he don't know what the Judgments mean,
Unless he cops 'em rovin', etc.

THE LOWESTOFT BOAT

Her cook was chef in the Lost Dogs' Home,
Mark well what I do say!
And I'm sorry for Fritz when they all come
A-rovin', a-rovin', a-roarin' and a-rovin',
Round the North Sea rovin',
The Lord knows where!

MINE SWEEPERS

1914-18

DAWN off the Foreland—the young flood making
Jumbled and short and steep—
Black in the hollows and bright where it's breaking—
Awkward water to sweep.
“Mines reported in the fairway,
Warn all traffic and detain.
'Sent up *Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and
Golden Gain.*”

Noon off the Foreland—the first ebb making
Lumpy and strong in the bight.
Boom after boom, and the golf-hut shaking
And the jackdaws wild with fright!
“Mines located in the fairway,
Boats now working up the chain,
Sweepers—*Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and
Golden Gain.*”

Dusk off the Foreland—the last light going
And the traffic crowding through,
And five damned trawlers with their syrens blowing
Heading the whole review!
“Sweep completed in the fairway.
No more mines remain.
'Sent back *Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and
Golden Gain.*”

THE NORTH SEA PATROLS

1914-18

WHERE the East wind is brewed fresh and fresh every
morning,

And the balmy night-breezes blow straight from the
Pole,

I heard a Destroyer sing: "What an enjoya-
ble life does one lead on the North Sea Patrol!

"To blow things to bits is our business (and Fritz's),
Which means there are mine-fields wherever you
stroll.

Unless you've particular wish to die quick, you'll a-
void steering close to the North Sea Patrol.

"We warn from disaster the mercantile master
Who takes in high dudgeon our life-saving rôle,
For every one's grousing at docking and dowsing¹
The marks and the lights on the North Sea Patrol."

So swept but surviving, half drowned but still driving,
I watched her head out through the swell off the
shoal,

And I heard her propellers roar: "Write to poor fellers
Who run such a Hell as the North Sea Patrol!"

¹ Shoals and lights on the East Coast.

PAN IN VERMONT

1893

(About the 15th of this month, you may expect our Mr. —, with the usual Spring Seed, etc., Catalogues.

—FLORISTS' ANNOUNCEMENT.)

It's forty in the shade to-day the spouting eaves declare;

The boulders nose above the drift, the southern slopes are bare;

Hub-deep in slush Apollo's car swings north along the Zodiac-

iac. Good lack, the Spring is back, and Pan is on the road!

His house is Gee & Tellus' Sons,—so goes his jest with men—

He sold us Zeus knows what last year; he'll take us in again.

Disguised behind a livery-team, fur-coated, rubber-shod—

Yet Apis from the bull-pen lows—he knows his brother God!

Now down the lines of tasselled pines the yearning whispers wake—

Pitys of old thy love behold! Come in for Hermes' sake!

PAN IN VERMONT

How long since that so-Boston boot with reeling
Mænads ran?

Numen adest! Let be the rest. Pipe and we pay, O Pan.

(What though his phlox and hollyhocks ere half a
month demised?

What though his ampelopsis clambered not as adver-
tised?

Though every seed was guaranteed and every standard
true—

Forget, forgive they did not live! Believe, and buy
anew!)

Now o'er a careless knee he flings the painted page
abroad—

Such bloom hath never eye beheld this side the Eden
Sword;

Such fruit Pomona marks her own, yea, Liber oversees
That we may reach (one dollar each) the Lost Hes-
perides!

Serene, assenting, unabashed, he writes our orders
down:—

Blue Asphodel on all our paths—a few true bays for
crown—

Uncankered bud, immortal flower, and leaves that
never fall—

Apples of Gold, of Youth, of Health,—and—thank you,
Pan, that's all. . . .

He's off along the drifted pent to catch the Windsor
train,

PAN IN VERMONT

And swindle every citizen from Keene to Lake Cham-
plain;
But where his goat's-hoof cut the crust—beloved, look
below—
He's left us (I'll forgive him all) the man-flower 'neath
her snow!

THE QUEST

THE Knight came home from the quest,
Muddied and sore he came.
Battered of shield and crest,
Bannerless, bruised and lame.
Fighting we take no shame,
Better is man for a fall.
Merrily borne, the bugle-horn
Answered the warder's call :—
“Here is my lance to men (Haro!),
Here is my horse to be shot.
Yea, they were strong, and the fight was long ;
But I paid as good as I got!”

THE SCHOLARS

"Some hundreds of the younger naval officers whose education was interrupted by the War are now to be sent to various colleges at Cambridge to continue their studies. The experiment will be watched with great interest."

—DAILY PAPERS.)

*"Oh, show me how a rose can shut and be a bud again!"
again!"*

Nay, watch my Lords of the Admiralty, for they have
the work in train.

They have taken the men that were careless lads at
Dartmouth in 'Fourteen

And entered them in the landward schools as though
no war had been.

They have piped the children off all the seas from the
Falklands to the Bight,

And quartered them on the Colleges to learn to read
and write!

Their books were rain and sleet and fog—the dry gale
and the snow,

Their teachers were the hornèd mines and the hump-
backed Death below.

Their schools were walled by the walking mist and
roofed by the waiting skies,

When they conned their task in a new-sown field with
the Moonlight Sacrifice.

They were not rated too young to teach, nor reckoned
unfit to guide

THE SCHOLARS

When they formed their class on Helle's beach at the
bows of the "River Clyde."

Their eyes are sunk by endless watch, their faces
roughed by the spray,

Their feet are drawn by the wet sea-boots they changed
not night or day

When they guarded the six-knot convoy's flank on the
road to Norroway.

Their ears are stuffed with the week-long roar of the
West-Atlantic gale

When the sloops were watching the Irish Shore from
Galway to Kinsale.

Their hands are scored where the life-lines cut or the
dripping funnel-stays

When they followed their leader at thirty knot between
the Skaw and the Naze.

Their mouths are filled with the magic words they
learned at the collier's hatch

When they coaled in the foul December dawns and
sailed in the forenoon-watch ;

Or measured the weight of a Pentland tide and the
wind off Ronaldshay,

Till the target mastered the breathless tug and the
hawser carried away.

They know the price to be paid for a fault—for a
gauge-clock wrongly read,

Or a picket-boat to the gangway brought bows-on and
full-ahead,

Or the drowsy second's lack of thought that costs a
dozen dead.

THE SCHOLARS

They have touched a knowledge outreaching speech—
as when the cutters were sent

To harvest the dreadful mile of beach after the “Van-
guard” went.

They have learned great faith and little fear and a
high heart in distress,

And how to suffer each sodden year of heaped-up
weariness.

They have borne the bridle upon their lips and the yoke
upon their neck,

Since they went down to the sea in ships to save the
world from wreck—

Since the chests were slung down the College stair at
Dartmouth in 'Fourteen,

And now they are quit of the sea-affair as though no
war had been.

Far have they steamed and much have they known,
and most would they fain forget;

But now they are come to their joyous own with all the
world in their debt.

.

Soft—blow soft on them, little East Wind! Be smooth
for them, mighty stream!

Though the cams they use are not of your kind, and
they bump, for choice, by steam.

Lightly dance with them, Newnham maid—but none
too lightly believe.

They are hot from the fifty-month blockade, and they
carry their hearts on their sleeve.

THE SCHOLARS

Tenderly, Proctor, let them down, if they do not walk
as they should :

For, by God, if they owe you half a crown, you owe
'em your four years' food!

.
Hallowed River, most gracious Trees, Chapel beyond
compare,

Here be gentlemen tired of the seas—take them into
your care.

Far have they come, much have they braved. Give
them their hour of play,

While the hidden things their hands have saved work
for them day by day :

Till the grateful Past their youth redeemed return them
their youth once more,

And the Soul of the Child at last lets fall the unjust
load that it bore!

A SONG OF THE WHITE MEN

1899

Now, this is the cup the White Men drink
When they go to right a wrong,
And that is the cup of the old world's hate—
Cruel and strained and strong.
We have drunk that cup—and a bitter, bitter cup—
And tossed the dregs away.
But well for the world when the White Men drink
To the dawn of the White Man's day!

Now, this is the road that the White Men tread
When they go to clean a land—
Iron underfoot and levin overhead
And the deep on either hand.
We have trod that road—and a wet and windy
road—
Our chosen star for guide.
Oh, well for the world when the White Men tread
Their highway side by side!

Now, this is the faith that the White Men hold
When they build their homes afar—
“Freedom for ourselves and freedom for our sons
And, failing freedom, War.”
We have proved our faith—bear witness to our
faith,
Dear souls of freemen slain!
Oh, well for the world when the White Men join
To prove their faith again!

SUPPLICATION OF THE BLACK ABERDEEN

1928

I PRAY! My little body and whole span
Of years is Thine, my Owner and my Man.
For Thou hast made me—unto Thee I owe
This dim, distressed half-soul that hurts me so,
Compact of every crime, but, none the less,
Broken by knowledge of its naughtiness.
Put me not from Thy Life—'tis all I know.
If Thou forsake me, whither shall I go?

Thine is the Voice with which my Day begins :
Thy Foot my refuge, even in my sins.
Thine Honour hurls me forth to testify
Against the Unclean and Wicked passing by.
(But when Thou callest they are of Thy Friends,
Who readier than I to make amends?)
I was Thy Deputy with high and low—
If Thou dismiss me, whither shall I go?

I have been driven forth on gross offence
That took no reckoning of my penitence.
And, in my desolation—faithless me!—
Have crept for comfort to a woman's knee!
Now I return, self-drawn, to meet the just
Reward of Riot, Theft and Breach of Trust.
Put me not from Thy Life—though this is so.
If Thou forsake me, whither shall I go?

THE BLACK ABERDEEN

Into The Presence, flattening while I crawl—
From head to tail, I do confess it all.
Mine was the fault—deal me the stripes—but spare
The Pointed Finger which I cannot bear!
The Dreadful Tone in which my Name is named.
That sends me 'neath the sofa-frill ashamed!
(Yet, to be near Thee, I would face that woe.)
If Thou reject me, whither shall I go?

THE VAMPIRE

1897

A FOOL there was and he made his prayer
(Even as you and I!)
To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair
(We called her the woman who did not care)
But the fool he called her his lady fair—
(Even as you and I!)

*Oh, the years we waste and the tears we waste
And the work of our head and hand
Belong to the woman who did not know
(And now we know that she never could know)
And did not understand!*

A fool there was and his goods he spent
(Even as you and I!)
Honour and faith and a sure intent
(And it wasn't the least what the lady meant)
But a fool must follow his natural bent
(Even as you and I!)

*Oh, the toil we lost and the spoil we lost
And the excellent things we planned
Belong to the woman who didn't know why
(And now we know that she never knew why)
And did not understand!*

THE VAMPIRE

The fool was stripped to his foolish hide
(Even as you and I!)
Which she might have seen when she threw him
aside—
(But it isn't on record the lady tried)
So some of him lived but the most of him died—
(Even as you and I!)

*And it isn't the shame and it isn't the blame
That stings like a white hot brand—
It's coming to know that she never knew why
(Seeing, at last, she could never know why)
And never could understand!*

