A NAVAL VENTURE

Title: A Naval Venture
The War Story of an Armoured Cruiser

Author: T. T. Jeans

Release Date: June 13, 2014 [eBook #45960]

Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A NAVAL VENTURE ***

Produced by Al Haines.

[image]

"AIM LOW, SONNY! AIM LOW. YOU WILL SEE YOUR BULLET-SPLASHES"

A Naval Venture

The War Story of an Armoured Cruiser

BY
FLEET-SURGEON T. T. JEANS, R.N.
Author of "Gunboat and Gun-runner"
"John Graham, Sub-Lieutenant, R.N."
"Ford of H.M.S. Vigilant"
&c.

Illustrated by Frank Gillett, R.I.

BLACKIE AND SON LIMITED
LONDON GLASGOW AND BOMBAY
1917

Preface

In this book I have endeavoured to write a gun-room tale which will give a general impression of the part played by the Royal Navy during the Dardanelles operations, and of gun-room life under these conditions.

In writing it I have been greatly assisted by many shipmates—officers, petty officers, and men—who have been employed away from the ship, on various occasions, either on shore or in steamboats, tugs, or motor-lighters. From their accounts it has been possible to bring into the book descriptions of some interesting incidents and operations which did not come under my personal observation.

My thanks are due, more especially, to Lieutenant H. A. D. Keate, R.N., and to Lieutenant V. E. Kemball, R.N., of this ship, who have read laboriously through the manuscript as it progressed, corrected many errors of fact and detail, and suggested very many improvements to the story as a whole.

T. T. JEANS,
Fleet-Surgeon, R.N.

H.M.S. ***SWIFTSURE***, *27th April, 1916.*

Contents

CHAP.

I. The "*Achates*" goes to Sea

II. The Gun-Room of the "*Achates*"

III. Ordered to the Mediterranean

IV. The Bombardment of Smyrna Forts

V. The "*Achates*" is Shelled

VI. A Night's Adventure

VII. Off to the Dardanelles

VIII. The Landing on Gallipoli

IX. The "River Clyde"

X. A Night Attack

XI. The Beach Party

XII. Off Cape Helles

XIII. The Army comes to a Standstill

XIV. Submarines Appear

XV. A Peaceful Month

XVI. A Glorious Picnic

XVII. A "Cutting-out" Expedition

XVIII. Bombarding at Suvla Bay

XIX. The Army again comes to a Standstill

XX. Hard Work at Mudros

XXI. The Evacuation of Suvla Bay

XXII. A Terrible Night

XXIII. In "Dug-outs" at Cape Helles

XXIV. The Evacuation of Cape Helles

XXV. The "*Achates*" Returns to Malta

Illustrations

"'Aim low, sonny! Aim low! You will see your bullet-splashes'" . . . Frontispiece

"The Gunnery Lieutenant now flew about, jumping from voice pipes to range-finder and back again"

"The Lamp-post jumped up, seized the box, hoisted it on his shoulder, and disappeared ahead"

"'Look! what an extraordinary ship!'"

"Screened lanterns!"

The Gun-room Court Martial on the China Doll

Sketch Map of Gallipoli and the Dardanelles

A NAVAL VENTURE

CHAPTER I
The "*Achates*" goes to Sea

On one miserably wet and cheerless afternoon of February, 1915, the picket-boat of H.M.S. *Achates* lay alongside the King's Stairs at Portsmouth Dockyard, whilst her crew, with their boat-hooks, kept her from bumping herself against the lowest steps. The rain trickled down their glistening oilskins, and dark, angry clouds sweeping up from behind Gosport Town on the opposite side of the harbour, and scudding overhead, one after the other, in endless battalions, made it certain that a south-westerly gale was raging in the Channel.

At the top of the steps, with his back to the wind and rain, his feet wide apart, and his hands in his pockets, was the midshipman of the boat, in oilskin, sou'wester, and sea-boots. This was Mr. Vincent Orpen—commonly known as the Orphan—not very tall, but sturdy and broad-shouldered in his bulky oilskins. Between the brim of his dripping sou'wester and his turned-up collar showed a pair of very humorous eyes, a determined-looking nose and mouth, and a pair of large ears reddened by the cold and rain.

He was waiting to take the Captain—Captain Donald Macfarlane—off to Spithead, where the *Achates* lay, ready for sea, but this absent-minded officer had very probably forgotten the time or place where the boat was to meet him.

Near by, taking shelter in the lee of the signalman's shelter-box, the marine postman and a massive, friendly dockyard policeman were standing with the rain dripping off them.

Presently the midshipman splashed across to them and spoke to the postman.

"The Captain did say King's Stairs; didn't he?"

"King's Stairs at two o'clock, sir; I heard him myself; King's Stairs at two o'clock, and it's now past the half-hour. He was only a-going up to the Admiral's office, he said; just time for me to slip outside to the post office and back again, sir."

Down below, in the picket-boat, Jarvis, the coxswain, an old, bearded petty officer—a Naval Reserve man—was grumbling to one of the crew: "The Cap'n can't never remember nothink—he'll forget hisself one o' these fine days."

"This ain't a fine day," the young A.B.—Plunky Bill—answered cheekily.

"Stow it! I'll give yer 'fine day' when we gets aboard: I knows it ain't. We'll get a fair dusting-down going out to Spithead, and a good many of you youngsters'll wish you'd never come to sea when we gets out in the Channel to-night."

"I 'opes we ain't going back to the mine-bumping 'bizz' in the North Sea, a-waiting for to be terpadoed," Plunky Bill said presently, viciously shoving the picket-boat's dancing stern off the wall with his dripping boat-hook.

"That's about our job," growled Jarvis. "Better blow up yer swimmin'-collar when you gets aboard, and tie it around yer bloomin' neck."

"A precious lot of good they collars be—with sea-boots and oilskins on, and the water as cold as charity."

"Nobody's askin' you to wear it. When you feels you wants to drown, quick, just 'and it over to me—I don't. Dare say you ain't got no one to miss yer; I 'ave—a missus and six kids," growled the coxswain.

Just then the trap hatch of the stokehold flapped up, and out of the small square opening emerged the bare head of the stoker of the picket-boat—an old, grey-headed Naval Reserve man, who actually wore gold spectacles, the effect of which on his coal-begrimed face was very quaint. He looked round him in a patient, dignified manner, and sniffed at the wind and rain.

There was a shout from the top of the steps, and Mr. Orpen, with his hands to his mouth, called down: "Keep out of the rain, Fletcher—don't be an ass!"

The old man did not hear; but one of the boat's crew for'ard bawled out to him: "'Ere, close down yer blooming 'atch—chuck it, grandpa—shut yer face in—the Orphan's a-singing out to yer—'e's nuts on yer 'ealth, 'e is." The old stoker, wiping his rain-spotted spectacles, meekly obeyed, pulled the hatch over his head, and disappeared from view.

Then the postman, with his big, leather letter-bag, clattered down, splashing the puddles on the steps. "The Cap'n's coming at last," he said, and stowed himself away under the fore peak.

Down came Mr. Orpen, jumped aboard, and took the steering-wheel. A moment later, and after him came the tall, gaunt figure of the Captain, the rain trickling off the gold oak-leaves on the peak of his cap, dripping off his long, thin nose and running down his yellowish-red moustache and pointed beard. His greatcoat was glistening with raindrops, and his trousers beneath it were soaked and sticking to his thin shins.

"I forgot to bring my waterproof," he said. "I'm not late, am I?" and nodding cheerfully, he stepped into the boat.

Mr. Orpen saluted. "Shall I carry on, sir?"

The Captain nodded again; Jarvis shouted out orders; the boat's bows were shoved off, the engines thumped, and the picket-boat, starting on her stormy passage to Spithead, bumped the steps with her stern—the last time, had she known it, that she would ever touch England.

The crew dived down below under the fore peak and shut the hatch on top of them, for they knew well what was coming. It came right enough.

Directly the picket-boat left the shelter of the harbour mouth she began to reel and stagger as she steamed along Southsea beach, past the ends of the deserted piers, with the sea on her beam, washing over her and jostling her. Then she turned round the Spit Buoy, and head on to the wind and rain, plunged her way through the short seas, diving and lifting, throwing up clouds of spray which smacked loudly against the oilskins of the midshipman at the wheel and the coxswain hanging on by his side.

As one wave came over the bows, rushed aft along the engine-room sides and swirled round their feet, and its spray, tossed up by the fo'c'sle gun-mounting and by the funnel, covered them from head to foot, Jarvis roared: "Better ease her a bit, sir."

But the Orphan was enjoying himself hugely. He knew the old boat; he knew exactly what she could "stand", and he was not going to ease down until it was absolutely necessary, or until Captain Macfarlane made him; and the Captain was still sitting in the stern-sheets, tugging, absent-mindedly, at his pointed yellow beard, apparently having forgotten where he was, and that if only he went into the cabin he could keep dry.

The picket-boat throbbed and trembled and shook herself, butted into a wave which seemed to bring her up "all standing", swept through it or over it, then charged into another; and as the battered remnants of the waves flung themselves in the Orphan's face and smacked loudly against his oilskins he only grinned, shook his head, and peered ahead from beneath the turned-down brim of his sou'wester.

Jarvis, the coxswain, was not enjoying himself. He hated getting wet—that meant "a bout of rheumatics", and he had a "missus and six kids".

Gradually the picket-boat fought her way out to the black-and-white chequered mass of the Spit Fort, until the four funnels and long, grey hull of the *Achates* showed through the rain squalls beyond.

A solitary steamboat, on her way ashore, came rushing towards them—a smother of foam, smoke, and spray; and as she staggered past, only a few yards away, with the following seas surging round her stern, Orpen waved a hand to the solitary figure in glistening oilskins at her wheel—a midshipman "pal" of his from another ship—who waved back cheerily and disappeared to leeward as a squall swept down between the two boats.

"A nice little trip he'll have, off, sir—if he don't come back soon," the coxswain shouted when the last wave's spray had run off the brim of his sou'wester and he'd caught his breath. "It's breezin' up every minute, sir!"

Once past the Spit Fort, the picket-boat was in deeper water; the seas became longer, not so steep, and she took them more easily. Orpen needed only one hand now to keep her on her course, and in ten minutes he steered her under

the stern of the *Achates*, and brought her alongside the starboard quarter.

The Captain, dripping with water, jumped on the foot of the ladder as a wave swung the picket-boat's stern close to it. Half-way up the ladder a sudden humorous thought struck him, and, bending down, he called out: "You did not ease down all the time, did you, Mr. Orpen?"

"No, sir," Orpen sang back, grinning with the happiness of everything. He didn't worry in the least—so long as the Captain didn't mind—that he had, by forcing his boat through the seas, wetted him to the skin, and kept him wet for the last twenty minutes.

The officer of the watch shouted "Hook on!" and the picket-boat was hauled ahead under the main derrick, until the big hook dangling from the "purchase" swung above the boat. The crew made the bow and stern lines fast; Fletcher, the old stoker, drew himself up on deck and lowered the funnel, steam roared away from the "escape"; one seaman struggled with the ring of the boat's slings, holding it chest-high; another waited his opportunity, when a wave lifted the picket-boat, to seize the big hook hanging above him; the ring was slipped over it; the midshipman waved his hand and shouted; the slings tautened as the order "up purchase and topping lift" was given; a last wave lopped over the bows, and with a jerk she was hoisted clear of the water and quickly swung inboard.

Up on the quarter-deck the Captain was talking to the Commander—a wiry little man with a weather-beaten face and a grim, hard mouth. "Same old job, sir?" he asked.

The Captain nodded ruefully. "It's all the poor old *Achates* is fit for."

"You're pretty well soaked, sir. Rather a wet passage off?"

"I forgot to go into the cabin," the Captain laughed.

"We're ready for sea, sir. I shortened in, as you were rather late."

"Was I?" the Captain's eyes twinkled. "Right you are! I'll be up again in a minute. I must get into dry things, or the Fleet Surgeon will be on my tracks"—and he disappeared below.

In half an hour the *Achates* was under way and steaming out into the Channel and the gale.

This ended her week's "rest"—the second "rest" since the war broke out, six months before. Now she was off again to the North Sea, with its constant gales, its mine-fields, its enemy submarines, and the grim delight of frequent hurried coalings.

It was not a very pleasing prospect.

CHAPTER II
The Gun-room of the "Achates"

Having seen his picket-boat safely landed in her crutches on the booms, the Orphan dived down below to the gun-room to dry himself in front of the blazing stove there.

The gun-room was a long, untidy place on the starboard side of the main-deck, just for'ard of the after 6-inch-gun casemate. A long table, covered with a red cloth, of the usual Service pattern, and rather more than usually torn and stained with grease, occupied most of the deck space, and was now laden with plates, cups and saucers, and, down the middle, in one gorgeous line, tins of jam, loaves of bread, fat pats of butter, and slabs of splendidly indigestible cake.

Long benches, covered with leather cushions, were fixed each side of it, whilst a few chairs, in various stages of decay, were drawn up round the stove and the upset copper coal-box. The after bulkhead of this sumptuous abode was occupied by midshipmen's lockers—rows of them one above the other—and from the half-open locker doors peeped boots and books, woollen helmets, sweaters, and safety waistcoats.

Along the foremost bulkhead was a corticine-covered sideboard with drawers for knives, forks, and spoons, cupboards for bottles, and a cosy gap for a barrel of beer. Above the sideboard, at either end of it, there were two little sliding-doors in the bulkhead, for the plates and food to be passed in from the pantry beyond, and for the dirty plates to be passed out. Between these two sliding-hatches, pictures of beautiful ladies taken from the last Christmas Number of the Sketch had been gummed on to the bare expanse of dirty-white paint, and gave an air of brightness and refinement to an otherwise somewhat depressing interior.

The outer bulkhead—the outer side—the ship's side—had been white—once. Along it were five scuttles, at present closely screwed up, and the tail ends of waves occasionally swished angrily across them. In the spaces between these scuttles, war maps, most of them torn and ragged, had been pasted to the iron-work, and one or two pin-flags still managed to hold fast, though the vast array

that had once fluttered across them had long since disappeared.

At each end of the inner bulkhead was a door leading out into the "half-deck", and between them were more lockers, the roaring, smoking stove, its brass chimney, and the upset coal-box. Behind the brass chimney hung a tattered green-baize notice-board on which were pinned a few dusty long-forgotten gun-room orders; whilst from hooks above it hung a cheap alarum clock and five damaged wrist-watches, each in its strap, and each labelled with an official report of the "scrap" during which it had met its honourable fate.

Newspapers and magazines littered untidily the corticine-covered deck; a gramophone box, a couple of greatcoats, and a green cricket bag lay piled in one corner near the lockers; some sextant boxes and two pairs of sea-boots filled another.

Overhead, between the deck beams, wooden battens were fixed, and above them squeezed a motley assortment of greatcoats, golf-bags, cricket pads, and oilskins. Almost anywhere in the gun-room you could put up your hand without looking, and pull down an oilskin or a greatcoat, which, of course, was most convenient, unless you pulled down half a dozen golf-clubs on your head at the same time, when naturally the convenience was not so noticeable.

When the Orphan came in, throwing his wet sou-wester and oilskin into the corner on top of the gramophone box, the only other gun-room officer there was the "China Doll"—the Assistant Clerk. Only just "caught" he was, a very youthful young gentleman of, so far, unblemished reputation, with a pink-and-white face, and a trick of opening and shutting his very big and very blue eyes so exactly like a doll that he had been christened "China Doll" directly he had joined the Honourable Mess.

He was engaged busily toasting bread in front of the stove with the long gun-room toasting-fork, and this was probably his most important duty on board—the duty of making toast for seven-bell tea; the first piece for the Sub-lieutenant, the second for the senior snotty, and the third for that very senior officer—his very senior officer—the Clerk—Uncle Podger.

He had just finished the first piece as the Orphan entered, and looked up, blinking his eyes excitedly.

"What's the news, Orphan? Did the Captain tell you what we're going to do?"

"Late again, China Doll; five minutes after seven bells, and only one piece of toast ready; you'll catch it when the others come along."

In spite of his protests the Orphan grabbed that piece of toast, buttered it and began eating it, standing in front of the stove whilst the China Doll hurriedly began to toast another slice, between the Orphan's legs, and implored him for news of where the ship was going, and what she was to do. But the Orphan was

much too busy eating to take any notice; and just as the first slice disappeared and he was licking his fingers, he heard a clattering of sea-boots down the ladder from the deck, and as four dripping snotties poured in, he seized the toasting-fork, pushed the China Doll on one side, and calmly finished toasting the second slice.

These four new-comers were the "Pink Rat", "Bubbles", the "Hun", and Rawlins. The Pink Rat was the senior snotty—a small-sized youngster whom anyone could spot as the Pink Rat, because he had a thin, sharp, ferrety-looking face, very pink complexion, beady eyes, prominent teeth, and long mouse-coloured hair brushed straight back from his forehead and plastered down with grease. Bubbles was half as big again as the Pink Rat, with a fat, red, honest face, creased with continual chuckling, and a fat, red neck which always seemed to swell over his collars. He had something wrong with his nose, and couldn't breathe through it very well, so that when he was laughing—he generally was—he used to throw his head back, open his mouth to breathe, and make the most extraordinary bubbling noises. The Hun, the third to enter, looked a very gentle snotty, very refined and quiet—quiet, that is, compared with the others. He was not big or strong; but when he once was "roused" he would always join the weaker side in a "scrap", and then became so violently excited that whatever he gripped he gripped with all his might—like a wild cat. He had nearly choked Bubbles once; and the Pink Rat never forgot how, at another time, he had nearly pulled out a handful of his hair. He always apologized afterwards. Rawlins, whose proper name was Rawlinson—the last of these four—was a brawny youth with an odd hatchet-shaped head, quite as good-natured as Bubbles, and the least talkative member of the Honourable Mess. He was always willing to look out for a pal's "watch" or boat duty, in itself enough to make anyone very popular.

The Pink Rat, Bubbles, and Rawlins, seeing no toast waiting for them, dashed at the China Doll, charged him into a corner, threw their wet oilskins over him, and fell in a heap on top.

"Toast must be ready!" they yelled as they allowed him to get up.

"I can't make it fast enough when the Orphan's here, alone; look at him—that's his second."

The Orphan had just taken a huge bite out of the new piece; with a rush they threw themselves on him; in the mêlée of feet, legs, and chairs the China Doll captured the toasting-fork, stuck another bit of bread on it, and crouched in front of the fire again.

The general scramble was terminated by the noise of the pantry hatch sliding back, and an enormous, purple-faced marine servant, in his shirt-sleeves, pushed in a big teapot.

"Come along, Barnes, cut us some more bread; open a tin of 'sharks';

where've you put my biscuits?" they called at him.

By this time the third piece of toast was done to a turn; and the Pink Rat, in the absence of the Sub, on watch, was just going to claim it, when in came Uncle Podger—the Clerk—a broad-shouldered, squat youth, with a breezy, cheery countenance, and ruffled hair, who had been promoted to the exalted rank of Clerk exactly three weeks before, and had, therefore, been just a year and three weeks in the Service.

His arrival was greeted with shouts of "Uncle Podger, your minion is slack again at the toast business. The China Doll must be beaten."

The Assistant Clerk dodged the Pink Rat and wriggled free, squealing out that this piece was for the Sub.

"He'll beat me if it isn't ready. He'll be down from the bridge in a minute," he laughed, and took shelter behind his superior officer, explaining that "he'd done one for the Sub, and the Orphan ate that; another for the Pink Rat, and the Orphan had eaten that too; the Sub must have this, mustn't he?"

"Then this is the third," Uncle Podger said with mock gravity. "You were wrong, my young subordinate, very wrong indeed, to give away those other pieces; this one is mine." He gently removed the beautifully browned bread from the prongs of the fork.

"Yes—sir," said the China Doll, dropping his eyelids and pretending to be very humble.

"By the King's Regulations and Gun-room Instructions, there can be no doubt about it, can there?"

"No—sir; no possible doubt whatever—no possible, probable, possible doubt whatever."

The Clerk, glaring majestically at his subordinate officer's familiarity, promptly proceeded to butter and then to eat the slice; whilst the others, crowding round the stove with bits of bread on the ends of knives, tried their best to toast them.

Then the Sub did come in—a man of medium height, shoulders broader than Uncle Podger's, a complexion tanned by exposure to the wind and rain, black hair over a broad forehead, thick black eyebrows over deep-set grey eyes which had a knack of looking through and through anyone he spoke to, a thin Roman nose with a bridge that generally had a bit of the skin off (the remains of his last "scrap"), firm upper lip, a tremendous lower jaw, and a neck like a bull. He came in with his swaggering gait and aggressive shoulders, unbuttoning his dripping oilskin and roaring loudly.

"What ho! without! bring hither the toasted crumpet, the congealed juice of the cow, and we will toy with them anon! Varlets, disrobe me, for I am weary with much watching."

"Hast a savoury dish prepared for me, you pen-driving incubus, you blot on the landscape?" he roared again at the China Doll, who stood with eyes opening and shutting and mouth wide open, watching two of the snotties hauling off the Sub's oilskin.

"Where's my toast?" he roared ferociously.

"Here, sir," and the Assistant Clerk patted the Orphan's stomach, and fled for safety to the ship's office, where he knew he would be safe from instant death, because the Fleet Paymaster, though he would "scrap" with anyone, at any time, anywhere else, would not allow any skylarking there; nor would the stern Chief Writer, whose sanctum it was; and they had to keep friends with the Chief Writer, or never a pen-nib or a piece of blotting-paper would they get when they ran short of these things.

Two more snotties came into the gun-room after the China Doll had escaped.

These were the "Lamp-post" and the "Pimple", the tallest and the shortest in the Mess—the Pimple a little chap with a broad flat face, and a tiny red nose in the middle of it. He was the Navigator's "doggy", and that communicative and ingenious officer was always giving him the latest news—news which he, more often than not, invented himself. The joy of the Pimple's existence was to have some "news" to tell the others. He was a bully in a very small way, and extremely deferential to the Sub and the ward-room officers.

The Lamp-post was a tall, stooping snotty with sloping shoulders; his clothes were always too small for him, and his long thin arms and legs were always in his own way and in that of everyone else. Set him down at a piano and he was marvellous; the joy of his life was to be asked to play the ward-room piano. He could play anything he had ever heard; and inside his aristocratic head were more brains than the rest of the snotties possessed between them, the only one who did not know that being himself.

The whole of the Honourable Mess—with the exception of the escaped China Doll—being now assembled, seven-bell tea pursued its usual course—a cross between a picnic and a dog-fight—until the bugle sounded "man and arm ship", and there was a hurried scramble for oilskins and caps as all, except Uncle Podger, dashed away to their stations.

The ship had now cleared the Isle of Wight and felt the force of the gale. She began to pitch and roll heavily as the heavy seas threw themselves against her starboard bow and rushed along her side.

A minute or two after the "man and arm ship" bugle had sounded, the China Doll strolled jauntily in and started afresh with his afternoon tea.

"When you, Mr. Assistant Clerk, have served as long as I have," commenced Uncle Podger gravely, "you may perhaps learn to realize that cheeking your se-

niors is punishable by death, or such other punishment as is hereinafter mentioned."

"Pass us the sugar, Podgy, there's a good chap," grinned that very insubordinate officer, as a lurch of the ship threw the sugar-basin into the Clerk's lap.

"Man and arm ship" having passed off satisfactorily, the ship went to "night defence" stations, and the bugle sounded "darken ship".

Barnes, the purple-faced marine servant, still in his shirt-sleeves, came in and solemnly closed down the dead-lights, screwing the steel plates over the glass scuttles, and then proceeded to clear away the debris of seven-bell tea.

Most of the snotties now trooped down from the upper deck to warm themselves round the stove.

CHAPTER III
Ordered to the Mediterranean

Up above, under the fore bridge, the Orphan, looking like an undersized elephant, with all his warm clothes under his oilskins, tramped from port to starboard, and back again round the conning-tower. The crews of his four 6-pounders were clustered round their guns, hunched up in all sorts of winter clothing. Many of them wore their duffel jackets with great gauntleted gloves drawn up over their sleeves, and had already pulled the hoods of their jackets over their heads, giving them the appearance of Eskimo or Arctic explorers; the others were in oilskins padded out with jerseys, jumpers, flannels, and thick vests.

Once issue warm clothing to a bluejacket and never will he leave it off, whatever the temperature, unless he is made to do so.

The chirpy little gunner's mate had reported "all correct, sir, guns cleared away, night-sight circuits switched on, sir, and four rounds a gun ready."

The Orphan had reported himself to the officer of the watch, on the bridge above him, and now had nothing to do, for the best part of two hours, but walk up and down and keep warm.

"They tells me that one of 'em submarines was nosing round these parts two days ago, sir," one of his petty officers said, as he stopped at one gun, looked through the telescope sight, and tested the electric circuit. "It ain't much weather for the poor murdering blighters."

It was not. Darkness was rapidly closing in, and the gale howled angrily

out of the west, driving masses of dark rain-clouds and a heavy sea before it.

The *Achates* dipped her fo'c'sle constantly, and when she lifted and shook herself, the spray shot up far above her bridge screens.

The Orphan and his guns' crews on the wind'ard side would feel the ship quiver as a wave thudded against the casemate below them, and then had just time to duck their heads before millions of icy particles of spray soused viciously over them.

Presently the Orphan took shelter in the lee of the conning-tower and leant moodily against it, thinking of the warmth and gaiety of the dance he had been at the night before, also of a certain little lady in white and blue.

In peace time it is depressing enough to leave a cosy harbour, and face a wild winter's night in the Channel; but in war time the chance of blowing up on a mine and the risk of being torpedoed make the strain very considerable.

For the first night and the first day or two, most people are inclined to be rather "jumpy"; though afterwards this feeling wears off quickly, and one leaves everything to "fate" and ceases to worry.

Only a few days before, Germany had announced to the world the commencement of her submarine blockade of the English coast, so the Channel was probably already swarming with submarines; though even the Orphan, depressed and miserable as he was then, could not have imagined that these submarines had orders to sink merchant ships and mail steamers at sight and without warning, and that a civilized nation had sunk so low, nineteen hundred years after Christ was born into the world, as to plot the whole-sale murder of inoffensive women and children.

But he was miserable enough without knowing that, and opening up his oil-skin coat, practised blowing up his safety waistcoat. Then he wondered whether his guns' crews had their swimming-collars with them—as was ordered—and went from gun to gun, dodging the spray, to find out.

It was quite dark now, the foc's'le and the turret below were invisible, and he had to grope his way along to find the guns' crews by hearing them talk or stumbling against them.

One or two of the men had lost their collars; another had burst his trying how big he could blow it; others had left them down below in their kit-bags or lashed in their hammocks.

Plunky Bill, the cheeky A.B. belonging to the picket-boat, was the only one who had his. The gunner's mate explained that "Plunky Bill 'ad a sweet'eart in Portsmouth what was fair gone on 'im, and 'ad made 'im promise to always wear 'is collar".

Plunky Bill evidently thought he had a grievance, and growled out that "'E wasn't going to be bothered with young females, not 'im; a-making 'im look so

foolish-like".

"Well, they ain't no use, nohow," the gunner's mate grunted, jerking a thumb towards the heavy sea.

"Any news, sir?" the gunner's mate shouted, when he and the Orphan had regained the lee of the conning-tower, round which solid icy spray swished almost continuously. "The Ruskies are giving it to them Austrians in the neck, proper like, ain't they, sir?"

"Didn't hear any," the miserable Orphan shouted back.

"D'you know where we're off to?" the other asked.

"North Sea again," the Orphan told him.

The gunner's mate had no use for the North Sea—never wanted to see it again, and said so in blood-curdling language.

"What about the Dardanelles, sir?" he asked a moment later. "That's the place I'd like to be in. There's a sight of old 'tubs' gone out there. Any news, sir?"

But the Orphan had heard none, and climbed up on the bridge above to have a yarn with the midshipman of the watch—the Pimple.

He was full of schemes for "ragging" the China Doll.

"Patting your 'tummy', Orphan; that was cheek if you like! and the Sub didn't like it either."

The Pimple was very deferential to the Sub—rather too much so; what the Sub did and what he said made up most of the Pimple's daily existence. "He'd like us to take it out of the China Doll, wouldn't he?"

"Don't be an ass. Let the China Doll alone—it's too beastly wet and cold to bother about him. What about that cake you 'sharked' off the table?" So the Pimple, ever ready to ingratiate himself with anyone, produced a big wedge of gun-room cake out of his greatcoat pocket, and the two of them, crouching under the weather screens, munched away silently.

It was so dark that they could not see the look-out man, who was holding the brim of his sou'wester over his eyes to shield him from the rain and the spray, and trying to pierce the blackness of the stormy night in front of him. Both snotties were startled by a sudden cry from him: "Something a-'ead, sir! on the starboard bow, sir!" Another look-out also spotted something; everyone tried to see it; the officer of the watch dashed to the end of the bridge and peered through his night-glasses; the gunner's mate, down below, could be heard shouting to the guns' crews to "close up"; the breeches of the guns snapped to as they were loaded; and the Orphan, stuffing the remnants of the cake in his pocket, scrambled down the ladder.

"There it is, sir! There! there!—I can see it!' came excitedly out of the darkness. Everyone thought of submarines.

"Just like one, sir!" a signalman bawled to the officer of the watch, who yelled to the Quartermaster "hard-a-port", and rushed into the wheel-house to see that he did it.

At that moment a bobbing light began flickering out of the darkness ahead—a signal lamp.

"It's the challenge, sir," the signalman shouted.

"All right; reply; bring her on her course, Quartermaster. Starboard your helm, hard-a-starboard!" shouted the officer of the watch coolly; and as the *Achates'* bows swung back again, she swerved past a long, black object down below in the water, with its twittering signal light tossed about like a spark from a chimney on a dark night, and by that faint light they could just see the outline of three funnels before the light was shut off and everything disappeared.

It was only a patrolling destroyer. One could not see her rolling, or the seas breaking over her, but one could realize the horrible discomfort aboard her.

"Poor devils!—a rotten night to be out in—we nearly bumped into her," thought the officer of the watch, jumping to the telephone bell from the Captain's cabin, which was ringing excitedly.

"Nothing, sir; a patrol destroyer; had to alter course to clear her. No, sir, the wind is steady, sir."

It was six o'clock now—four bells clanged below—the first dog-watch was finished, and presently the Pink Rat came up to relieve the Orphan.

"Jolly slack on it!" grumbled the Orphan as he bumped into him and dived down below.

The easiest way aft was along the mess deck—the upper deck was so dark—and as the Orphan passed through one of the stokers' messes he saw Fletcher, the old stoker of his picket-boat, sitting at a mess table, all alone, under an electric light, his face buried in his hands, and a Bible before him.

"What's the matter, Fletcher? you look jolly mouldy," he said, stopping at the end of the table. "What's the matter? Bad news?"

"Yes, sir," he said gently, standing up, one hand pushing his gold spectacles back on his nose, the other marking the place in the book. "A letter from my wife. Our last boy's been killed in France, sir. That's the third; he was a corporal, sir."

His old, refined, tired face looked so abjectly miserable that the Orphan did not know what to say. "Come and get a drink. That'll buck you up," he stuttered.

But Fletcher shook his head. "I'm an abstainer, sir; thank you very much." And the snotty, muttering "I'm sorry", went away along the rest of the noisy, crowded mess deck towards the gun-room.

There was comparative quiet there. The Sub and Uncle Podger were sitting in front of the stove, reading.

"You know old Fletcher—the stoker of my boat; he's frightfully miserable; he's sitting down in his mess looking awful; he's just heard that his last son's been killed; I wish we could do something for him. The letter must have come when I brought off the postman."

"How about a drink?" asked the Sub, scratching his head. "I *am* sorry."

"Who's that?" asked Uncle Podger; "that old chap with the gold specs?"

The Orphan nodded.

"Fancy having to stick it out—all the misery of it—in a mess deck, with hundreds of chaps cursing and joking all round you," the Sub said. "I don't see what we can do to help him."

"You've got a cabin," Uncle Podger suggested. "Get him down in it; shut him in for an hour. What he wants most is to be alone."

"Right oh!" said the Sub, springing to his feet. "I've got the first watch; he can stay there till 'pipe down';" and he sent Barnes, the purple-faced marine, to find Fletcher and tell him that the Sub-lieutenant wanted him at once in his cabin.

The Sub, swinging his mighty shoulders, stalked down to his cabin, and presently there was a knock outside, and Fletcher peered in. "Yes, sir?"

"I've just heard, Fletcher," the Sub said, holding out his hand. "We are all very sorry; you'd like to be by yourself for a while. Stay here till 'pipe down'; no one shall come near you."

He pushed the old man down in the chair, drew the door across, and went into the gun-room.

A few minutes later the Pimple, who had been to his chest, outside the Sub's cabin, came in.

"Old Fletcher's blubbing like anything," he said. "I heard him."

"Get out of it, you little beast!" roared out the Sub. "Get out of the gun-room till dinnertime. Who told you to go sneaking round?" and Uncle Podger got in a well-judged kick which deposited the miserable Pimple on the deck outside.

The Orphan had the "middle" watch that night, so he turned into his hammock early, and was roughly shaken before it seemed to him that he had been to sleep a minute.

"Still raining?" he grunted to the corporal of the watch who had called him, as he climbed out and hunted round for his clothes.

"Raining and blowing 'orrible!"

He groped his way for'ard, only half awake, stumbling on the unsteady slippery deck-plates, barking his shins against a coaming, and bumping into the rest of the watch as they came up from the lighted mess deck like blind men. He "took over" from the snotty of the first watch, and, as soon as his sleepy eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, began pacing up and down across the narrow deck.

The gale still howled wildly through the fore shrouds, the wet signal halyards still flapped noisily against each other, and the rain still came driving under the bridge; but by this time the *Achates* had altered course and was running up-Channel, so had the seas on her starboard quarter, and though she was rolling heavily no spray came over her. That was one thing to be thankful for, the Orphan thought, as he looked into the utter blackness ahead of him.

Presently he leant against the conning-tower. But there was nothing for his eyes to rest on, and the screaming of the gale and the roaring of the rushing seas mingling together to make one continual, tumultuous clamour in his ears, lulled him nearly to sleep.

He started—he thought he was dancing with the little lady in white and blue—grinned to himself, and went up on the bridge to have a yarn with Bubbles, who was now the midshipman of the watch; tracked him by his laugh and his snorting noise; doubled up he was, at some yarn the Navigating Lieutenant was telling him—he always laughed long before a yarn came to an end!

"The ass jumped on to the top of the conning-tower—got an arm round the periscope tube, and began banging away at the periscope with a hammer!" the Navigator was shouting as the Orphan came up. (Bubbles threw his head back and roared.) "He'd only got in a few whacks when the old submarine began to dive; down went the conning-tower and the periscope, and the last that was seen of him was a hand and a hammer giving one last whack!"

Bubbles choked and snorted with laughter.

"What was it—a German submarine—was he drowned—did they catch the submarine?" the Orphan asked.

"Yes, they did. It had been badly hit before. We swept for it, and found it three days later, and the brave ass was still clinging to the periscope tube with his feet twisted round the conning-tower rail."

"Who was he?" gasped Bubbles when he could stop laughing.

"No one in particular, only the deck hand of a trawler," the Navigator said, in his cynical way.

Mr. Meredith, the officer of the watch, a tall, good-looking Naval Reserve lieutenant with a weather-beaten face, and rather bald-headed, came up. "It's five bells, you fellows. How about some cocoa? I've got a tin of gingerbreads."

"That's the ticket, old chap!" the Navigator cried, and Bubbles was sent off to make the cocoa and bring it up to the chart-house.

Ten minutes later, the cheery chart-house was filled with the fragrant odour of cocoa, the Navigator's charts had been rolled aside; two were sitting on the table, the other on the settee which was the Navigator's bed at sea, all with steaming cups of cocoa in their hands.

"Where's the 'War Baby'? Go and fetch the War Baby," the Navigator

shouted; so off Bubbles went, the light going out as the door slid back, and coming on again as it closed and "made" the electric circuit.

Presently, in came the youngest-looking thing in soldiers anyone ever saw, with a face as pink and white as the China Doll's, and the first buds of a tiny moustache on his upper lip.

"It's perfectly damnable outside," he piped in his girlish voice, as he seized a biscuit and a cup of cocoa.

"Hullo!" sang out the Navigator, as they all heard a knock on a door beneath them; "there's someone banging at the Skipper's door." (The Captain, when at sea, slept in a tiny cabin immediately beneath the chart-house and above the shelter deck.)

They heard the Captain's voice calling "Come in"; and the Navigator, seizing his glasses, and singing out that "the Captain would be up on the bridge in a jiffy—he always does if anyone wakes him," went out, followed by the others.

In a minute the Captain came up, shouting for him.

"Here I am, sir."

He seized the Navigator by the arm excitedly—the Captain was seldom anything but calm—and drew him into the chart-house. "Read this," he said, snapping his jaws together and sticking out his little pointed beard, as the door was closed and the light glared out.

The Navigator read: "*Achates* is to proceed with dispatch to Malta, calling at Gibraltar for coal if necessary."

"That means the Dardanelles, sir! Finish North Sea, sir?"

Captain Macfarlane looked down at him with twinkling eyes and smiled happily.

In five minutes' time the *Achates* had ported her helm and was on her new course; the news had flown round the bridge, been bellowed down below to the guns' crews, and shouted down the voice-pipes to the engine-room.

"We're off to Malta!—the Dardanelles!" and everyone who passed the good news added, "Finish North Sea. Thank God!"

The sober, obsolete old *Achates* seemed to know where she was bound. On her new course she once more faced the gale and the seas, diving and pitching, shaking and trembling, throwing the wild spray crashing against the weather screens, flying over the bridge and pattering against the funnels.

What cared she, or anyone aboard her, however wildly the gale blew!

CHAPTER IV
The Bombardment of Smyrna Forts

The *Achates* arrived at Gibraltar on the fourth morning out from Spithead, and went alongside the South Mole to coal, just as the warm Mediterranean sun rose above the top of the grand old rock.

The gun-room officers—-everybody, in fact—were in the highest spirits. It was grand to have left behind the dreary, cold English winter, and it was grander still to be on the way to the Dardanelles. Best of all, they could now go to sea without worrying about submarines and mines.

Two days from Gibraltar the daily wireless telegram from England told them that the forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles had been silenced, and that landing-parties were being sent ashore to demolish them.

"Why couldn't they have waited? We shall be too late; we shall miss all the fun," they cried sadly, down in the gun-room; "just come in for the tail end of everything; they'll be up at Constantinople by the time we get there; what sickening rot!"

"If you'd seen as much fighting as I have," Uncle Podger said solemnly—he'd only been a year in the Service, and seen none—"you'd——"

But he wasn't allowed to finish. They shouted:

"Dogs of war! Out, Accountant Branch!" and rolled him and the China Doll on the deck until Barnes banged the trap-door with the porridge-spoon to let them know that breakfast was ready.

At Malta there was another hurried coaling.

It was here they heard that the *Bacchante*, their chummy ship—a sister ship—the ship which had been next to them in the North Sea patrol—had already passed through Malta bound for the Dardanelles.

It was, of course, the Pimple who heard this first, and who climbed down into a coal lighter alongside to tell the Sub. The Sub, black and grimy, grinned. "We'll get a chance to knock spots out of them at 'soccer', somewhere or other," he said, joyfully rubbing some of the coal-dust on his sleeve over the Pimple's excited and fairly clean face.

"I hope they haven't found out about the sea-gulls," the Pimple said; but the Sub hadn't any more time to talk to him.

The sea-gull incident was rather a sore point with the *Bacchante* gun-room.

That ship had not yet fired a gun; the *Achates* had, and the *Bacchante* snotties were jealous and didn't believe it. All they could find out was that their rival's after 9.2-inch gun had fired at a submarine early one morning.

"What happened?" they would ask. "Did you hit it?"

"Well, we didn't see it again," the *Achates* gun-room would answer. "We must have hit it."

They always forgot to mention that this submarine had turned out to be a dozen or more sea-gulls sitting close together; and they had told the story so often—of course leaving out the sea-gull part—that they very much hoped that their chummy ship would never get hold of the proper yarn. If once they knew, their legs would be pulled unmercifully.

It would not have mattered so much if one of the Lieutenants or the Commander had made the mistake; but the worst of it was that the Sub had been on watch at the time, so the snotties, the China Doll, and Uncle Podger would have perjured themselves for ever, rather than give away the secret.

At Malta a passenger came on board, a tortoise about eight inches long. Who brought him no one knew, but in a day or two old Fletcher the stoker had adopted him as his own. The old man loved to sit on the boat deck by the hour in the sun, with "Kaiser Bill"—as the men called the tortoise—and feed the ungainly wrinkled brute with bits of cabbage.

Malta was left behind; the weather grew hot; white trousers were ordered to be worn, and were scarce—no one had expected to be sent to a warm climate—but those who had them shared with those who hadn't; the China Doll borrowed a pair, much too big for him, from Uncle Podger; those who had none, and would not borrow, wore their flannel trousers. Of course the Pink Rat turned out in beautifully creased white ducks and spotless shoes; the Pink Rat always carried about with him a very extensive wardrobe, though where he stowed it all, no one could imagine.

But no one bothered about clothes. It was so glorious to be warm again, and to be on their way to "do" something and fire their guns.

"At something better than sea-gulls!" said the Orphan, grinning with delight. "We'll have shells coming all round us; you'll get plenty of them, up in your old foretop, China Doll; you and your range-finder will be blown sky-high in no time. Won't that be fun?"

The China Doll opened and shut his eyes, and simply trembled with excitement.

"The China Doll has his legs blown off!" shouted the Pink Rat—the senior

snotty. "First aid on the China Doll!"

With a rush the snotties tumbled him on his back. "Lie still!" they yelled. "Stop kicking—your legs are blown off—you haven't got any!"

"If I haven't got any, you won't feel me kicking!" the China Doll squeaked, lashing out with his feet.

Whilst two ran for a bamboo stretcher, the others captured his legs and tied them together with handkerchiefs and table napkins, so tightly that the victim cried for mercy. The stretcher was brought; they lashed him in it; lashed his arms in, to prevent him grabbing at the furniture and shouting and yelling, ran him aft along the deck to lower him down into the Gunner's store-room, below the armoured deck, where the doctors set up their operating table at "Action" station.

Fortunately for the China Doll the armoured hatch leading down to it was shut down and must not be opened.

On the way back to the gun-room with him, they had to pass the Surgeon's cabin, where Doctor Crayshaw Gordon was sitting, busy censoring letters. Dr. Crayshaw Gordon, R.N.V.R.—in private life he had a big consulting practice in London—hearing the noise and seeing the stretcher, thought there had been an accident, so jumped out of his cabin. "Hello!" he sung out, in his funny chuckling way of talking—fixing his gold eyeglasses on his nose, opening his mouth wide, and pulling nervously at his little pointed tawny beard. "Hello! what's the matter?"

"The China Doll, sir!" they shouted, dropping him on the deck. "Both legs blown off!—he can't kick you, sir, we've lashed him up too tightly."

"It's very painful," the China Doll bleated, all the pink gone out of his face.

Dr. Gordon went down on his knees and began to unlash him.

"Rather too much—too much," he said in his agitated manner, when he found how tightly the handkerchiefs had been fastened, and cried out with alarm when the China Doll's head suddenly dropped back.

"He's fainted, you silly fellows!"

They unbuckled the straps and untied the handkerchiefs in double-quick time.

"Put him on my bunk," Dr. Gordon told them; and, very frightened, they laid him there.

The China Doll's eyes opened, and he looked round not knowing what had happened. "Don't play ass tricks; get out of it; leave him here!" Dr. Gordon ordered gently; and they trooped away, dragging the stretcher along after them—rather sobered for the moment—to get a lecture from the Sub and Uncle Podger when they crowded into the gun-room and told what had happened.

In half an hour the China Doll was back again—none the worse, except that the pink had not all come back in his doll's face—rather pleased with himself than

otherwise.

That happened on a Wednesday afternoon. On the Thursday, orders came by wireless for the *Achates* to rendezvous off the Gulf of Smyrna; and as dawn broke on Friday, the 5th March, she found herself half-way between the islands of Mytilene and Chios.

No one knew what was going to happen except, perhaps, Captain Macfarlane. "And he's probably forgotten," the irrepressible Orphan said.

This young gentleman was on watch with his guns, under the fore bridge, when the rendezvous was reached, and spotted some puffs of smoke rising above the horizon to the north'ard. Presently he saw through his glasses the masts of two battleships.

"What are they?" he asked excitedly of one of his petty officers, who was training a gun in their direction and looking through the telescopic sight.

"I know them, sir!" he cried. "The *Swiftsure* and *Triumph*. Look at their cranes—boat cranes—amidships, sir; there can't be any mistaking them, sir."

As the Orphan had never seen them before, he had to take his word for it.

"Trawlers behind 'em, sir—half a dozen or more," the petty officer called out.

In half an hour the very graceful outlines of these two battleships could be seen without glasses—easily distinguished from any other ship in the Navy by their hydraulic cranes for hoisting boats in and out.

The Orphan looked at them with all the more interest, because he knew that they had just come from the Dardanelles, and he peered at them through his glasses to try and discover any shell-marks. They looked as if they had just come out of dockyard hands, and he felt disappointed.

The trawlers followed, like ducklings out for a morning paddle with their father and mother. Very homely they looked.

Signal hoists fluttered and were hauled down, and soon the three big ships, with the little trawlers clustered at a respectful distance, lay with engines stopped.

The Captains of the battleships came across to the *Achates*, and an R.N.R. Lieutenant—in charge of the trawlers—bobbed alongside in a trawler's dinghy and scrambled on board. All three went below to the Captain's cabin.

It was a perfect morning, the breeze a little chilly, the sea calm, and just beginning to catch the light of the sun as it rose behind the misty, grey mountains of Asia Minor.

The two spotless gigs and the disreputable dinghy lay alongside, and their crews were soon busy answering questions, as the quarter-deck men left off their scrubbing decks and bawled down to know the news, and how things were going, and what was to be done here. "Have you been hit?" was the chief question.

"We got an 8-inch in the quarter-deck," the *Swiftsure's* boat's crew called up. "Knocked the ward-room about cruel;" and the *Triumphs*, jealous, told them: "It ain't nothin' compared to Kiao Chau—we got our foretop knocked out bombarding the forts there; a 12-inch shell what did that. It's not near so bad here as what it was out there."

In the hubbub of voices the Commander, splashing out of the battery in his sea-boots, sent the men back to their holystones and squeegees.

The Captains and the R.N.R. Lieutenant went back to their ships and trawlers, and then the three big ships commenced steaming in line ahead up the Gulf of Smyrna, the *Achates* leading, the *Swiftsure* astern of her, and the *Triumph* astern of the *Swiftsure*. The little trawlers were left behind.

By breakfast-time everyone in the gun-room knew that the forts of Smyrna were to be bombarded. The Navigator's "doggy"—the Pimple—came down bursting with this information. "The Navigator says we shall be in range just after dinner. I heard the Captain tell him they had a big fort there with 9- or 10-inch guns, and a mine-field in front of it—any amount of mines."

"We shall get first smack at them, shan't we?" the others said, beaming. "Our Captain is the senior one, isn't he?" and they hurried through breakfast and clattered up on the quarter-deck to have a look at the land.

By this time the ships were well inside the Gulf of Smyrna, steaming along its southern shore. Green olive-clad hills, rising from the sparkling, sunlit sea, sloped upwards until their sides, becoming barren, towered ragged into the cloudless sky. For two hours they steamed along, until, in front of them, the mountain barrier which circled the head of the Gulf, and sheltered the town of Smyrna itself, loomed ahead fourteen miles away.

The three ships were quite close inshore now, and every officer and man who had no special duties was on deck looking ashore, yarning in the glorious warm sunshine, pointing out villages, eagerly scanning every projecting point of land, and wondering whether the Vali of Smyrna knew they were coming and was prepared.

They were not long in doubt. The tall, aristocratic Major of Marines, soaked in Eastern lore by many years spent among Arabs and Sudanese, suddenly spotted a little pillar of grey smoke rising from the shore. He pointed it out, saying it was a signal, and was much chaffed by the other ward-room officers, until even they realized that he was right, when more curled up from projecting points of land as they steamed past. The news of their approach was being passed along to Smyrna.

"Isn't it exciting? I do feel ripping, inside," the Orphan told the Lamp-post as they both watched the shore and the signals. "Isn't it an adventure? my hat!"

"The Greek galleys and the Roman galleys came along just as we are com-

ing," the learned Lamp-post said excitedly. "I bet the poor galley-slaves' backs were tired before they fetched up!"

"It must have been beastly for them not to be able to see where they were going and not to take part in the fighting."

"They didn't want to," the Lamp-post told him. "Let's come for'ard."

So they went along the boat deck, and from there they soon were able to see a little square shape rising out of the water. It was the fort of Yeni Kali, which commanded the approach to the Bay of Smyrna and the town. It was jutting out on low-lying land from the southern shore of the bay, which here made a broad sweep along the foot of some very high hills.

Up above, on the bridge, the Navigator was pointing out to the Pimple a buoy with a flag on it. "That marks the end of the mine-field. I'll bet anything they've forgotten to remove it, or haven't had time. You see that low ground to the right of it—all covered with bushes and things—they've got batteries somewhere there, and there are more of them half-way up the hills."

The Pimple nervously followed the Navigator's finger as he pointed out the places, and expected every moment that a gun would open fire. He had felt very brave at breakfast when he talked about them, but he was not quite sure whether he was enjoying himself so much as he expected.

The ships stopped engines whilst still out of range, and went to dinner at seven bells. An excited cheery dinner it was, and the mess deck hummed like a wasps' nest, the hoary old grandfathers among the men—and there were many of them—in as high spirits as anybody.

Punctually at half-past twelve Captain Macfarlane went for'ard to the bridge, the ships commenced to go ahead, and the bugles blared out "Action stations"—the ordinary General Quarters bugle without the preliminary two "G" blasts, but what a difference when heard for the first time!

The China Doll, clambering up the fore shrouds to his dizzy perch in the for'ard fire-control top, found his little heart thumping so much that he had to have a "stand easy" half-way up, gripping the ratlines and getting his breath.

Captain Macfarlane—on the bridge—saw him stop, and guessed the reason. He had had much experience of shells coming his way—during the Boer War—and knew how he had hated them, so felt sorry for the youngster.

"A lot depends on you, Mr. Stokes" (that was the China Doll's name), he called up to him encouragingly; and the China Doll was up the rigging like a redshank, tremendously proud and happy, clambered into the top, and began helping the seamen, already there, take the canvas cover off the range-finder and unlash the canvas screens.

The Gunnery-Lieutenant climbed up after him, and snubbed him for asking foolish questions. "Were they going to fire? Who was going to fire? How do I

know? You'll know soon enough. Just hang on to those voice-pipes and don't talk."

So for some time the China Doll, humbled again, had nothing to do but look round him. Right ahead was the fort, standing square and bold at the end of the low-lying land. Three miles or so behind it, sloping up the mountains, were the white houses of Smyrna; over to the northern shore, to his left, long heaps lay dazzling in the sun—salt heaps these were; and on the right, the high hills with their concealed batteries. He looked behind at the two ships following astern, and down below at the *Achates* beneath him, and wondered, if the mast were shot away, whether he would fall clear of her in the water or on top of the boats. The "top" where he was, looked so small from down below, but when he was actually in it, it seemed so big that he thought shells couldn't possibly miss it.

He looked down at the bridge, and saw the Pimple shadowing the tall Navigator as he dodged from side to side of the bridge—they would both go into the conning-tower presently; he saw Mr. Meredith's bald head showing out of the turret on the fo'c'sle, and Rawlinson squeezed his head out too. For a moment he rather wished he could change places with them.

But then the orders came up through the voice-pipes. The Captain wanted the range of the fort. The seaman at the range-finder fumbled about with the thumb-screws and sang out: "One—six—nine—five—o" (the o is sounded as a letter, not as a figure). These were yards. The China Doll shouted down his voice-pipe: "One—six—nine—five—o". Nothing more came up for a quarter of an hour; he noticed how the "top" shook with the vibration of the engines. Then he had to sing down his voice-pipe: "One—five—five—o—o"; another interval; the range came down: "One—four—one—o—o", and the Gunnery-Lieutenant began shouting orders through his voice-pipes about degrees of elevation and the kind of shell to be used.

A bell tinkled close to him, and the red disk showed that the transmitting-room was calling him. Uncle Podger was there, he knew, sitting in the little padded room below the armoured deck and the water-line, with his head almost inside a huge voice-pipe shaped like the end of a gramophone, listening for orders, and waiting to pass them on to the various guns. And it was Uncle Podger's voice which came to him: "What's happening? Are we getting close in? It's beastly hot down here; aren't we going to fire soon?"

Before he could answer, a long signal hoist nearly knocked off his cap, flicking against the side of the "top" as it went up to the mast-head. Down it came again; a corner of a yellow-and-red pendant caught in a voice-pipe; he released it, and saw the signalman haul the flags down, in a gaily coloured heap, on the bridge below him. When he looked astern again, the two ships were spreading

out; the vibration of the "top" ceased. He knew that the engines had stopped, and presently all three ships lay in line, with their starboard broadsides turned towards the old fort.

The Gunnery-Lieutenant now flew about, jumping from voice-pipes to range-finder and back again, reporting to the Captain. "Aye, aye, sir!" he shouted, and then called down, "Fore turret!—fore turret! try a ranging shot—common shell—one—four—o—five—o, at the left edge of the fort. Fire when you are ready!"

[image]

"THE GUNNERY LIEUTENANT NOW FLEW ABOUT, JUMPING FROM VOICE PIPES TO RANGE-FINDER AND BACK AGAIN"

The China Doll felt funny thrills running up and down his backbone as he watched the fore turret move round, and the long chase of the 9.2-inch gun cock itself in the air. Mr. Meredith's bald head disappeared through the sighting hood. He heard the snap of the breech-block and the cheery sound of "Ready!" Mr. Meredith's head came out of his hood as he gazed at the distant fort through his glasses. He heard the word "Fire!" and at the same moment the fighting-top swayed as if a squall had struck the mast, a great cloud of yellowish smoke blotted out the foc's'le, and the *Achates* had fired a gun for the second time in the war—on this occasion not at sea-gulls!

In a few seconds a column of water leapt into the air behind the fort—the shell had fallen in the bay beyond. The Gunnery-Lieutenant roared down: "One—three—eight—five—o; fire as soon as you are ready!"

Off went the gun again; another wait, and a black-reddish splash appeared on the face of the fort, and up shot a cloud of dirty smoke. "Hit, sir!"

After that he was too busy to notice anything; he only remembered, later on, that the Turks had not fired back. More signals were hoisted; the *Swiftsure* and *Triumph* commenced firing, and in a very short space of time hits were being rapidly made on Yeni Kali fort.

Then the after turret of the *Achates* opened fire, and with her second round landed a lyddite shell square on one corner of the fort—brick dust and masonry going sky-high.

The Turks did not return the fire.

When, eventually, the bugle sounded the "secure", the China Doll could hardly believe that he had been there for two and a half hours, and at the order to "pack up" he climbed down below, and ran to the gun-room, where Barnes, the big marine, in his shirt-sleeves, was already laying the table for afternoon tea.

The snotties and Uncle Podger came trooping in, jabbering like magpies; the Pink Rat, who was in the after turret, and Rawlinson, who had the foremost one, each claiming that his own gun had made most hits. They both were getting angry—the Pink Rat cool and cynical, Rawlinson's temper getting the better of him.

They seized the China Doll. "You saw; which gun did best?" but the Assistant Clerk was much too wily to take sides, and wriggled away.

They pounced on the Pimple, who had been on the bridge all the time. He, flattered to have his opinion asked, thought that Rawlinson's gun had made more hits.

"That rotten, worn-out pipe of a gun of yours," the Pink Rat sneered, "couldn't hit a haystack at a mile; yours were dropping short all the time!"

"Yours may be the slightly better gun" (it was more modern), "but if you had anything to do with it, it wouldn't hit the Crystal Palace, a hundred yards away," Rawlinson snorted, getting red in the face. "Ours *didn't* go short."

"Contradiction is no argument," the Pink Rat said loftily; and Rawlinson, who was half as big again as the senior snotty (that was why the Pimple had backed him), would have given him a hiding, had not the Sub come in and stopped them.

"What the dickens does it matter? We've given old Yeni Kali a fair 'beano'; its own mother wouldn't know it. Hurry up with the tea booze; I've to go on watch; out, both of you, if you can't keep quiet!"

Barnes brought in the big teapot, slices of bread and jam and butter disappeared marvellously as they all ate and gabbled. "Why didn't they shoot back?—the mean beggars—I expect we've knocked out all their guns," Rawlinson gurgled with his mouth full. "You didn't, anyway," sneered the Pink Rat.

"I wish we'd gone straight in—don't put your sleeve in my butter—I don't believe those mines would have gone off—wouldn't they?—a bally lot you know about mines—you pig, Pimple, you've taken half that tin of jam—the Captain knows all about them—that's what those trawlers are for—shove across the bread—they'll sweep a passage through them—why didn't they let us fire more of our 6-inch—your old guns, Orphan—they ain't as much good as a sick headache—look at that slice of cake the Pink Rat's cut—put the Pink Rat down for two slices, Barnes, and bring along the teapot."

The Hun put his head in at the door. "Twenty-five minutes past four, sir."

"All right! Curse it! I'm coming," and gulping down what was left of his tea, and grabbing his telescope and cap, the Sub went up to relieve the watch amidst a babel of "Hun! Hun! hold on a jiffy! You were on the bridge all the time; which 9.2 made the most hits? What did the Captain say?"

"The after gun; that's what the Captain said," he told them, and went out

again.

"I told you so!" laughed the Pink Rat; and Rawlinson, crestfallen and angry, shouted "that he didn't believe it, and if it was true, that it was all due to the China Doll passing down the wrong ranges".

The poor Assistant Clerk flushed with mortification, and squeaked out: "I know I didn't make any mistake—I just repeated the figures after the Gunnery-Lieutenant—they were right at my end of the voice-pipe."

"Well, don't cry!" Rawlinson growled. "You've got such a silly voice—you can't help it—the figures must have come wrong at our end."

They seized the luckless China Doll, stuck him on a bench at one end of the mess, twisted one of the long white table-cloths into a rope, and made him hold one end, whilst the Orphan held the other to his ear and pretended to listen.

"Now pass the range," they laughed; "try one—five—nine—o—o."

"One—five—nine—o—o," the China Doll called into the end of the table-cloth, not quite certain that he was enjoying himself.

"One—four—seven—six—and a half," repeated the Orphan very solemnly.

"There you are! China! try again!" and they made him give the order. "Train seventeen degrees on the port beam."

The Orphan, thinking hard, shook his head and shouted back "Repeat!"

"Train seventeen degrees on the port beam," the China Doll repeated.

As solemn as a judge, the Orphan sang out, "Tame seven clean fleas in the cream;" and as the poor Assistant Clerk squeaked, "Don't be silly!" there were yells of "He called you silly, Orphan; you aren't going to stand that. Go for him, Orphan. We'll hold him; he shan't hurt you." But Uncle Podger told them all to stop fooling and smooth out the table-cloth. "We can't get things washed properly on board," he said.

CHAPTER V
The "Achates" is Shelled

Next morning, the 6th March—a glorious sunny morning it was—the three ships and the trawlers again moved in towards battered Yeni Kali. The trawlers went ahead to sweep through the mine-field under the protection of the *Triumph*, whilst the *Achates* and *Swiftsure* followed astern.

Breakfast was at seven o'clock—a hurried meal—and everyone bolted down his food in order to get on deck quickly and see the fun.

"Rotten bad form of 'em not to fire at us yesterday," Uncle Podger remarked, emptying half the sugar basin on his porridge. "In all the wars I've been in, we've fired first, then the enemy fired back; we spotted their guns and knocked them out."

"And landed for a picnic afterwards," suggested his neighbour, skilfully bagging the sugar basin.

"Generally," replied the Clerk.

"In the last war I was in," began the China Doll, "we generally asked the enemy to lunch. The Captain said that made them so happy."

"If we're to have breakfast at this silly time," Bubbles chuckled, "I call it a rotten war."

They heard shouts on deck. The half-deck sweeper put his head in to tell them that the Turks were firing, and they all stampeded on deck.

Right ahead, the little trawlers could be seen, in pairs, close in to the old fort and the low-lying land to the right of it. Right on top of the mine-field they were, and spurts of water were splashing up, every other second, among them. Flashes twinkled out from the scrub on the low-lying ground, three, four, five at a time, and the splashes of their shells sprang up, one after the other, between the trawlers.

Everyone held his breath and expected to see a trawler hit, directly.

There was a shout of "The *Triumph's* started!" A yellowish cloud shot out from her, then another; they shot out all along her broadside, and, right in among the scrub, where the Turkish guns had been firing, burst her 7.5 lyddite shells.

Then splashes began falling close to the *Triumph* herself—short—short—far over her—right under her stern. "Hit under the fore bridge!" someone shouted. The "Action" bugle blared out in the *Achates*; officers and men rushed to their stations; and the last thing Uncle Podger and the Lamp-post saw was the trawlers turning round and scuttling back, followed by columns of water leaping up close to them.

Uncle Podger, sedately excited, and the long, thin Lamp-post made their way along the mess deck, pushing through the crowds of men scurrying to and fro; guns' crews squeezing into the casemates and closing the armoured doors behind them; the stoker fire-parties bustling along with their hoses, and the lamp trimmers coming round and lighting the candle lanterns in case the electric light failed.

To get to the "transmitting-room", which was their station, they had to go down the ammunition hoist of "B2" casemate—the for'ard one on the port side of the main deck,—and so many men of the ammunition supply parties had to go

down it that there was a squash of men squeezing through the casemate door.

"Early doors, sixpence extra," Uncle Podger grinned, as they waited whilst man after man climbed down the rope-ladder in the hoist. This hoist was simply a steel tube some fifteen feet long, big enough for a broad-shouldered man to crawl through, and the rope ladder dangled down inside it. When the bottom rung of the ladder was reached, there was a jump down of some five feet or so into the "fore cross passage"—a broad space, from side to side across the ship, under the dome of the armoured deck. The magazines were below this fore cross passage, and men standing in them handed up the six-inch cordite charges through open hatches.

Into this space ran the ammunition passages, running aft along each side under the slope of the armoured deck, with the boiler-room bulkheads on the inner sides, and the bulkheads of the lower wing bunkers on the outer. When, as was now the case, the shells in their red canvas bags hung in rows along both these bulkheads, there was precious little room for two people to pass side by side.

The ammunition hoists from all the 6-inch guns, farther aft, opened into these passages, and under each hoist an electric motor and winding drum was placed to run the charges and shells up to the casemate which it "fed". All these spaces and passages were very dimly lighted by electric lights and candle lanterns.

As Uncle Podger and the Lamp-post crawled down the tube and dropped into the "fore cross passage", they were hustled by men dashing out of the ammunition passages, seizing charges and shells from the men standing in the magazine hatches, and dashing back again to their own hoists. These were the "powder-monkeys" of the old days, most of them, now, big bearded men; one, the biggest down there, a man nearly fifty years of age, had been earning five pounds a week, as a diver, before the outbreak of war brought him back to the Navy. And no one was more cheery than he, as he dashed backwards and forwards from his hoist to the magazine, laughing and joking, and wiping the sweat off his face. It was very warm down there, and the smell of sweating men soon made the air heavy.

A bearded ship's corporal came down with the key of the transmitting-room, opened the thick padded wooden door in the bulkhead, and went in. The Fleet-Paymaster and the tall, depressed Fleet-Surgeon followed him down the tube. They scuttled out of the way of the trampling men.

"A nice little place for you to work in, P.M.O.," chuckled the Pay as they wormed themselves into a corner.

"Rats in a trap!" grunted the P.M.O., and drew in his feet and cursed as a seaman trod on them.

The chief sick-berth steward and his assistants had already come down, but

vainly looked for a place to stow their surgical dressings. They had to hang them from hooks in the bulkheads.

Uncle Podger and the Lamp-post stood waiting for the Chaplain, the Rev. Horace Gibbons; and when they saw his shoes and scarlet socks dangling from the lower end of the ammunition hoist from "B2" casemate in a helpless, pathetic way, they dashed to his assistance; each seized a foot and guided it to safety on top of a convenient motor-hoist, and as the Padre let go the ladder and jumped feebly, they softened his fall. This was always their first job, for he hated that rope-ladder and that hoist with a deadly hatred, and, most of all, hated falling those last few feet, suddenly dropping, as it were, from heaven, and appearing in an undignified manner among all the men there.

The Lamp-post and Uncle Podger dusted down the little pasty-faced Padre and put his hat on straight.

"Thank you so much! I'm afraid I've broken my pipe in that hoist."

"Hallo, Angel Gabriel!" grinned the Pay, as the three of them passed into the transmitting-room. "Paying a call in the infernal region?"

As they shut the felted door they shut out all the noise.

This transmitting-room was a tiny little place, perhaps fifteen feet long and five wide, with four camp-stools, and rows of telephones and brass indicator boxes with their little red and white figures showing through the slits in them. Voice-pipes, too, everywhere, and in one corner, over a camp-stool—Uncle Podger's camp-stool—projected an enormous brass voice-pipe with a gramophone-shaped end.

Every instrument had its label above it: Conning-tower—After Turret—Starboard 6-inch—Y group—X group—scores of them; and in front of the Padre's camp-stool was a little table, like a school table, with paper lying on it and a pencil chained to it.

"Nothing happened yet, sir," the ship's corporal sang out, as they closed the door and seated themselves on their camp-stools with their backs against the after bulkhead and the door.

Uncle Podger, sitting with his head in his gramophone trumpet, could hear people talking in the conning-tower. "Signal to the *Swiftsure* to stop engines"—that was Captain Macfarlane's clear, incisive voice; then the Navigator's infectious laugh, "The trawlers are safe, sir; out of range, sir. They've had the fright of their lives, sir."—"Port it is, sir," came the gruff voice of the quartermaster at the wheel. "Steady it is, sir."

He rang up the fore-control top, where the China Doll was perched, and a bell at his side tinkled. "What's going on, China Doll?" he called into his loud-speaking navyphone, giving the mouthpiece a shake.

"Stop that confounded ringing!" it bleated out, in the peculiar nasal tone

these navyphones always have. That was the Gunnery-Lieutenant's irritated voice, so Uncle Podger kept silent.

Then he heard, loud and clear through the trumpet mouth: "Transmitting-room! Transmitting-room! Tell the Major and Mr. Meiklejohn" (one of the Lieutenants) "that the port 6-inch will fire first."

"Aye, aye, sir! Port guns will fire first."

He passed on the message to the Lamp-post, and the Lamp-post, who was in charge of the port broadside gun instruments, commenced telephoning to the Major, aft, and Mr. Meiklejohn, up in B1 casemate, above them.

Then more orders came down, rapidly, one after the other; ranges, worked from the foretop, ticked themselves off in the slits of the little brass boxes, were verified, and passed on to the port guns and the turrets.

"Commence with common shell," sounded the trumpet mouth. Uncle Podger repeated it.

"It's showing all right on my dial," the Lamp-post said, a little bothered with so many telephones asking him questions.

"All right, Lampy. Don't lose your wool. Pass it on to the guns."

"What range is showing?" called the trumpet.

"One—two—nine—five—o." "One—two—nine—five—o." "One—two—nine—five—o," the Lamp-post, the Padre, and the ship's corporal told Uncle Podger.

"One—two—nine—five—o," he spoke into his navyphone.

"What range are the guns showing?" asked the trumpet. It was the Gunnery-Lieutenant, anxious to know, at the last moment, whether all the instruments were recording properly.

This meant ringing up each gun, and took time. Presently all the replies were received.

"Y3 shows One—two—nine—o—o, sir," Uncle Podger telephoned. "The others are correct."

"Confound Y3!" he heard the Gunnery-Lieutenant say angrily.

Then the figures in the slits in the brass boxes began to move—the "five" gave way to "o", the "nine" disappeared and "eight" took its place; the range was decreasing. The little labels bearing the types of shell to be used—armour-piercing, common, lyddite—revolved, and came to a standstill with "common" showing.

All these changes down in the transmitting-room repeated themselves in similar instruments at the different guns, but to make doubly sure that they were correctly known there, the order "Common shell" was also passed by telephone. "Tell B1 to stand by to fire," bawled the big trumpet, and the Lamp-post calmly passed on the order.

"Fire!" yelled the trumpet mouth. The Lamp-post pressed the key which

rang the fire-gong in B1 casemate. There was a dull thud from above, and B1 had fired.

Then orders came down one after the other; the whole battery began firing. The two turrets started, the fore-turret gun making the transmitting-room rattle, whilst the after 9.2 only made it wriggle.

The Padre was busy jotting down times and ranges, the ship's corporal was helping the Lamp-post with his instruments, and Uncle Podger was taking in and passing orders to them all. They had no time to think of what was going on elsewhere.

Outside, in the "fore cross passage", the noise of the for'ard guns, B1 and B2, coming straight down their hoists was very loud. The breeze, too, blew the cordite smoke down the hoists when the breeches of the guns were opened to reload, and made the air and stench more disagreeable than ever. The ammunition supply parties were busy; empty red shell-bags were brought back and flung into the magazines; filled ones were handed up, and the men ran away with them.

The Fleet-Surgeon and the Fleet-Paymaster flattened themselves out of the way.

"Cheer up, P.M.O.! We'll all be dead soon," the Pay chuckled.

"Indeed and we shall," snarled the P.M.O. "Listen to those beastly engines—they've been going ahead for the last hour—we'll be hitting the mines in a minute."

"Well, we shan't know much about that, old chap; we're right on top of the magazines. You'd be an angel before you could say 'knife'."

"Rats in a trap! Dry up!" growled the P.M.O. "Rats in a trap! That's what we are."

"A-climbing up de golden stairs," hummed the Pay, pointing to the end of the rope-ladder dangling from the hoist above them. "Hullo! That's something new," the Paymaster broke in cheerfully, as there was a noise just behind them—on the outer side of the coal bunker—a different noise to any they had heard before.

"Do you hear the coal jumping about?"

"That's summat 'it the harmour," men shouted gleefully.

"Two more!" Called out a gunner's mate as two more crashes came, a little farther aft, and the coal jumped and rattled behind the bulkhead.

A cloud of black smoke poured down one of the hoists. "Black powder," said the men, sniffing, as it drifted along the passage and made them cough. "A shell's burst somewhere."

A man from B3 slid down the rope of his hoist, and sang out that one had just burst against the side of the gun port. "No one hurt," he added, with a little tinge of regret.

A few seconds later a very cheery voice bawled down one of the starboard hoists to say that shells had come into the mess deck and burst there.

The men were genuinely pleased that their old ship had at last been hit.

"Anyone killed?" they shouted up.

"Don't know yet. The whole blooming place is on fire; port side, half a dozen knocked out. Old Cooky got one in his leg. No one badly hurt."

Rumours flew up and down these hoists. No one knew what had actually happened. A lot more smoke came down the hoists. The Fleet-Surgeon fidgeted lest he ought to go up, but he had to wait for orders, and stay there until he was sent for.

"They're giving it 'em back, a fair treat," the men sang out, as the guns up above fired very rapidly and the whole ship shook.

The engines had stopped their rumbling during this time, but now they started again. No more crashes came against the armoured side, the guns ceased firing, and presently a message came down: "The Captain wants the Fleet-Surgeon."

"Now for it," growled the Fleet-Surgeon, and swung himself awkwardly up the dangling ladder through the hoist up into the casemate, and so out to the wrecked mess deck.

Two shells—5.9-inch shells—had come in through the ship's side and made a terrible mess of things. The first one had burst in the stokers' mess deck, smashing mess tables and stools and setting fire to them. Flying fragments had wounded the chief cook, who, against all orders, was in the galley, and five men belonging to the "fire" and "repair" parties. The rest had dashed along with their hoses, and, whilst they were putting out this fire, the second shell had burst in the next mess aft on the other side of a bulkhead, and without fuss or worry they had dragged their hoses along and put this out too.

Both messes were now ankle-deep in black water, the blackened and smashed wooden tables and benches lying higgledy-piggledy all over the deck; pipes and stanchions were torn and twisted; the iron cap and ditty-box racks hung down fantastically from the blackened beams and plates overhead, and the whole place was littered with the men's crockery smashed into the tiniest pieces.

"I'll give you an hour and a half for the wounded, and then we're going in again," the Fleet-Surgeon was told, when he found the Captain and Commander wading about among the wreckage.

Off went the Fleet-Surgeon to find his wounded; they had already been dragged into cosy corners and roughly bandaged.

Dr. Gordon came along, from his station aft, to help him.

By this time all the ships had withdrawn out of range. The "Secure" and the "Disperse" were sounded, and everyone hurriedly dashed down to see the

damage and hunt for bits of shell.

"And there's another on the boat deck," the Pimple, absolutely off his head with excitement, screamed to the Lamp-post and Uncle Podger as they came out of B2 casemate, up the hoist of which they had just climbed.

He dragged them up to see the damage done, and even Uncle Podger went into raptures when he saw the beautiful hole in the wooden deck, and the fifty or more small holes which fragments of shell had made in the engine-room uptakes and in one of the funnels.

"It doesn't matter if the *Bacchante* does find out about the sea-gulls, now," he said, and gloated at the lovely sight.

The Orphan came up, anxious lest any of the flying pieces had hit his beloved picket boat; Bubbles came along, chuckling and laughing, and they all craned their necks over the side to see the holes where two shells had come in, and where those that had struck the armour had knocked off the wood sheathing and the paint.

"Come along or we'll miss lunch," Bubbles gurgled; and they romped aft, passing old Fletcher, the stoker, coming up, grimy and unwashed, from his watch below.

"I've just brought 'Kaiser Bill' up for an airing, sir," he said, as the Orphan stopped to speak to him. "I took him down out of mischief," and he carefully placed the idiotic tortoise down on the iron plates, and tried to tempt him with a piece of cabbage leaf to put out his ugly head.

Lunch in the gun-room was a very rowdy meal. If the Sub hadn't been pretty severe, precious little more crockery would have been left there than in those two stokers' mess decks.

"Just fancy! Six times hit—no, eight times—I counted them—all right, eight times—so much the better—and six wounded. Fancy old Cooky being knocked out—jolly hard luck; he oughtn't to have been there. You should have been in B3 when the shell hit the gun port, it did make a noise. They did make a funny noise all round (this from the China Doll). I had my cap blown off—one went between my turret and the shelter deck (this from Rawlinson).

"We're going back again," the Pimple, who had had to go back to the bridge and now came down, shouted. "I've just heard the Skipper tell the Navigator. Give me some soup, Barnes, quick—I say, you chaps, leave me a bit of pudding. We did get it hot. You should have been on the bridge."

"Bet you were safe and sound in the conning-tower," the others cried.

"I was only there part of the time. They kicked me out—it was too crowded. When that shell burst on the boat deck, bits came right over me. A bit hit a signal locker and dropped quite close to me. I've got it here," and the Pimple produced a bit of scrap iron out of his pocket and held it up.

"That isn't a bit of shell," they laughed, as they handed it round; "it's a bit of a deck plate."

"Well, it was jolly hot when I picked it up," said the Pimple, rather distressed. "I say, Barnes, do hurry up with some grub."

"Oh, you chaps, did you hear?" and the Pimple brightened again. "That shell which hit the *Triumph* killed a snotty."

At first they thought, and rather hoped, he might be someone they knew; but the Pimple, who got all his news from the talkative Navigator, told them he was an R.N.R. midshipman, so they were a little disappointed, because they could not possibly have known him.

That afternoon the ships again steamed in almost to the edge of the mine-field, and all of them opened a very heavy fire on the Turkish guns; but these were so widely dispersed, and so cleverly hidden in the scrub of the low-lying ground, that hitting them was a matter of pure luck.

Two trawlers also made another plucky attempt to sweep through the mine-field, but had to retire when more guns fired at them—guns which it was impossible to locate from the ship.

It was evidently hopeless to clear the mine-field during daylight, so ships and trawlers retired again.

A small steamer—the *Aennie Rickmers*—(she had been captured from the Germans) met them outside. She carried some scouting hydroplanes, and as she turned out suitable to accommodate the wounded, these were sent across to her.

On the Sunday and Monday the ships bombarded Yeni Kali and also a battery on a ridge, without doing much damage. The hydroplanes went up on both these days, and circled over the low ground where the batteries lay hidden, and also over the bay inside. No one in the *Achates* had as yet seen air-craft reconnoitring an enemy position, so everybody came up to have a look when the first one left the water with its pilot and observer and commenced to climb higher and higher in huge spirals.

When it had risen sufficiently high, it flew away towards Yeni Kali with its hydroplane floats beneath it, looking, for all the world, like a big bluebottle which had stuck its feet in something sticky and could not fly well for the weight of it.

As they eagerly watched it, suddenly a puff-ball of white smoke showed against the blue sky—below it—then another nearer, two more a long way behind; field-guns were firing shrapnel at it.

Not a soul on board had seen anything like this; everyone simply stood and held his breath, and watched the hydroplane and the white puff-balls following it.

"Gosh! I'd like to be those chaps, young Orphan," the Sub roared. "My

jumping Jimmy! There's excitement for you! Ten minutes of it worth a life-time. Eh, you jam-stuffing sybarite?"

"Very pretty to watch, but give me dry land," Uncle Podger declared solemnly.

The little Padre, sucking a big pipe, his face twitching with excitement, muttered "bother"—a fearful swear-word for him—and spat out the end of his mouthpiece. He had bitten it off in his agitation.

The China Doll stood with his pink-and-white face gazing upwards, his mouth wide open, and his big eyes opening and shutting.

"My jumping Jimmy! Life! Life! We're seeing life, my jumping Doll," and the Sub lifted the Assistant Clerk off the deck and dropped him again.

"Do you want to go back to the North Sea patrol—my young Blot on the Landscape?"

"No, sir;" and the China Doll curtseyed disrespectfully, and bolted behind the stolid figure of Uncle Podger.

"By the King's Regulations and Gun-room instructions, disrespect to superior officers is punishable by death or such other punishment as is hereinafter—" began the Clerk, but was interrupted by a shout of "Look! She's coming down now!"

The hydroplane was coming back, the puff-balls had ceased, and with long spiral swoops she slid down on the water and spun along the surface to the *Aennie Rickmers*.

"Old Yellow Beard wants you, sir," a young A.B.—it was Plunky Bill—interrupted, saluting the Sub.

"What! Who?" roared the Sub, glaring at him.

"Beg pardon, sir; I forgot myself, sir. I means the Captain, sir. Wants you in his cabin, he does."

The Sub, with a glare which froze poor Plunky Bill, stalked aft.

Some half-hour later, the half-deck sentry put his head into the gun-room: "The Sub-lootenant wants Mr. Orphan—in his cabin."

That young gentleman had wagered that he could drink a bottle of soda water more quickly than Bubbles could, and happened to be employed in the process of deciding this. The first trial had resulted in a dead heat, but the second had ended rather disastrously for both; and though the others patted him on the back with any heavy, unsuitable article they could find, he had not quite recovered himself when he burst into the Sub's cabin.

The Sub was excited again. When he was excited his eyes burnt like coals and his mouth was a slit, tightly shut—shut like a rat-trap.

"Orphan! my jumping Orphan! we've got it—you and I and your rotten old picket-boat. Guess what we've got to do, my 'JJ.'! It's simply too grand!"

He lighted his pipe. The cabin was already so full of smoke that the Orphan was coughing.

"What is it?" he gasped—the soda water inside him still busy.

"Have a cigarette?" the Sub said, shoving a box towards him.

"I'm not eighteen yet!" the Orphan said, thinking that the Sub perhaps had forgotten and might beat him afterwards.

"You'll have to be twenty-eight to-night, my jumping Son—thirty-eight; you've got the chance of a lifetime. Squat down on the wash-stand."

"Jumping Moses!—you and I have to go in to-night and stick a light on a mark-buoy—a Turkish mark-buoy they've fixed in the wrong place, close inshore it is, under the old fort. What do you think of that?"

"What mark-buoy?" asked the Orphan. "How ripping!"

The Sub drew a few rough outlines on a piece of paper. "There's the fort, and that's the line of the low bit of land sweeping away to the right. It sticks out a bit farther along, and just off the 'stick out' place the mark-buoy should mark a shoal, but the Turks have shifted it farther in—just about there"—and he marked a cross on the paper—"to bother us. And we've got to find it to-night, and stick a red light on it. How's that for 'good'?"

"They'll see us, won't they?" the Orphan said, catching his breath again, for he knew that at least three search-lights swept the approach and the minefield—a big one on Yeni Kali itself, "Glaring Gertrude", and two this side of the minefield, from somewhere down by the water's edge—"Peeping Tom" and "Squinting Susan"; two much less powerful lights these were.

"I bet they'll see us. If they don't before, they will after we've fixed up that red light. The trawlers are going to sweep through behind us, and that light's to guide 'em," and the Sub smote the table with his great clenched fist. "What price that for a good night's work? Better than boarding ships in the North Sea, eh?"

"Right in under the fort we'll have to go?" asked the Orphan, his breath still rather short; "and right in under all those guns along the beach?"

"Right in, my jumping Orphan! Rifle range! pistol range! biscuit range! The *Swiftsure's* coming in to have a bang at "Peeping Tom" and his pal. My jumping O.! what a job!"

"When d'we shove off?" asked the Orphan, his eyes blazing.

"Seven o'clock—seven sharp. You bring the grub—shark sandwiches—and a couple bottles of beer. You're not rattled, my young Orphan?" he said, springing up and clutching the midshipman's shoulders.

As a matter of fact the Orphan was rather taken aback, and though he did his best to look frightfully happy, it was not an absolute success.

The Sub altered his voice. "Look here. Those confounded trawler fellows have done their job two days running, under heavy shell-fire, whilst we've been

behind armour. It's time we showed them the way—understand? It's our turn to-night, yours and mine."

"I'm all right," the Orphan said. "It was rather a startler, that's all. I'd been getting up a sing-song, and we were going to court martial the China Doll."

"Warn your boat's crew," the Sub continued, perfectly satisfied and absolutely happy. "Tell 'em to take some grub."

"How about old Fletcher?" the Orphan asked. "He's rather old for the job."

"You know him best. Sound him. Off you go!"

So Fletcher was sent for and told all that was going to happen.

"If you'd rather a younger man——" the Orphan began, not knowing how to best say what he meant.

"Me, sir! Don't leave me behind. I'm as strong as a horse," the old stoker broke in.

"Right oh! The boat will be 'turned out' about six-thirty. Don't forget to bring some grub."

"I won't, sir, thank you," and Fletcher went for'ard.

"I don't think we'll court-martial the China Doll after all," the Orphan said when he went back to the gun-room.

"Oh! Rather! What rot! Of course we will! Mustn't we, China Doll?" the others cried.

"Well, I'm not going to be there, anyway. You'll have to find someone else for prisoner's friend."

"What's up?" they asked. "Got the blight?"

"Oh, I've got a bit of a job on this evening, you chaps!" And the Orphan did his best to look unconcerned, but they saw that he was bubbling over with excitement, and dragged the news out of him.

"He might be captured, if they don't kill the poor little chap first," Bubbles gurgled. "Fancy the Orphan being a prisoner," the others shouted. "Poor old Turks—hard luck on them—you'll have to wear a fez—and be able to smoke all day—a nubbly-bubbly—won't that be nice?—and have a dozen wives—and get sixpence a day to keep them" (this was from Uncle Podger).

And when it was time for him to prepare the picket-boat, they called after him: "If you don't come back we'll finish your ginger nuts—oh, you pig, you're taking them with you—that's not playing the game—we'll write such a nice letter home—how we all loved you—with all our names to it—p'raps your daddy will send us a present—wouldn't a barrel of beer be nice—good-bye, Orphan, we'll never forget you—if he does send us one—not till it's finished."

Then they settled down to revise the list of officials at the China Doll's coming court martial. Bubbles would have to do prisoner's friend, although he was not much good at it, because when he did think of something funny to say,

he couldn't say it for laughing at what somebody else had just said.

CHAPTER VI
A Night's Adventure

The Orphan went up on the "booms" and found Jarvis, the bearded coxswain, and Plunky Bill busy touching up with black paint any bits of brasswork on the picket-boat which might show in the searchlights. They had already done this once, and were making certain, by the aid of a lantern, that no shiny place had been missed.

As he climbed into her he heard Plunky Bill say saucily: "'Ow about the missus and the six kids? Ain't you going to back out of this 'ere lark in the dark?"

"'Ere, get on with yer black paint," growled Jarvis. "'Ow about yer sweet'earts—five of 'em as I knows on. You ain't going to get yerself killed, are you, and break five bleeding 'earts? Eh, young feller-my-lad?"

They were so cheery that the Orphan lost that funny feeling in his inside that had been so uncomfortable. He climbed on board and went for'ard to have a yarn with old Fletcher, who was busy in the stokehold getting up steam.

"No sparks out of the funnels to-night," he said, stooping down.

"I'll take good care of that, sir," Fletcher answered.

It was a very dark night, with a gentle breeze blowing in towards Smyrna, and as the Orphan straightened himself he saw the glare of the search-lights over the mine-field, and that unpleasant sensation in his stomach would come back. He tried to pretend it was only indigestion, but knew it wasn't.

"Peeping Tom", the nearest, was flickering here, there, and everywhere, but it was a very poor light, and he didn't mind that one; "Squinting Susan" shone, twice as brightly as her brother, right across where the picket-boat must pass; occasionally she swept round to help him, as if she knew he wasn't of much use.

Then right behind these two was that beastly "Glaring Gertrude"—a splendid light. She was lighting up the salt-heaps on the opposite shore most of the time; but when she did turn to have a look out seawards, her beam lighted up the *Achates*, although the ship was at least five miles away, making the men's faces quite plain to see, and outlining the masts and funnels and rigging in a most unpleasant manner.

A signalman came along with the lantern and some "cod" line. "That will be strong enough, sir, to lash it to the buoy," and he held out the cod line in the dark for the Orphan to feel.

Everything being ready, the picket-boat was lifted out of her crutches, dangled over the side of the ship, and lowered into the water. At seven o'clock she was alongside the darkened ship, and the Sub, in monkey-jacket, blue trousers, and sea boots, climbed down and gave the order to "shove off".

"What ho! my Explorer of Mine-fields—my Lighter of Beacons—this beats the band!" the Sub shouted, as the picket-boat left the shadow of the ship's side, cleared her bow, and headed for the glare of the search-lights and the mine-field.

Close to the *Achates* lay two trawlers and the *Swiftsure's* picket-boat—the Orphan could just make out their obscure shadows.

"They're going in to sweep," the Sub told him. "The *Swiftsure's* picket-boat is going to show them the way. My jumping Jimmy!" he roared, unable to suppress his boisterous excitement. "Isn't this a grand show?"

The steamboat pushed her way along, and soon the dark mass of the *Triumph* loomed up against the blackness of the high hills behind her.

On she went towards where they knew the *Swiftsure* herself was lying, and as the Orphan strained his eyes to pierce the darkness in towards the land to find her, a match was struck in the bows, and a splutter of tobacco sparks trailed down over the side. Jarvis shouted angrily: "Put out that pipe!"

"No smoking, you fools!" barked the Sub to the men crouching in the bows; and Jarvis growled: "It's that 'ere Plunky Bill, 'e's a fair terror. 'E's been an' gone an' blacked 'Kaiser Bill'," he added after a pause. "'E said 'e was that shiny 'e'd give the show away. 'E's a comic, that Plunky Bill."

"You haven't brought the tortoise?" the Orphan asked incredulously.

"Grandpa 'as; 'e's got'im down in the stoke'old, the old 'umbug; 'e's fair wild with Plunky Bill; 'arf an 'our it took 'im to get the paint off 'im with a drop of turps and a sweat-rag."

"Hullo! There's the *Swiftsure*, sir," and the Orphan saw her masts and funnels and cranes ahead of him lighted up for a moment by a quick flash from "Peeping Tom". Almost immediately a flame shot out from her side—a roar—and a shell burst with another splash of flame close to the shore end of that search-light.

"Peeping Tom" disappeared at once.

Then "Squinting Susan" twisted round to see what had fired at her little brother; waggle waggle went her beam trying to find the battleship.

Bang! Flash! Another gun—another shell blazed up somewhere near her, and she too disappeared. "They've doused their glim for 'em," Jarvis grunted.

"My jumping Jimmy! that's good work," the Sub muttered joyously.

But in a second or two out shot "Peeping Tom" and hunted about nervously, to switch off again as another shell burst somewhere near him.

As he switched off, "Sister Susan" switched on again, only to vanish as still another shell came along her way.

"What a jest, my Galloping Orphan! We'll get past them both and not be seen."

And so they did. "Peeping Tom's" beam flashed on them once, and they held their breath, but it swept astern and left them in darkness, and before it worked back the *Swiftsure's* gun had blazed out, and it was switched off even before the shell burst.

"Squinting Susan" was much too anxious to help her brother to find the *Swiftsure*, and didn't bother her head about anything else; her crew, too, had nerves—very badly.

"We're past them both," the Sub said, chuckling quietly, shaking his huge fist at them, and guffawing loudly as he watched first one and then the other switching on and then switching off—out would shoot one light from shore—bang would go a gun—off switched the light—darkness—the other light would try—and disappear again. "Peeping Tom's" crew were even more flustered than "Squinting Susan's"; they hardly waited to be fired on before switching off.

It was the funniest sight in the world.

"Bet Bubbles is nearly choking himself," the Sub said, "and Uncle Podger making funny remarks."

"They're 'court-martialling' the China Doll in the gun-room," the Orphan told him.

"Oh, of course; I forgot that."

The picket-boat was now steaming in darkness, made more intense by the glare, two miles ahead of her, of "Glaring Gertrude's" huge beam. This light, by a lucky chance that night, never seemed to leave the white salt-heaps on the opposite shore.

"We're right on top of the mines now, sonny. Feeling gay?"

"Ra—ther!" answered the Orphan, the uncomfortable feeling in his stomach entirely forgotten.

"Worth a guinea a minute! My jumping Jimmy, it is!" the Sub kept saying to himself. "Starboard a little! That's the ticket. Keep her as you go. We're nearly past the mines now."

Presently the Orphan could see a dark line to starboard—perhaps a thousand yards away—and knew that this was the low-lying ground which swept along to the right of Yeni Kali fort, the land from which the guns had fired on the trawlers last Saturday.

If only "Glaring Gertrude" would stay where she was and amuse herself

counting the salt-heaps all would be well. Once or twice she swept away from them, and the Orphan caught his breath lest she would swing right round on the picket-boat; but every time, just at the critical moment, back she would go to see if the salt-heaps were still there.

The picket-boat throbbed along; hardly any smoke was coming out of her funnel, and only very seldom a spark; old Fletcher might be a humbug, as Jarvis said, but he *could* stoke.

Then the Sub pointed out, right ahead, the square dark shape of Yeni Kali itself, its upper edge—broken and jagged where shells had crumbled it—silhouetted against "Glaring Gertrude's" beam.

"They're working it from somewhere in the fort itself," he said, speaking very quietly, "and the fort gives us a shadow. Splendid!"

"We've come too far; port your helm and ease her a bit, Orphan. Get that lantern ready—stand by to light it," he told the signalman.

The picket-boat turned in towards the darkness of the land, and moved through the black water with just a little rippling gurgle under her bows, whilst the crew, for'ard, strained their eyes to find the mark-buoy—the mark-buoy which the Turks had shifted.

"We ought to see it—it's white," muttered the Sub impatiently, but their eyes were rather blinded by looking at "Glaring Gertrude", and they could not pick it up.

The Sub kept his eyes shut for a minute, and then looked again.

No result.

The line of shore was very close now, and it was inconceivable that the Turkish look-outs at their guns, all along it, could not see the picket-boat. Round and round, first this way and then that, she steamed, hunting everywhere for that mark-buoy—without success.

To seaward the *Swiftsure*, "Peeping Tom" and his sister were still keeping up their noisy game of "Peep Bo", I spot you!—Bang! No, you don't!

But for that, and the gurgling under the bows, and the soft grating of the engines, there wasn't a sound. Not a sound came from the shore close to them, not even a dog barked.

The Sub grew restless. He knew that the two trawlers and the *Swiftsure's* picket-boat must already be sweeping through the mine-field and expecting to see the red light to guide them.

He swore at the Turks, cursed himself, and above all he cursed "Glaring Gertrude" and the fort for making the darkness so pitch black round the picket-boat.

He steered out towards the opposite shore until he almost ran into the big search-light's beam, swung her round, and made another "cast", but the blackness

away from the glare and in the shadow of the fort was absolutely inky.

No buoy could he find.

He looked at the luminous face of his wrist watch. "It's getting on for eleven," he said bitterly. "The trawlers must have nearly finished."

"There's a light, sir! Look, sir! To seaward!" a man called excitedly.

"Keep quiet, you fool," growled Jarvis, "or you'll wake them Turks."

They all looked back towards the mine-field, and saw a small white light—like a small star twinkling low down on the water—between them and the *Swiftsure*.

"The trawlers have finished—that's the signal," the Sub swore angrily, "and we've not helped them. Go back to the ship, Orphan. Curse it all!"

And then at last the Turks woke up. Flash! Bang! Flash! Bang! Guns began firing one after the other, and the Orphan ducked as he heard shells whistling through the darkness.

He could have kicked himself for ducking, because the shells were not really coming his way, but bursting hundreds of yards beyond the little white light. It was that the Turks had seen, not the picket-boat. She had, however, to pass it on her way back.

"Which side shall I pass the light?" he asked nervously.

"Keep inside; they won't see us, and they won't hit us if they do—I almost wish they would," the Sub growled miserably. "Shove her along!"

As the picket-boat increased speed and approached the light the noise of shells came much nearer. One especially seemed to be very close, and burst in the water not a hundred yards ahead.

"Confound you! Keep your head still; you aren't a jumping marionette," swore the Sub as the Orphan ducked again.

"Sorry!" he stuttered. "I try, but I can't help it."

"Shove her along! Open her out! Let her rip!" roared the Sub. He was more happy now that there was some danger.

The picket-boat dashed through the water. She came abreast the white light, swinging from a pole on a buoy quite unconcernedly.

"That marks the end of the channel they've swept," the Sub bellowed; but the Sub was much too interested in the shells which were humming and shrieking, right over the boat now, some of them bursting as they struck the sea, others falling in with a "flomp". Another moment and the white light was left behind, wriggling excitedly as the wash of the steamboat made the buoy dance. Another hundred yards and they were out of the line of fire.

There was a sudden shout from the bows: "Something ahead, sir!" and out of the darkness came cries and shouts for help. They steered towards them, stopping engines, and found two men in an almost sinking dinghy—a trawler's

dinghy—one of them trying to paddle with bits of bottom board.

They hauled them in and left the boat behind.

The men were numbed and half dazed. One, a signalman, had a cut on his head and was bleeding freely.

"285's blown up, sir; we're the only ones left."

Neither knew anything, except that there had been a great heave under their trawler and they'd found themselves in the water, swum about, found the dinghy, and got into her. One man had started feebly baling her out with his hands, whilst the other had ripped up one of her bottom boards and tried to paddle to the ships.

"She was only a-goin' round in circles and a-drifting inshore," he said.

They hadn't seen any more of the crew, but the Sub stopped engines and halloed into the darkness. No answer coming back, he returned to the *Achates* at full speed. "Squinting Susan" and "Peeping Tom" had to be passed, but they and the *Swiftsure* were still busy with their little game, and so no one bothered about them.

Until the Sub brought the news, no one knew of the disaster to trawler No. 285—not even the second trawler, which had already returned. Some of the crew of the *Swiftsure's* picket-boat had seen a sudden glare on the water—-like a flash running along the surface—which they thought was a shell bursting. Nobody had heard any explosion.

In case there were any more survivors, the *Swiftsure's* picket-boat went back to search the mine-field, and luckily found the skipper of the trawler and two more men drifting about on wreckage. Even they could give no definite account of what happened. One thought he heard a noise; another that he'd seen a flash; they all remembered a great heave under them and finding themselves in the water.

And so, in this sad way, the night's adventure ended; and the picket-boat having been hoisted in, the Orphan, very miserable, undressed and turned in to his hammock.

The Sub was wretched. He had not found the mark-buoy, and had done nothing to help in any way, and he cursed himself for not searching the mine-field area thoroughly, and for leaving the trawler skipper and those two men.

He wished someone would kick him very hard.

Next forenoon the Orphan was busy in his picket-boat collecting the crews of the other trawlers—some men from each—and bringing them aboard the *Achates*. He also had to fetch from the *Aennie Rickmers* her captain—a positively enormous man—and the flying officers, one of whom was a jovial burly Frenchman with a

red beard, very proud of being called "Ginger".

On the quarter-deck, officers and men fell in, bare-headed, whilst the little pale-faced Padre read the burial service for those missing from the blown-up trawler.

Nothing more happened that day, but on the Wednesday the wind rose, and by nightfall was blowing hard—a very black night it was—and at about two o'clock in the morning an explosion occurred under the bows of the *Aennie Rickmers*.

She made signals of distress, and began to sink rapidly by the head. There had been rumours for some days that two Austrian submarines had escaped from the Adriatic; it might be a torpedo from one of them, or perhaps from some Turkish torpedo-boat. Some suggested floating mines; others that an explosion had occurred inside the *Aennie Rickmers* herself. No one knew exactly what had happened. All that anyone did know, when Captain Macfarlane took the *Achates* close to her, was that she was sinking; that her "dago" crew of Levantine nondescripts had deserted in all her boats; and that her English officers, the flying officers, their men, and the four wounded from the *Achates* were left without any means of saving themselves.

A most unpleasant hour-and-a-half followed.

The first the China Doll knew of it was being roughly punched in the ribs and shaken. He woke to hear men passing from hammock to hammock, singing out: "Turn out, sir, turn out; submarines about; all hands on deck, sir!"

He didn't lie long after that. He was down, had pulled on his trousers, found a coat and cap, fumbled in his chest until he found his swimming-collar, and was blowing it up round his neck before he was really awake.

Bubbles, whose hammock was slung next to his, had gone to sleep again. He prodded him feverishly. "Submarines, Bubbles! All hands on deck! Get your swimming-collar!" he squeaked.

"Oh, bother! Curse you!" grunted Bubbles. "You aren't pulling my leg? Oh, hang it!" he grumbled, as he saw all the other snotties tumbling into their clothes, officers coming out of their cabins into the dark, crowded "half-deck", and heard the banging down of armoured hatches. "I do hate this beastly war. Breakfast at seven; then a cold bath at two in the morning. Beastly!"

The China Doll went up on the dark quarter-deck and hunted round for someone to talk to. His teeth were chattering and his knees were trembling—it was so dark and cold.

"What's happened?" he asked, stumbling across Uncle Podger.

"Something blown a hole in the *Aennie Rickmers*, and the Sub's gone across in the cutter to bring back our wounded."

"What did it? Was it a submarine?"

"Don't bother; no one knows. Come and have a look at her."

He took him round to the other side of the turret, into the wind, and out in the pitch-black night they could just make out the darker mass of the hydroplane ship, apparently tipped up by the stern, and a signal-lamp flashing on board her. They heard shrieks coming from her, and the China Doll's heart beat fearfully fast.

Near them, on the quarter-deck, the querulous voice of Dr. O'Neill, the Fleet-Surgeon, was lamenting that he had ever come to sea. "Mother of Moses!" he groaned, as "Glaring Gertrude" turned her light towards the *Achates* and everybody's face showed up, and the turret and the superstructure, the masts and the funnels, stood out clearly against it. "Mother of Moses, they'll torpedo us next if we wait here much longer! They *must* see the ship every time that beastly thing passes across us."

As "Glaring Gertrude" swept away, and everybody and everything was left in darkness again, the Fleet-Paymaster's loud, cheery voice bellowed: "Cheer up, old 'C.D.'; if you have to take to the water, you won't find any whisky in it!"

The officers and men standing by tittered, for they well knew that Dr. O'Neill was a rabid teetotaler, and that "C.D." stood for "Converted Drunkard".

"I've never tasted the beastly stuff in my life, and know it you do!" snapped the Doctor furiously.

"Sadly lacking in the sense of humour you are, old C.D. What could be funnier than the whole seven hundred and fifty of us to go drifting ashore, under those salt-heaps, with swimming-collars round our necks?"

The Fleet-Surgeon stalked away, muttering angrily: "I hate fools."

By this time everything that could be done to make the *Achates* safe, in case she was attacked, had been done; water-tight doors and hatches were all closed; the Orphan was under the fore-bridge with his 6-pounder guns' crews; Bubbles was on the after-shelter deck with his; look-out men, all round the quarter-deck and fo'c'sle, peered into the darkness; the Sub had gone across to rescue the wounded men and, if need be, bring back everybody from the *Aennie Rickmers*, and all the officers and men who had no jobs to do stood waiting for whatever was going to happen.

To those who realized what might happen, and who thought it more than probable that whatever had fired a torpedo at the hydroplane ship—and by now everybody said it was a torpedo which had blown a hole in her—would come back out of the darkness, wait for that search-light to show up the *Achates*, and then take a pot-shot at her;—to those, that next hour-and-a-half was probably the most trying, and longest, in their lives. The wind blew so fiercely, and the water was so cold and dark, that there was very little chance of anyone being picked up once the *Achates* did sink, as there was every prospect of her doing—the poor

old ship—once a torpedo got home.

Fortunately most people have not vivid imaginations, and to go into the battery during this time no one would have imagined that anything at all out of the way was happening. The men crowded there, just discernible by the blue-stained fighting-lights, walked up and down or stood in knots, smoking, and talking quietly about everything under the sun except what was going on. It was only when that hateful search-light passed along the ship, and one saw that practically all these men had their swimming-collars blown up round their necks, that one realized that they did know what the next few moments might bring them, and that, knowing this, they did not worry about it.

All had been done that could be done; of course, the *Aennie Rickmers* and their own wounded messmates aboard her could not be left in danger, and old "Yellow Beard", as they called Captain Macfarlane, was on the bridge up there above them.

So why bother?—and they didn't.

Uncle Podger, going up on the boat deck—really to get away from the China Doll, who would worry him with questions—stumbled against someone crawling on his hands and knees. The search-light sweeping round just then, he saw that it was Fletcher. "What are you hunting about there for?" he asked him.

"I can't find the tortoise, sir," the old man said. "I did not want to leave him behind if anything happened."

"He can swim, can't he? You'll be able to hold on to him, and he'll tow you ashore!" Uncle Podger laughed, and tried to help find "Kaiser Bill", waiting for "Glaring Gertrude" to come back again and throw a little light into the corners the "savage" beast most frequented. He left Fletcher still looking for him, and on his way for'ard to pass the time with the Orphan, collided with the Pimple stumbling along from the bridge.

"She's safe—she's only got her fore compartment flooded—-the bulkhead's holding. Our wounded are coming across in the cutter. The Captain's sent me to tell the Fleet-Surgeon," and away the Pimple dashed.

A few minutes later the cutter with the wounded splashed alongside. They were hoisted in and taken to the sick-bay. Two of these—Cookey, the chief cook, and the leading stoker—both of whom had had their legs smashed, were very big men indeed; and no one who has not had to do it can imagine the difficulty of handling helpless men of that great size and weight, and lowering them into, or hoisting them out of small boats even in daylight. In darkness it is much more tedious and awkward; yet, abandoned by their crew, and with the ship apparently sinking under them, the first thing the officers of the *Aennie Rickmers* and the French and English flying officers and men did, after they had been thrown out of their bunks by the force of the explosion, was to get the wounded ready to be

lowered over the side, and, directly the *Achates'* cutter had come alongside, to lower them safely into it. This was an incident of quiet, unostentatious coolness and courage which deserves recording. It is, perhaps, easy to be courageous at 2 p.m.; at 2 a.m. it is a very different matter.

And another thing must be put down. As the first of those two helpless men was being carried for'ard, an officer—the first he met, and it was not the Fleet-Surgeon—took off his own swimming-collar, pushed it into his hands, and disappeared in the dark before he could give it back.

Shortly afterwards the miserable "dago" crew came screaming alongside and begged to be taken on board. They were; and they'll never forget the "feel" of the ammunition boots of the tender-hearted marines who shepherded them that night into a casemate and locked them up inside. Then off went the *Achates* to get out of the limit of "Glaring Gertrude's" range of vision, and to lose herself in the pitch-black night, where neither torpedo-boat nor submarine could find her.

The Sub had been left behind in the damaged ship, to shore up that fore bulkhead and to keep an eye on it all night. He was as happy as a "fiddler" to be able to make a good job of it and "wash out" the recollection of his bad luck and judgment two nights previously.

The remainder of the Honourable Mess crowded down into the gun-room with the joyous relief of danger past, demanding sardines, onions, and beer. They got them, too, at that unearthly hour of half-past three in the morning, for the purple-faced Barnes and the miserable little messman knew from long experience what would be wanted, and had spent the last half-hour preparing for them. It all went down as "extras", so the messman didn't mind.

The Pimple brought the news that it was a torpedo-boat that had attacked the *Aennie Rickmers*. "A signalman saw her dropping astern directly after the noise—the Navigator says he saw it too," he told them.

"Have an onion, Pimple?" they jeered.

The China Doll, at the first rumour of "sharks and onions", had dashed down from the quarter-deck, entirely forgetting that his swimming-collar was still round his neck; and they made him keep it there—blown up, too—so that he had the very greatest difficulty to swallow his fair share of the food—as for his glass of beer, Rawlinson drank half that—before the Commander sent the sentry to tell the Pink Rat to "'out lights' in the gun-room and stop that confounded noise!"

Then they crept noisily to their hammocks in the half-deck, and, marvellous to relate, slept like tops.

This finally concluded the operations off Smyrna—they were only intended temporarily to divert the Turks' attention—and a few days later the *Swiftsure* and *Triumph*, with the trawlers, were recalled to the Dardanelles, and the *Achates* ordered to Port Said to repair her small damages, leaving "Peeping Tom" and "Squinting Susan" to play "I spy you" by themselves, and "Glaring Gertrude" to go on counting her salt-heaps on the opposite shore or not, just as she pleased.

CHAPTER VII
Off to the Dardanelles

The *Achates* arrived at Port Said on the 18th March and made fast, head and stern, to the Senior Naval Officer's buoys, off Navy House.

It was on this date that the combined French and British fleet made the attack on The Narrows—the attack which ended so disastrously with the loss of the *Ocean*, *Irresistible*, and *Bouvet*, and the crippling of the *Inflexible* and *Gaulois*.

A very bad day it was, only relieved by some daring acts of bravery, of which none so roused the admiration of the whole fleet as the courage displayed by those destroyers which went alongside the mortally wounded *Ocean* and *Irresistible*, and removed their crews under a concentrated fire from many heavy guns.

It was magnificent.

But the *Achates* lay comfortably at Port Said all that tragic day, making preparations for repairing the damage caused by the Smyrna shells, and talking by wireless to her chummy ship the *Bacchante*, anchored off Suez, at the other end of the Canal.

Barely six weeks ago the Turks had made their feeble attack on the Suez Canal, and of course the first thing that the Honourable Mess decided to do was to visit Kantara and Tussum, where the fighting had taken place. The Lamp-post had an elder brother on the staff at Ismailia, the Pimple had a long-lost cousin in an Indian regiment at Kantara, and by dint of much worrying of these two unfortunate young soldiers, everyone had the opportunity of visiting these places and picking up a few bullets.

Anyhow, they had a very joyous three weeks, only slightly damped by the almost entire disappearance of the damage done by the Smyrna shells; but a few

holes remained in one funnel, and they looked forward intensely to showing these to their chums in the *Bacchante*. Eventually that ship came back through the Canal, the *Achates* followed her outside, and both of them steamed away to join the Eastern Mediterranean Squadron at its base at Mudros, the harbour in the island of Lemnos, sixty miles or so from the end of the Gallipoli Peninsula and the commencement of the Dardanelles. At last they were to take a hand in "The Great Adventure".

At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 12th April they both slipped through the "gate" in the submarine net, and anchored in that great land-locked harbour.

It was extraordinarily impressive to see the enormous assemblage of ships there—both French and British ships of every kind—battleships, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, huge transports, store ships, colliers, auxiliaries of all sorts, two white-painted hospital ships, trawlers, and tugs.

At the top of the harbour lay the little white town of Mudros, with its white twin-towered Greek church, and its row of spidery windmills on the ridge behind it; though the Honourable Mess had not much time to gaze open-mouthed at all these things, and to grin with pleasure when the *Bacchante* anchored in the wrong place and was obliged to shift billet; because a collier came alongside almost immediately, and down they had to go, get into "coaling rig", and, for the rest of that bright sunny afternoon, "coal ship".

Everybody knew that the next attack on the Dardanelles would be a combined naval and military operation, and as transport after transport came steaming into Mudros harbour, the enthusiasm and excitement increased.

Also the Honourable Mess dined their pals of the *Bacchante*, and proudly showed them the few traces still remaining of the damage done to the ship at Smyrna. This was a beautiful occasion, because it washed out all memory of the incident of the "sea-gulls"—not one of them mentioned it—and also because the *Bacchante* snotties introduced a delightful new form of "drag" hunt round the "half-deck", the "drag" being a piece of decomposed cheese (which they brought with them) and some Tabasco sauce and Chile vinegar dropped discreetly at intervals. As a special privilege, the "War Baby" was invited to the "meet", and the "Youngest Thing in Marine Subalterns" joyfully left the exalted atmosphere of the ward-room, unbuttoned the trouser-straps under the soles of his boots—the straps which kept his trousers and their broad scarlet stripes so beautifully straight—and prepared for the fray.

Blindfolded, and on hands and knees, these young gentlemen enjoyed a famous "run"; and though the Padre did object to the "drag" being placed on the pillow in his cabin bunk, even that did not seriously diminish their enjoyment.

As a matter of fact, it slightly added to it.

Exactly what part the Navy would take in the approaching "landing" on the Gallipoli Peninsula no one exactly knew; but when the news came that men were being told off for "beach parties", and then when the Pink Rat, Bubbles, and the Lamp-post were ordered to be prepared to land with them and provide themselves with some sort of khaki uniform, excitement rose to fever pitch.

Within half an hour the Pink Rat appeared in the mess in proper soldiers' kit—beautifully fitting—which, he explained, "he'd brought out with him in case of accident".

"If you went to Heaven you'd turn up at the gate, and sign your name in old Peter's book with a pair of wings on and a mouth-organ!" the Sub snorted when he saw him; and Uncle Podger suggested that "he probably had a tail, with a sting on it, and a brand-new shovel, stowed away somewhere on board, lest, "in case of accident", he found himself in the other place."

The whole Honourable Mess concerned themselves with the fitting out of Bubbles and the Lamp-post. Proper khaki was unobtainable—at that time—so they dyed their white uniform in Condy's fluid, and as it shrunk in the process, and the resulting colour was a dirty yellow, streaked with brown, the effect was not good.

"Most unsatisfactory!" said Uncle Podger, when they first tried it on and he saw the Lamp-post's ankles and wrists sticking out far beyond the ends of trousers and sleeves, and Bubbles hardly able to breathe in his. "Most unsatisfactory! It will be an insult to the Honourable Mess if either of you are found 'corpsed'."

"You mustn't tell them you belong to the *Achates* when they come to bury you," the others shouted. "You must promise that!"

"You're perfect scarecrows," roared the Sub when he saw them—"a pair of confounded convicts!"

Everybody laughed at them and devoutly envied them—and they laughed at each other.

Rawlinson, who prided himself on being a really great poet, burst out with:

"Two little convicts going out to fight,
One had his clothes too short, the other much too tight!"

There was a roar of laughter as the Honourable Mess lifted up their voices, chanting this, and dancing round the quaint pair, whilst Rawlinson, exhausted with the production of this exquisite couplet, retired to a corner to think out something which would rhyme with khaki.

The Lamp-post, grimacing, and trying to twist himself so that he could get a back view, didn't know or care what he looked like, but said he felt "like a prize idiot".

"How nice to feel natural for once, Lampy!" that insubordinate officer, the China Doll, squeaked.

This was simply asking for trouble. The two convicts chased him round the table, just missing him as he dashed out into the half-deck. Piercing shrieks for help followed, and the others rushed out to rescue him.

A glorious scrap followed.

"At any rate," said the Sub, when they'd come back again to repair damages, and the Hun had apologized for tearing the Pink Rat's coat-collar, "you'll both frighten the old Turks. That's one comfort."

There were so many things to keep up the excitement during those days of preparation. The transports, with their cheering loads of British, Australians, New Zealanders, French, and Algerian troops; the quaint old battleships from home, the dear old "mine bursters", with their clumsy, projecting spars and tackle, over the bow, for booming off mines; the balloon ship practising its funny, yellow gas-bag at the outer anchorage, and the enemy aeroplanes and their bombs. These last were, at first, a source of immense delight to the Honourable Mess, but eventually they became a little sorry for them—they flew so high and dropped their bombs so very unsuccessfully.

"How very disappointing!" said the Lamp-post one day. "Just fancy having brought along those bombs, to drop 'em harmlessly, and then have to fly back, all that way, without having done any damage."

He was quite serious about it, and, as a matter of fact, one could not but feel sorry for the poor chap, up there in his Taube, who, having expended all his four bombs uselessly, found he had to fly back some sixty miles to wind'ard, before he could go and "turn in" and try to forget about it.

Then, one day, they heard that their old friend the torpedo-boat, down at Smyrna, had come out to sea and fired three torpedoes at a crowded transport without hitting her; and by nightfall came the news that she had been chased, driven ashore, and destroyed by gun-fire. That was very good "business".

Next came the order that steel plates were to be built round the steering-wheels of the steam pinnace and the picket-boat, to protect the midshipmen and coxswains from rifle-fire. Almost at the same time the Orphan and the Hun (who was in charge of the steam pinnace) had been ordered to provide themselves with khaki, and told that their boats would be required to tow the soldiers to the beaches, on the day of the grand attack.

It was a great moment for both of them; and what a mess they made of their hands and clothes with Condy's fluid, and what prize burglars they looked when at last they showed themselves arrayed for war!

Every ship had to supply one or more steamboats, and each ship devised its own rifle protection. The *Achates'* boats had a steel plate about five feet high bolted to the deck, in front of their steering-wheels, with a narrow, horizontal slit just below the upper edge, so that when those behind it stooped down under cover they could steer through this. The ends of the plates curved back a couple of feet, so as to give side protection.

Some ships built regular steel boxes with "all round" protection, others carried the side plates so far aft that they protected men standing in the stern-sheets; and the snotties in the boats with the least protection made great fun of those who had more. Probably, among the hundred thousand men in that harbour, during the days prior to the landing, the twenty or thirty snotties in charge of these steamboats were the most supremely happy of all.

The Hun and the Orphan went away, several times, and practised towing the transports' boats. Each steamboat had to tow four of these, one behind the other. On one day the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers came on board the *Achates*, and practised climbing down into the boats, down specially constructed wooden ladders, and were then towed ashore in twenty-four packed boats, each four being towed by a steamboat, and all six steamboats steaming in line abreast.

On another day all the snotties and men "told off" to land as beach parties, or as crews of boats, were fallen in on the quarter-deck, and Dr. Crayshaw Gordon, mounting the after capstan, gave them a few words of advice and instruction in case any of them were hit.

"Don't frighten them, Doc," the Commander had hinted previously—and he didn't. He had such a funny way of "putting" things that he had the men laughing in no time.

He explained how the little first-aid dressing should be used, tearing open the cover, showing them the pads to go next the wounds, the pieces of waterproof to cover the pads, and the bandage to wrap round all. He held up the safety-pin which is in every packet—held it so that all could see—and finished up with: "You men will probably come under heavy fire; some of you will get bullets through you; but if any of you come back wounded *without* your safety-pins, there will be the devil's own row." He had such a quaint, nervous, amusing way of talking, and was so kind-hearted and so popular with the men, that they grinned and guffawed with amusement.

Of those men who stood there that afternoon, fifteen were killed on the day

of landing, and some twenty-five or thirty wounded.

"Thank God, they have no imagination," Dr. Gordon told the Commander, "and can't realize what is in front of them!"

"They simply don't bother to think about it, Doc."

On the 23rd April the first move began. Transports crammed with cheering troops, cruisers, and battleships slipped out through the "gate" in the net. The *Achates* spent the night at sea, and anchored off Tenedos Island next morning. Here were gathered the men-of-war, transports, fleet sweepers, and trawlers told off for the landings at the end of the Peninsula. It was a dull, grey-looking day, and a fresh breeze rising in the morning made the sea choppy, and must have caused intense anxiety to those in command, because the great landing was to take place next morning, and unless the sea was absolutely smooth, boat-work would be much more difficult.

That afternoon the Sub was ordered to go in the Orphan's picket-boat as "second in command" of the six steamboats which were to tow the battalion ashore. He was dumb with delight, and the Orphan almost as pleased.

In the afternoon the breeze did die down, and the Turks sent an aeroplane to see what was going on. It dropped a few bombs from a great height into the water between the ships, and flew back again.

Later on, the *River Clyde* came along and anchored close to the *Achates*. Poor old *River Clyde*! She was to make her last voyage that night, with 2000 troops on board, to run herself aground under the mediæval castle of Sedd-el-Bahr early next morning, and make her name famous in the annals of the British Navy and Army for many ages.

Large square openings had been cut in her side, and under these ran plank gangways, meeting at the bows, where a hinged platform was all ready to be lowered into the hopper and the lighters which were to fill the gap between her stem and the shore.

Her soldiers were intended to pour out of these openings, along the planks, down into the hopper and lighters, and so ashore.

At dusk the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers came on board—old soldiers all of them. Very silently and quietly they "fell in" on the quarter-deck and in the batteries, unslung their packs, laid their rifles alongside them, and were dismissed.

This was the moment for which the bluejackets were waiting. They had a great feast prepared on the mess deck, and hustled them down to it.

Five of the subalterns were grabbed by the Honourable Mess and brought down to the gun-room; the remaining officers were entertained in the ward-

room.

"Thank God!" roared the Sub, "I'm coming in with you chaps to-morrow, or I couldn't face you. Buy up the place—beat the China Doll—break the blooming furniture—chuck your gear on the deck outside. Bless you, we'll give you a better dinner than you had in that old transport of yours. And there's my cabin for two of you—the bunk for one, and a shake-down for another. Barnes! Barnes! Bring round the sherry, and tell 'em to hurry up with the dinner."

Every delicacy the gun-room store possessed appeared on the table. The soldiers swore it was the best dinner they'd had since they left England; and the Honourable Mess spun them yarns about Smyrna—by order of the Sub, who had forbidden them to mention the morrow.

Dinner over, Uncle Podger took charge or the five subalterns, and piloted them into the crowded ward-room, where a "sing-song" had already been started. The Sub, the Pink Rat, Bubbles, the Lamp-post, the Orphan, and the Hun changed quietly into their war gear. The Sub, the Orphan, and the Hun climbed down into the two steamboats, went across and made fast to the trawler which was to tow them and their eight transport boats (empty) across to the Peninsula during the night. The other three snotties, laden with leather gear, water-bottles, field-glasses, revolvers, ammunition-pouches, haversacks with food for twenty-four hours, and blankets rolled up in their straps, were taken across to the *Newmarket*—fleet sweeper—along with all the men of the beach parties.

The sing-song in the ward-room was in full swing as the last crowded boat pushed off, and up through the open ward-room skylights came the rousing, roaring chorus of "John Peel", following them in the darkness until they were almost alongside the *Newmarket*. Many of those who sang it were singing it for the last time.

At ten o'clock the *Achates* weighed anchor.

The sing-song went on until nearly eleven, but breakfast had been ordered at a quarter to four, so older heads suggested sleep. The "Lancashire" officers were stowed away in cabins, beds were made up for them on the deck; the ward-room cushions and arm-chairs all helped, and the men of the battalion lay down on the upper deck, with their heads on their packs.

At 3.15 everyone turned out, and half an hour later breakfast was ready for the soldiers—eggs and a good helping of bacon, bread and jam and butter to fill up corners, and as much coffee, tea, or cocoa as they wanted to wash it down.

This was all the *Achates* could do for them, and, little though it was, everyone felt happy that each officer and man of that grand battalion started on The Great Adventure with a good breakfast under his belt.

The little Padre, whose gentle soul had been in anguish all that night, was not the only one who wished that their mothers and wives could know this.

At half-past four the *Achates* stopped engines; the Lancashire Fusiliers "fell in", and out of the darkness covering an absolute calm, almost unruffled sea, came the six steamboats and the twenty-four transports' boats, each with its crew of five bluejackets.

Into these the soldiers filed, down the long ladders, and in twenty minutes the last boats had been filled and towed away.

There are no words which will properly and soberly describe the admiration felt by the officers and men of the *Achates* for that battalion. When the last boat had shoved off, and the transports' boats and their six steamboats had taken up their stations in line abreast and began to move slowly away, Captain Macfarlane turned to the Commander and said gravely: "I've seen, Commander, a good deal of war on shore, but I have never seen anything which has stirred me so greatly as the quietness and discipline of those fellows—as the majesty of their bearing."

He went up on the bridge, and the *Achates'* engines rumbled slowly ahead.

It was now a quarter to five on Sunday morning, the 25th April, the greyest of shadowy dawns—the formless clouds were grey—a darker streak of grey, where grey sea and sky met, was the Gallipoli Peninsula; and three grey patches, darker still, were the *Swiftsure*, *Cornwallis*, and *Albion*, close inshore, waiting for the moment to commence bombarding.

Behind the *Achates*, like a shoal of minnows, followed the steamboats and their twenty-four transports' boats; behind them were fleet sweepers, and looming indistinctly in the distance, as wide as the eye could pierce, came transports and store-ships in great numbers, the *River Clyde* among them.

On board the *Achates* the fo'c'sle and after shelter deck were crowded with officers and men anxiously gazing ahead.

"You know that R.H.A. officer," the China Doll kept on telling anyone who would listen to him—"that cheery chap who's going in with them to make signals. He promised to send me off a Turk's rifle. Wasn't that decent of him?"

On the bridge Captain Macfarlane, tugging nervously at his pointed beard, and standing next to the Commander, muttered to himself: "Thank God! they had a good breakfast."

"Every one of them, sir," the Commander jerked out, in the most matter-of-fact way.

"There's nothing like having your stomach full to keep up your pluck, Commander. It makes all the difference."

"I expect it does, sir. The books say so, at any rate."

"I know it does," the Captain said, thinking of what he had been through

himself, and turning to speak to the Navigator, busy taking bearings.

The thudding of heavy guns broke the stillness, and splashes of flames lighted up the greyness of the daybreak.

"Hullo! they've started!" said the Commander. "They're three minutes late by my watch. I expect the blessed thing is losing again. I'm hanged if I know what's wrong with it."

The Great Adventure[#] had commenced.

[#] The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps had already effected a landing beyond Gaba Tepe, 15 miles to the north-east.

CHAPTER VIII
The Landing on Gallipoli

For half an hour there was one constant rumbling of guns fired by the *Swiftsure*, *Cornwallis*, *Albion*, *Prince George*, *Lord Nelson*, and *Agamemnon*; and shells from the first two of these, bursting in scores on the last half-mile of the Peninsula, hid it almost continuously under a cloud of lyddite smoke.

The six picket-boats steamed in steadily towards this smoke cloud with the Lancashire Fusiliers behind them, not advancing very rapidly because the current, flowing out of the Dardanelles, was against them, and the transports' boats were so heavily laden.

The crews of these boats had already tossed their oars—four in each boat—in readiness to pull in to the land when the steamboats should cast them off.

The Orphan steered his picket-boat—the fifth boat from the left—with one hand; in the other he held a half-eaten sandwich. Jarvis stood one side of him, the Sub the other, all three behind the bullet-proof protecting shield. Jarvis had slept a little through the night; the other two had not.

"Practise stooping and steering through the slit," the Sub ordered. "If you keep standing up and looking over the top, you'll get a bullet in your head when the time comes."

"But there can't possibly be anyone left alive there," the Orphan protested,

as he watched the shells bursting.

"Just wait! You'll soon find out!" the Sub answered grimly, and noticing that the picket-boat was forging ahead of the line, sung out to the stoker petty officer to "ease her". This man was looking out of the engine-room hatch, just in front of the bullet-proof screen, and popped his head down to give another twist to the steam-valve. Old Fletcher, peering out of the stokehold hatch, farther for'ard, thought he, too, had been told to do so, and also bobbed his head down.

"Has the tortoise come along with us this time?" the Sub asked. The Orphan did not know; but Jarvis snorted: "Yes, 'Kaiser Bill's' 'ere all right; the old 'umbug!"—though whether he meant the tortoise was a humbug, or the old stoker, he didn't say.

The picket-boat fell back into line, and the Hun, standing behind his bullet-proof screen in the pinnace on the right, waved cheerfully across to the Orphan.

It was now clear daylight—about a quarter-past five.

The battleships still pounded the end of the Peninsula, and the six steamboats drew ahead of the *Achates*, which had now stopped engines. Behind them followed the trawlers, and the *Newmarket*, fleet sweeper, with the Pink Rat, Bubbles, the Lamp-post, and their beach parties, and behind her—far behind—came many transports.

"There's the *River Clyde*," called the Orphan, pointing away over the starboard quarter to where she was coming along, very slowly, towing the hopper and lighters which were presently to bridge the gap between her bows and the shore. After her, and with difficulty keeping pace with her, more ships' steamboats towed half a battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers.

"That's Cape Tekke—that high end bit, and that's Cape Helles—the higher cliff to the right, with the white lighthouse 'affair' on top," the Sub explained. "We've to land in between them. There's a bay there—'W' beach—underneath that smoke."

The sun itself had not yet been visible, but now it shot up from behind a distant ridge, humped like the back of a huge pig, and blazed straight in their faces.

"Old Achi Baba," said the Sub, shielding his eyes. "If they get as far as that to-night, they'll be able to look down on the Narrows and on the forts there."

"The Navigator told the Pimple that the soldiers expect to have dinner at Achi Baba," the Orphan said. "I jolly well hope they will. Isn't this sun beastly? I can't see where I'm going."

"Well, don't get too far ahead, and don't look into it," the Sub growled. "This isn't a race; ease down and give the pinnace a chance."

They were now about a thousand yards off the smoke cloud which concealed "W" beach, and the incessant crash of high-explosive shells bursting there,

and on the high ground above it, made the most infernal din. At this point the two left-hand steamboats diverged from the other four and steamed towards the rocks under the actual end of the Peninsula; the Sub, with the remainder, maintained the original course. But "W" beach, and the scooped-out gully which led upwards to the high ground, and the cliffs at each side of it were hidden in dense clouds of lyddite smoke and by a thick morning haze which lay on the water. Unfortunately the sun, shining over Achi Baba, shone full on this smoke and mist, and lighted it up to such a dazzling extent that from the boats one could see nothing whatever of the shore, and judging distances was impossible.

The boats were now drawing very near their destination, and the Sub had all the responsibility on his shoulders of judging the moment when to slip them. A blast from his steam-whistle was to be the signal for all to be cast off, and Jarvis picked up the whistle lanyard and only waited the order to tug it. Plunky Bill, in the bows, kept a sharp look-out for'ard, and every now and then dipped the boat-hook in the water to find its depth.

The Sub, his face set and anxious, seized a megaphone and shouted: "Out oars!"

The transports' boats' crews immediately dropped their tossed oars into the rowlocks, and the soldiers in these boats turned round to have a look where they were going. They had, until then, been sitting stolidly in the boats with only their packs and the backs of their caps visible, and this sudden swinging round of heads as the oars dropped, and the almost simultaneous appearance of five hundred faces, made an unforgettable sight. Nothing could be seen through the dazzling smoke and mist.

"It's twenty to six," the Sub jerked out, looking at his wrist watch. "We're a few minutes late. We ought to be right there now."

Not a shot had been fired from shore, and the ship's shells were still bursting—very close the explosions seemed to be. "They must be able to see us," the Orphan whispered, nervously peering through the steering slit.

Then there was a yell from Plunky Bill: "Stakes right ahead, sir! Only four foot of water, sir!" Others took up the cry—the crew of the Hun's steam pinnace had seen them and were shouting and pointing.

The Sub looked under the bows and saw them himself.

"We're there!" he roared. "Pull, Jarvis; one long blast! Let go aft! Full speed astern! Hard a-starboard!"

The steam spluttered out for a moment—the Orphan thought the whistle would never clear itself—then it shrieked—the echo came back from the shore almost immediately, proving how close they must be—splash went the tow-rope into the water—the other steamboats slipped their tow-ropes—the stern of the picket-boat swerved to port and trembled as the screw went full speed astern,

and the oars of the transports' boats splashed madly in the water.

Not a rifle-shot came from the shore.

As the picket-boat gathered stern-way, the crowded transports' boats splashed past on either side; their coxswains, perched in the sterns, yelling: "Go it: give way! Pull hard! Shove your backs into it!"

"Good luck to you all!" the picket-boat's crew shouted.

The soldiers turned round with grim, set faces, their hands on the gunwales gripping very tightly, ready for the moment when they would have to jump out. The leading boat wavered; she had come up against the stakes and the barbed-wire netting stretched between them. These checked her for a moment, but her weight carried her through, and she almost disappeared in the very thick and dazzling haze. The other boats dashed after her.

In the bows of one—with his machine-gun—was a very cheery subaltern who had dined in the gun-room the night before, and also his equally cheery chum the subaltern of Royal Horse Artillery—the brigade signaller. The latter, as he passed, called out: "Tell your China Doll I won't forget his rifle." "Good luck!" shouted the Sub, "I'll tell the little beggar."

"Turn her round! Take her out to the trawlers!" he roared to the Orphan. Round the picket-boat swung, and just as she commenced to steam out there was a shout of "The first one's beached herself, sir! The soldiers are scrambling out, sir!" And then from behind the haze and smoke clouds, from both sides and above, there burst out the most terrific rattle of maxims, and rifles and the bark of something heavier than either.[#]

[#] One-inch Nordenfeldts.

The picket-boat steamed out at full speed, whilst stray bullets hit the water near her and others pinged overhead. The Orphan and the Sub looked back. They could only see indistinctly through the haze with the sun on it; they could not see what was happening, but neither of them—down inside them—could imagine that any men in those crowded boats could pass through that fire and live. The Orphan held his breath and gripped the steering-wheel. His heart seemed to stop beating: the Sub's face was set, and he had bitten his lip. "They're getting it in the neck—my God, they are!" Jarvis said, as the awful rattling and banging went on without a moment's pause.

The steamboats reached the trawlers, a thousand yards or more from that glare of mist and smoke which hid "W" beach and its tragedy, and there they waited until, suddenly, first one and then another, then half a dozen—a dozen

transports' boats, some with three oars working, others with only two, one with only one, scarcely any had all four, came into view, emerging from the mist, and bullet splashes leapt up in hundreds around and among them.

For one horrible second they thought that the boats had been beaten off, but then they saw that they had no soldiers in them, and knew that, at any rate, the soldiers had managed to land; the haze still made it impossible to see what had happened to them.

Breathlessly the crews of the steamboats, clustering round the two trawlers, watched these boats struggling off. The boat with only one oar working, and no coxswain, was turning circles, but drifting slowly out with the current. The man himself was evidently sitting on the bottom boards, because only his hands appeared above the gunwales, and he kept changing the oar from side to side.

Another boat near this one had two oars working, and they watched the coxswain in the stern crouching down and trying with his free hand to make these two keep time.

Just picture to yourself a stream with a tin floating some ten yards from the bank, and half a dozen boys, with their caps full of stones, throwing stones at it as fast as they can. Picture to yourself that tin with the splashes round it, and you will be able to realize something of what the Sub and the Orphan saw; only, instead of one tin, there were sixteen crippled boats—some of them already half filled with dead and wounded—and the bullet splashes leapt six feet and more out of the water.

Then imagine that, instead of a tin, it was a struggling cat the boys were trying to drown with their stones, and that you were making up your mind to slip off your clothes, swim in, and rescue it, knowing that the boys on the banks would throw stones faster than ever, and bigger ones too, which would really hurt.

Well, at this moment the Sub decided to steam into the hail of bullets and rescue those boats.

He roared out: "We can't sit here doing nothing. Go in and help them!"

The Orphan, pale and staring, rang "full speed ahead", turned the picket-boat's bows round, and dashed back towards the boats. The Hun, yelling and half mad with excitement, followed in the pinnace, and so did some of the other steamboats. The Orphan hardly knew what happened. Bullets hit the protecting screen, a chip of wood from the gunwale hit his cap; splashes leapt up all round him; his ears hummed with the whistling noise. He remembered hearing the Sub roar: "Go for those two over there!" and feeling him grip his hand on the steering-wheel to turn towards the two most crippled boats. He got alongside one—saw Plunky Bill and another hand get hold of her—had a picture of grey faces looking up at him from the bottom of her, and a muddle of khaki lying there across her

thwarts; towed her across to the boat with only one man; saw the Sub get hold of her painter, and then found himself, dazed and horribly shaky and sick, back again at the trawler. Plunky Bill came aft, grinning: "There's a 'ole in the funnel, sir, slap-bang through!" and proudly showed a bullet which he had found lying on the deck.

No one who looked into those transports' boats as they were towed alongside the trawlers will ever forget what he saw: men dead, dying, and wounded, all huddled and jumbled together on the thwarts of the boats and on the bottom boards, with legs and arms twisted strangely; wounded unable to free themselves from the weight of dead bodies on top of them—those grey, placid faces and sightless eyes which, ten minutes before, had glowed with excitement as they turned them to the sun; the blood-stained, torn khaki; the blood-stained water lapping round them, and the one, two, and in some boats three bluejackets, in their Condy's-fluid-dyed jumpers, sitting among them, flopping, exhausted, over their oars.

In one boat there was a Scotsman, in gold spectacles—not unlike Fletcher the stoker—a St. John's Ambulance man, and now a Territorial ambulance orderly. He had already dressed all the wounded in his boat, and now stepped into another, working away quietly, as if he was doing it in the accident-room of a hospital.

"We must get a doctor," he told the Sub; and as the trawlers had not one, the boats requiring most urgent assistance were towed across to the *Newmarket* anchored near. Here the wounded—most of them—received further treatment.

There was no time for sentiment. The boats were all urgently required to take more men ashore; three of them, those with the most dead and wounded, were told off to take on board the wounded from the others; bluejackets were told off to take the places of those of the crews who had been killed and wounded; and then the beach parties, Bubbles, the Pink Rat, and the Lamp-post, tumbled down into them. Bullets began flying round them and the *Newmarket*, but no one was hit. "Shove off!" was shouted; "land them under the rocks to the left of the beach;" and the Sub and the Orphan towed them inshore.

There was much less rifle-firing now, but many bullets came over and splashed round the picket-boat. The mist and smoke had cleared away, and the *Swiftsure* was still firing very rapidly at the Turks' trenches on the edge of the cliff, to the right of the beach, the *Achates* assisting with her small guns. Their shells burst along it one after the other, all along the dark line which marked the trenches, and scarcely a Turk dare expose himself to fire down at the beach.

The Sub, as he approached, saw through his glasses two Turks close together, leaning over and pointing their rifles down at the beach, and saw spurts of sand fly up where the bullets struck among a line of men lying prone, half in

and half out of the water, in front of lines of barbed wire. One of the shells from the *Achates* burst close to them, and when the smoke had drifted away the two Turks were still there—motionless—in exactly the same attitude, but their rifles were sliding down the rocks. He cast off the boats with the beach parties, and waved to them as they pulled past him inshore. The three snotties crowded in the stern, and looking up at the cliffs with eyes wide open, were, however, too excited to take any notice of the Orphan's shout of "Good luck, you chaps!"

Back he went to the *Newmarket*, meeting steamboats towing in boats packed with more troops. Another trip ashore with sappers and "details", and then he towed those three boats with the wounded to the *Achates*, where they were taken on board.

It was exactly half-past seven when he got alongside her, busy firing her small guns in the port battery, and her for'ard 9.2 turret-gun.

The Captain wanted to see the Sub, so he climbed up and went for'ard to the bridge.

The Orphan, left to himself, was sent off to a transport to tow more soldiers ashore; and on the way to her he saw, over against the Asiatic shore and the fort of Kum Kali, the French fleet, the *Jeanne d'Arc* with her six quaint, squat funnels, and the Russian *Askold* with her five thin, tall ones, and two battleships, all firing very rapidly.

Behind them lay big transports, and dozens of boats loaded with dark-coated infantry on their way ashore.

He reached the transport, got his orders, and steamed back to "W" beach with a long string of crowded boats behind him.

It was then, whilst he waited for them to be emptied, that he had the first clear view of "W" beach and the broad gully leading up to the green ridge above it.

No bullets—or only very few—came near him, and he could look on undisturbed. On the right, where the barbed wire was thickest, a row of dead Lancashire Fusiliers lay as if they had all been swept by the same torrent of maxim bullets. He knew that they were dead, because other men, springing into the water and wading ashore, stepped over them, looked down at them, and left them.

Higher up the beach, men were hanging on the barbed wire itself. At first he thought it was only clothes hanging there; then he saw that they had been men. Fresh troops were scaling the cliffs; soldiers advanced up the green slope above, singly and in little groups. Away to the left, under the rocks, more men clustered; and as some of them limped along to the boats, some with bandages, some without, he knew that these were wounded waiting to be dressed. They crowded into the boats he had just brought ashore, and many were carried down—among these being a wounded Brigadier shot through the leg. He saw

nothing of Bubbles, the Pink Rat, or the tall, lanky Lamp-post; but he did feel certain that the landing had been made good.

Trawlers, loaded with stores, approached as close inshore as they could get; boats of every description were flocking in, and already the sappers were lashing pontoons together on the left, under the rocks, to make a temporary pier.

Then the boats he had towed in came out to him, and he towed them and their wounded back to the *Achates*. For the remainder of that morning the Orphan was employed taking Staff Officers backwards and forwards between the ship and "W" beach.

The beach parties had laid down six buoys at about ten yards apart and some fifty yards from the beach, and had led ropes from these to the same number of stakes driven into the beach opposite to them. The intervals between these ropes made waterways into which the big lighters could haul themselves ashore without colliding with each other. But there was a certain amount of jostling just beyond the buoys, and the Orphan had his work cut out, whenever he went near the beach, to prevent his boat being damaged by the crowds of steamboats "mothering" the big lighters into position. She had a big rope fender projecting across her bows, another lashed across her stern, and two lengths of six-inch "grass" hawser secured all round her side to protect her from bumps; but, in spite of these, she soon had one corner of her stern crushed, and her steering gear was jammed. The Orphan managed to take her back to the *Achates* safely, and, very sad about it, reported the damage to the Commander.

The Commander, at his wits' end for boats, was very angry.

"I'll take you out of her, Mr. Orpen, if you can't manage her," he said angrily, but then sent him away to get his boat coaled and watered whilst the repairs were being made. "You and your crew can come in-board and get some food," he called after the miserable Orphan.

So presently he was able to dash down to the gun-room, where Barnes had some cold meat and pickles waiting for him. He had had nothing to eat, except a couple of sandwiches, since the previous night, and the sight of food made him realize that he was ravenously hungry. It was now half-past one. The China Doll—the only one there—lay fast asleep on one of the cushioned benches; and he ate his food in peace, with the burly Barnes waiting on him. He was nearly as hungry for news as he was for food; but the old marine would not talk or tell him anything. "Just you go on with your food; there ain't no time for talking," and he gave him a cup of strong coffee afterwards. "That'll keep you awake," he said, as he cleared away.

The Orphan looked at the China Doll and longed to throw himself down on a cushion and sleep; but heavy firing broke out again, and, too excited to think of doing so, he went up on the quarter-deck to see what was going on.

"Your boat will be ready in half an hour," the officer of the watch told him.

The *Cornwallis*, *Swiftsure*, and *Albion* were now firing at a small knoll which showed up above Cape Helles, the big cliff half-way between "W" beach and Sedd-el-Bahr. This knoll was known as Hill 138, and barbed-wire entanglements round its slopes were plainly visible through the Orphan's telescope.

He asked the Fleet-Paymaster and the Navigator, standing on the quarter-deck and looking through their glasses, what was happening.

"The Turks still hold it," the Navigator said. "Our chaps are preparing to rush it when the ships have finished their bit of work."

"How are they going on down in the *River Clyde*?" he asked.

"Badly; they've been terribly cut up; haven't landed a man since nine this morning; something went wrong when they tried to get the lighters in position under her bows. Look through your glass! You see those chaps there under the little bank on top of the beach, this side of her; those are all who are left of some six or seven hundred who tried to get ashore early this morning. They can't budge; they have been there all the time. And those are their dead, those brownish lumps scattered along the beach. Those two transports' boats, stranded under Cape Helles, drifted there. Every man aboard them was killed before they got near the shore. They've been drifting about all the morning, and fetched up on the rocks. Look at that splash jumping up close to the *River Clyde*—that's another 8-inch shell from the Asiatic shore. They hit her three times before she took the ground, but have missed her ever since. Ah! There goes a salvo from the *Prince George*—she's looking after the Asiatic guns—that'll quiet 'em."

"Any news from the Australians, sir?" the Orphan asked, feeling horribly miserable.

"They and the New Zealanders have done grandly," the Fleet-Paymaster answered cheerily. "Pushed inland a devil of a way. They'll be across the Peninsula in no time—with luck."

No news had come from the French on the Asiatic side. "They seem to be doing all right," the Navigator said; "but it's precious difficult to make out what's happening there."

Some men came through the battery door carrying a stretcher with a man on it, his face covered with a cloth. They bore it right aft on the quarter-deck, lifted back a tarpaulin, which the Orphan then noticed for the first time, laid the body on the deck, drew the tarpaulin over it, and went for'ard.

"That's the seventeenth," the Navigator told him; "most of them soldiers."

Dr. O'Neill, capless and haggard, came up the after hatchway. "By the powers that be, but the General has a bad leg!" he said as he hurried past them on his way to the sick-bay.

"That's the General you brought off this morning," the Fleet-Paymaster ex-

plained.

The Sub and the China Doll came up from below, the China Doll just wakened by the heavy firing.

"That R.H.A. chap promised to send you off your rifle, China Doll; he called out to us just before he landed," the Orphan said; but the Assistant Clerk shook his head sorrowfully. "No, he's dead; he died as they brought him on board; he and that chum of his are both there," and he pointed to the tarpaulin.

"Someone told me," said the Sub, "that the R.H.A. chap got ashore all right, fixed up his signal things, and sent off one or two messages before he was knocked over. He was more lucky than a good many of those there; they never got out of the boats."

"Why did the Captain want you?" asked the Orphan.

The Sub took him aside, his eyes very bright. "He'd forgotten why he sent for me, but then wanted to know if we'd had orders to go after those crippled boats that time. I told him that we hadn't, but that I couldn't stand by and do nothing. I thought he was angry; he said that if the steamboats had been disabled it would have meant a serious delay. I told him we'd only had a bullet through the funnel and a bit chipped out of the gunwale. He looked me up and down, tugged at his beard, and I saw that he was smiling. So that's all right, my jumping Orphan!"

"Did he know that the Hun went in too?"

"I told him."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, you know that funny, slow way he has of talking when he's trying to be humorous. He just tugged his beard and said: 'I thought I noticed that young officer's boat'. Gosh! what a morning it's been!"

The picket-boat's steering gear having been reported repaired, the Orphan was sent away again, and kept busy until nightfall, backwards and forwards between "W" beach and the ships. Once he took Captain Macfarlane on board the *Queen Elisabeth*, now anchored off the *River Clyde*, and waited for him whilst the big ship fired salvoes of 6-inch shell into Sedd-el-Bahr village and the earthwork on Hill 141 above it. Another time he went alongside the sappers' pontoons, and Bubbles dashed down to speak to him. "My dear chap, it's a great game; we're having a ripping time!" he gurgled and snorted, looking a terrible brigand in his clothes—already very dirty. "Oh, that's nothing!" he laughed, as he saw the Orphan smile. "We lay in the old Turks' trenches for two blessed hours this morning. It was a great time. If you get a chance, bring us in some butter and some sausages—and, my hat! old chap, I'm dry—dry as a lime-kiln, and my water-bottle's been empty for the last three hours."

The Orphan had some water in the boat and gave it to him. The next time

he went back to the ship he got a barricoe filled and took it inshore; but there was too much of a crush for him to go alongside, so the Lamp-post waded in up to his waist and fetched it. "We've almost run out of it; all our people gave their water to the wounded, and there are any amount more coming down now. We've just heard that the Worcesters have rushed Hill 138, and they and the Lancashires are going to try and take Hill 141. Yes, there they come," and he pointed up the gully, down which many stretchers were being carried. He shouted to a couple of the beach party, and seizing the barricoe of water, they ran it up the beach towards a little tent under the rocks to the left, with a Red Cross flag flying near it, and crowds of men in every attitude of weariness gathered round it. These were all wounded men.

At this time, about a quarter to five, there was a period of comparative quiet. The Worcesters had cleared the Turks out of Hill 138, so that "W" beach was practically free from rifle-fire; and now they and the Lancashire Fusiliers were forming up to attack the earthwork on Hill 141. This dominated both Hill 138 and "V" beach, where the *River Clyde* lay, so that, until it was captured, it was impossible to join hands with the remnants of the Dublins on "V" beach. A very brave attempt was made about half-past five to take this earthwork; but the two gallant regiments were almost exhausted after their hard day's fighting under a hot sun, and they met more wire entanglements, so thickly laid, and commanded by such a heavy fire, that they were unable to advance farther. At nightfall the Turks still held Hill 141, and separated the troops who had landed on "W" beach from those who had landed on "V" beach.

These poor chaps had suffered terribly all day, and still remained crouched under the low cliff or bank there, unable to move.

During the fighting for this last hill, the Orphan towed in two horse-boats with two field-guns and their limbers. They were covered up with tarpaulins, and he was not certain whether they were English 18-pounders or French 75's. At any rate, the beach parties soon got hold of them with hook-ropes and drag-ropes, hauled them ashore, and "man-handled" them up the gully. The Orphan knew, in a general sort of way, that things were not "going" as well as had been hoped, but he was kept so busy, and was so fatigued, that by sunset he could hardly keep his eyes open. Several times he had to hand over the wheel to Jarvis; but at last, after having spent nearly an hour hunting in the dark for an important transport which had anchored in the wrong place, he found himself at nine o'clock back again alongside the *Achates*.

The Sub, on watch, told him that he would not be wanted for some time. "Go and get something to eat, and a rest," he said; "you've had a pretty hard day of it."

He stumbled down into the gun-room, where he found the Hun fast asleep

with his head on the table. Barnes brought him a glass of beer, and he swallowed it in one draught. "Give me a biscuit—anything—I'm too sleepy to eat."

But Barnes had some sandwiches ready. "Plenty of mustard on 'em—made 'em myself—mustard'll ginger you up. Just you lie down on the cushions, and I'll stick the plate alongside you."

The Pimple found him, and wanted to tell him the latest news. The Orphan told him to "chuck it". The China Doll came in and would have asked him questions, but the Orphan pretended to be asleep, so he tiptoed out again like a mouse. Uncle Podger strolled in, smoking his pipe, and began to play patience. He watched him shuffling and dealing the cards, and then fell asleep.

He woke. The corporal of the gangway was shaking him.

"The Commander wants you, sir."

He dragged himself up. The gun-room was empty. The alarum-clock on the notice-board showed a quarter to eleven, and he went up to the dark quarter-deck, where he found the Commander and reported himself.

"Oh! there you are, are you? I've been sending all over the ship for you. The 'wounded' launch is going down to the *River Clyde*; I've no one else to send with her; Rawlinson has gone away in a cutter and I can't trust anyone else; the steam pinnace will tow you down, and the doctors are going with you. I've sent four hands into the launch already, and she's at the starboard boom; drop her astern and alongside the port gangway. Hurry up!"

Still half asleep, the Orphan found this big pulling boat (fitted to transport wounded, she had been), dropped into her, and five minutes later brought her alongside.

The Hun, in the pinnace, came along out of the dark, bumped into her, and got her painter made fast to the towing-cleat. "They're having a jolly lively time down at the *River Clyde*!" the Hun called across.

The Orphan, turning his sleepy head in that direction, listened, and heard a good deal of rifle-firing, and occasionally the spluttering of a maxim.

"Right into it," he thought, and forgot his tiredness.

Dr. O'Neill and Dr. Gordon scrambled down the ship's side into the launch; the big chief sick-berth steward came down after them. Bags of dressings were passed down; and Dr. O'Neill cursed irritably when a bag, fumbled owing to the darkness, slipped through the hands of the people on the gangway above, fell into the boat, and only just missed falling overboard.

The Commander called down to the Doctor: "Keep the steam pinnace if you want her." The Sub roared out orders to the Hun, and he started his engines and towed the launch away from the ship's dark side.

Six bells struck on board her—it was just eleven o'clock.

CHAPTER IX
The "River Clyde"

The night was not very dark, a pale moon—past the quarter—appeared occasionally between slowly drifting clouds, and the sea was still quite smooth. The Peninsula showed as a dark wall rising gradually from Cape Tekke to the high cliffs at Cape Helles, beyond and under which the *River Clyde* lay.

The Orphan—wide awake now—steered the big clumsy launch, and listened to the two weary doctors talking of their day's work and the job in front of them. Dr. O'Neill, the Fleet-Surgeon, had a grievance—he generally had. This time it was with the Padre and the Fleet-Paymaster. They had tried to make out a list of the men killed and wounded—the men who had been brought on board the *Achates*—but the sights and sounds in that crowded sick-bay, with the for'ard turret-gun firing directly over it, every two or three minutes, had been too much for them. Their stomachs would not "stick it".

"The only job they have, and they can't do it," he growled. "It took me another two hours getting in all the names and the official numbers on their identity disks."

"It was pretty beastly in there, P.M.O., and they've never seen anything like it," Dr. Gordon said soothingly. "They did their best; the Padre fainted outside, and the Fleet-Paymaster was sick."

"Never seen anything like it before! Nonsense! Nor have I! Did you get them all safely to the hospital ship?"

Dr. Gordon told him that he had only just returned from doing so. "The whole thing's silly, confoundedly silly, and this is the stupidest of all—this trip of ours," the Fleet-Surgeon snapped.

"It's not much of a joy ride, is it? You must be awfully tired," Dr. Gordon said in his nervous, self-disparaging manner, as if he too had not been hard at work the whole day.

Silence followed for some time, until the steam pinnace, swerving suddenly to port to pass two trawlers, indistinct in the darkness, jerked the launch after her and waked the Fleet-Surgeon. "Why the devil can't that young imp in the

pinnace steer properly?"

The noise of furious rifle-firing coming from Sedd-el-Bahr stopped him for a moment, but then he went on again with his dismal groan. "A nice little job at this time of night. Running straight into it we are."

As the boats had altered course so much to port, they presently found themselves close under the high cliffs, and whilst being towed along in front of them, the moon, peeping out for a few moments, made them conspicuous.

Dr. O'Neill had just asked angrily: "Why the devil they wanted to go in so close! Didn't they know the Turks still held the end of them!" when ping! went a bullet over the stern of the boat and plunked into the water.

Another came, and another.

"Keep down, under cover!" growled Dr. O'Neill, more savagely than ever, and he and Dr. Gordon, the chief sick-berth steward and the four men of the crew, sat themselves down in the bottom of the boat. The Orphan, sitting exposed in the stern-sheets, wished he was ten sizes smaller.

They were close to the *River Clyde* now; its dark shape loomed just ahead of them, and the noise of firing crackled fiercely, tiny spurts of flame from hundreds of rifles lighting up the water's edge.

They ran under the starboard quarter and gained shelter; the launch scraped against a rough wooden ladder and stopped; the doctors scrambled up it, followed by the chief sick-berth steward; their surgical dressings and lantern were handed up to them, and they disappeared through the dark gangway port in the ship's side—one of those ports which had been cut to allow her troops to pour out quickly. The Orphan and his crew in the launch, and the Hun in his steam pinnace, were left to themselves.

A maxim rattled—fired somewhere from the *River Clyde* herself; and when it stopped, Dr. O'Neill's harsh voice could be heard asking: "Where the wounded were; what he could be expected to do in that damnable darkness! and calling for a match to light the lantern." A head peeped out from the gangway port, and a voice called down: "That's not a very 'ealthy spot, mate. The trawlers, what comed for the wounded, were sniped something 'orrid down there. They 'ad to shove off out of it."

"We've come for the wounded," the Orphan sang out.

"Well, you bally well won't get 'em. All that are left are hup on the hupper deck, and can't be got down whilst this 'ere shooting's going on—they're quite all right up there—be'ind the bulwarks they are."

From inside the ship came shouts of: "Put out that light! Curse you! We don't want any light here!" Evidently Dr. O'Neill had managed to light it, and was looking round for wounded.

"They'll begin sniping again—they starts directly they sees a light—better

keep down in those boats. Off they go—I'm 'opping it!" sang out the man above.

Ping! Ping! Ping! Three twinkles from somewhere to the right—a bullet hit the water, another clanged against the pinnace's steel wheel-screen, another hit the side of the ship just under the ladder, slid down and fell into the water.

The Hun, from behind his shield, sang out to the Orphan to know if he was enjoying himself. The shouts from inside grew louder; then there was silence. Evidently the lamp had been extinguished.

The voice from the gangway called down: "'Ave they stopped? Hany one got a souvenir in 'im?"

"Where are they firing from?" asked the Orphan.

"That old castle sticks hout in the sea, this 'ere side," called back the voice, "and them there snipers 'ave been doin' themselves something proud."

The Orphan strained his eyes and could just distinguish, about two hundred yards away—ahead of the *River Clyde*—the battlemented outline of the castle walls and, farther to the right, a much more indistinct and blurred mass sticking out into the sea. This was actually the sea walls of Sedd-el-Bahr castle, jutting out on a reef.

No more shots came from there, and there was quietness everywhere for a few minutes. He began to feel sleepy, but then one or two solitary rifles rang out on the cliff side of the ship, five or six followed, thirty or forty seemed to chip in, and, almost before he knew it, a perfect pandemonium of rifle-fire burst out, making a ruddy glow against which the stern of the ship and the masts stood out quite plainly. Presently maxims started on shore, whether English or Turkish he could not know; and then, up above, from the foc's'le of the ship herself, several maxims added their voices to the din. The snipers from the sea walls did not take part in this "show". It died down after a while; a few crashes of musketry, then a few scattered shots apparently answering each other, and silence—silence which seemed absolutely extraordinary—as if it was something tangible.

What had happened, the Orphan had not the faintest idea. He could only stay where he was, and hope that Dr. O'Neill would decide something shortly.

Presently he heard the Doctor's voice in the darkness: "Steam pinnace! Steam pinnace!" and the Hun calling back "Aye, aye, sir!" "Go back to the ship and ask the Commander to send for me half an hour after the next attack ceases."

"Right, sir!" and jeering at his pal, the Hun, shoved off and disappeared back to the *Achates*, drawing a solitary twinkle from the sea wall of the castle and a solitary bullet which hit the ship's side, above the Orphan's head.

In a few minutes a voice called down: "You've got to make fast and come along inside 'ere—you and your crew," so he clambered up the wooden steps with his four men. Very willingly he did this, for he was anxious to be able to say that he had been aboard the *River Clyde*, and he felt lonely and very exposed, waiting

alongside.

Inside her was absolutely pitch dark; a man who bumped against him could not be seen. The Orphan heard Dr. O'Neill's voice, and elbowed his way towards him, stumbling across something which he knew was a stretcher, but evidently not waking the man asleep on it.

"Sit down, and keep out of the gangway," Dr. O'Neill snapped, "unless you want a bullet in you. There's nothing any of us can do. There they go again, curse them!" as more rifle-firing started, just as it had done before—one or two shots, then more, then apparently a whole line blazing away as if they had millions of rounds of ammunition to spare. This time he heard hundreds of bullets pattering against the opposite side of the ship, and the glare showed him another gangway port opposite the one by which he had just entered.

"It's blocked up with boards, and you can see the light between them," someone sitting next him said; "and those blighted Turks can see a light inside here, through them, too."

This burst of firing died away very rapidly; and as he sat there, jammed among a lot of soldiers, his eyes gradually became accustomed to the darkness, and he made out that he was close to a big hatch leading down into absolute blackness—the hold probably—and that above him was another hatchway, with a coaming round it, the edges of which stood out quite clearly against the clouds. A broad wooden ladder—the foot of it quite close to him—led up to this and, as he knew it must, to the upper deck, where the remaining wounded lay. The gangway port through which he had come, showed as a lighter patch than the ship's side, and anybody moving across it could be just distinguished; but people did not move across it more than they could help, because a lot of bullets had already come through it from the sea wall. Under this, his launch lay—at the foot of the ladder he had just climbed up. Dr. Gordon kept on talking, evidently trying to pacify Dr. O'Neill, and a man near him kept rattling something—a ship's lantern it sounded like—so he guessed that the chief sick-berth steward sat quite near. People conversed all round him, in a drowsy sort of way, as if to prevent themselves being nervous or of going to sleep; farther away, hundreds of people seemed to be snoring. A soldier leant against his back; he knew it was a soldier because a bayonet kept pressing against his thigh; someone slid down across his legs, snoring loudly; he pulled up his knees, and the man went on snoring peacefully; out from a distant corner came the sound of a man in pain, in his sleep.

Some men were sitting at the foot of the ladder, and, because he heard Dr. O'Neill talking to them, he guessed that they were officers. He was evidently suggesting the possibility of getting down the wounded now that the firing had died away, but they kept on saying: "They'll start off again in a minute! It can't

be done." Every now and then came the noise of heavy boots trampling hurriedly across the deck above; a figure would appear over the coaming, silhouetted against the clouds for a moment, and then someone would come hastily clattering down the ladder as if he were glad to get away from there. The whistle of an occasional bullet over that hatch explained this.

Another burst of firing broke out, swelled to a perfect fury of noise, and then subsided just as the others had done.

During a comparatively quiet interval which followed, several men scrambled down the ladders. They called out: "Worcesters to go ashore at once!" and then went back again, screwing themselves over the coaming and disappearing along the deck. The group of officers stirred themselves and stood up wearily—a tired, lackadaisical voice kept repeating "Sergeant-Major! Sergeant-Major!" then seemed to wake properly, and yelled it out.

Men began to stir. '"Ere, wake up, Major! You're wanted," came out of the dark; the sound of a man waking irritably from his sleep, scrambling to his feet, a long yawn, and then a sharp, decisive "Yes, sir! Sergeant-Major, sir!"

"Fall in, the Worcesters! Worcesters! The Worcesters have to go ashore," the officer shouted.

"Fall in, Worcesters! Fall in, Worcesters! Fall in! Fall in round the ladder!" Men all round took up the cry, waking those asleep. Men cursed and yawned, and yawned and cursed again.

"Who are you a-shaking of? I ain't a ruddy Worcester," growled someone. The darkness was full of bustle and noise as the Worcesters dragged themselves to their feet and groped round for their packs and rifles. Rifles clattered to the deck; men jostled, cursing, against each other, and the Sergeant-Major's voice kept calling out: "Come along, lads! We've got to go ashore! Hurry up, Worcesters! This way, Worcesters! Fall in near the ladder!"

Men began humping on their packs. The Orphan—by this time on his feet, to keep out of the way—had a rifle shoved into his hands. "'Old on to it, mate, while I shoves my blooming pack on." He helped the man whilst he secured the webbing-straps. Then a plaintive voice came out of the dark: "I cawn't find me pack! Where's me pack?"

There was a titter of amusement as the Sergeant-Major yelled for the men to help him find it.

"'Ere it is, you blighted idiot!" someone shouted. "You was a-sittin' on it."

"'Elp me on! 'Elp me on!" the idiot pleaded.

"You'll 'ave to 'ave a lady's maid, that's what you'll 'ave to 'ave. We cawn't go waiting for you, Bill 'Awkins," bawled the Sergeant-Major; and to judge by the silly cries of Bill Hawkins, they were strapping him up too tightly.

"Where's me rifle? I 'ad it in me 'ands, and now I cawn't find 'e," the com-

pany idiot stammered helplessly; and the man whom the Orphan was helping chuckled: "'E's a fair treat, that 'ere 'Awkins; 'e can never find nothink."

The rifle had to be found. The Captain with the lackadaisical voice was getting impatient. Matches were struck to look for it.

"Come along, Worcesters! Get up on deck!" shouted the Captain; and they began clattering up the wooden ladder, actually bandying jokes as they disappeared over the coaming, and went pattering along the deck. The company idiot, who was in a pitiable state of terror lest he should be left behind, found his rifle at last, and, clutching it, he rushed up the ladder after them.

"Now 'old on to it, and don't let it out o' yer 'ands. You'll 'ave to look arter yerself now," said the Sergeant-Major kindly, as he followed him.

Whilst these men had been getting ready, another outburst of firing had commenced, and the fusillade on shore sputtered furiously.

"I shouldn't care to have to go ashore, out into that," Dr. Gordon said; and Dr. O'Neill answered: "I wouldn't go as cheerfully as they seemed to. Grand chaps those!"

"That's the first time I've heard him praise anyone," thought the Orphan.

Firing died away again, until only an occasional shot broke the silence; and with that company of Worcesters gone, there was much more room.

The two doctors talked in a low voice. The Orphan heard Dr. O'Neill say cynically: "You can't get a night like this in Harley Street;" and the volunteer reserve doctor laughed, in his funny, nervous manner: "No, I can't. I expect my old butler wouldn't sleep much if he knew how I was spending my night. He looks after me as though I were a baby."

Someone came down the ladder—the Orphan thought he had on a naval cap—sat with his back against a stanchion, and went to sleep. A man coming down presently, knocked against him and woke him—a perfect torrent of oaths, in a very childish voice, following.

"Why, that's old Piggy Carter from the *Queen Elizabeth*," thought the Orphan. "I'd know his voice anywhere." He went across and shook him, for he had fallen fast asleep again. "Carter! You are Piggy Carter, ar'n't you? I'm Orpen; you remember me?"

He did; and listened sleepily to the Orphan telling him all about the shell and splinter holes in the *Achates* deck and funnel, until Dr. O'Neill called out irritably: "Stop chattering!"

"Look here, Piggy, I want to go up on deck and have a look round," the Orphan whispered; but Piggy said he'd spent all day there, and in the water, with the lighters, and if the Orphan wanted to go along, more fool he, and he could go by himself. He—Carter—wanted to sleep, and didn't want to hear any more of "W" beach, or "X", or "Y", or "A", "B", or "C", or the whole tomfool alphabet of

beaches.

And he went to sleep, with his back against the stanchion; and the Orphan, left to himself, sat on some sacks, watched the clouds moving across the open hatchway, and listened to the firing ashore, the pattering of bullets against the ship's side, and the snoring of tired men.

He went to sleep, and woke in the midst of a tremendous din. There was a perfect scream of rifle- and maxim-firing. He longed to go on deck, and wondered whether Dr. O'Neill would see him. Perhaps he was asleep too.

There was a new noise now—a much louder boom following a glare which lighted up the clouds, and then a smaller glare and a lesser sound; nearer they were, much nearer. "Those are field-guns," he said to himself; and after listening to them for some minutes, judging the distances of the different sounds, realized that they were our own guns. They began firing two shots, one after the other. "Two guns," he thought; and then felt certain that these were the very same guns which he had towed ashore that afternoon at "W" beach. He *must* see what was going on.

He wriggled cautiously to the foot of the ladder—Dr. O'Neill's voice didn't call out to him—he went up it on hands and feet. As he reached the top a bullet whistled by; he ducked, and threw himself over the coaming, clung there, found himself on deck—the noise seemed louder there—and doubled himself up as he ran across to the shelter of the bulwark. He waited for half a minute to pull himself together, and then drew himself up and peered over.

Right in front of him was the dark mass of the cliffs—they seemed to be not 200 yards away—and twinkles of flame sparkled out all along the tops of them. As he looked, there was the glare of a field-gun flash which outlined the whole cliffs—the crash—and then a glare farther inland, and a fainter report of a shrapnel bursting. For an instant he saw before him a narrow strip of beach with a dark shadow above it. Then it was dark again; but all along it, all the time, spurts of rifle-flame, ten times as distinct and large as those twinkles of the Turks' rifles on the cliff, marked an irregular, uneven line, where he knew our own troops must be—those Worcesters, who had just landed, probably among them.

A little to the right, down in the centre of that spluttering line of flashes, there was a regular spout of flame—a maxim was rattling; farther away inland, twinkles darted out everywhere—the whole air seemed full of noises. Then he jumped nervously, for suddenly two or three maxims at the other end—from the bows of the *River Clyde*—opened fire at something or other, just as they had done before. He could see nothing moving; it was all very uncanny, and fearfully exciting. He forgot that bullets occasionally pinged overhead or splattered against the side of the ship, and waited there until that attack had been beaten off—or perhaps, after all, it had been a false alarm—and gradually first the maxims, then the

volleys, then the individual firing died down, and left only a few snipers trying to find each other.

Then he had time to look round the deck. Close to him he saw something—some queer shape—moving in the shadow of the bulwark, and he put out his hand and felt the rough hair and the long, smooth ears which could only have belonged to a donkey. There were two of them, both tied up behind a little deck-house. They were glad for anyone to touch them; they nosed at him, as if he gave them comfort, and stamped their little feet on the deck to show their pleasure, and to make him understand how they wanted to be taken on shore.

He gave them each a friendly pat and scratched their ears, wondering what they were doing there.

But what he wanted to see were those maxims, away at the other end of the ship; to be actually behind them when they next opened fire, and to find out what was happening, and what they were firing at. So he crept along the deck, along a row of stretchers, with shapeless forms on them, lying close under the bulwark. One or two groaned, but they all seemed to be asleep, and then he gained the entrance to the dark passage or alley-way under the superstructure. In it a man was smoking—he saw the glowing end of his cigarette.

"Can I get along here?" the Orphan asked. "I want to get to the maxims."

A rough Yorkshire voice told him the passage was full of people asleep. "You'd be doing better to go up along; keep away t'other side, it's safer so."

So the Orphan retreated, crossed the open deck in front of the mast and cargo winch, found the ladder leading to the superstructure, and was just going up it, to the shelter of the starboard side of the deck-house, when he saw a stooping figure bending over a stretcher, and Dr. O'Neill's harsh voice growled out: "Here, you! come and lend a hand. Lift that corner of the stretcher."

A wounded man lay on it, very heavily asleep; and as the Orphan lifted, the Doctor pulled free a blanket which had caught under the stretcher, and spread it over him.

He had not recognized the Orphan, who promptly darted up the ladder lest he should do so, and stop him going to find those maxims. He groped his way to the ladder, which he knew must lead down to the for'ard "well" deck; found it, climbed down, and then the fo'c'sle itself was in front of him, and an iron ladder to climb up. He was up it like a redshank, and at last found himself right in the bows of the *River Clyde*.

Two almost simultaneous glares from the field-guns lighted the clouds and showed up, for a moment, the high battlemented curtain-walls and the bastions of Sedd-el-Bahr castle, and showed the fo'c'sle he stood on, the cables, the capstan winch, some sand-bags piled up in the bows, some men standing behind them, and three box-shaped structures—two on the port side and one on the starboard.

He did not know what these were.

CHAPTER X
A Night Attack

The Orphan, holding his breath, crept forward to look over the sand-bags in the bows, treading on hundreds of empty cartridge-cases which rolled about the deck.

Another glare from the field-guns, and he saw that one of the men standing there, peering through his glasses into the gloom below, was an officer of the Royal Naval Division—the "R.N.D."—a Sub-lieutenant, wearing a naval cap with the silver anchor badge. (He actually belonged to the Armoured Car Section.)

"Hello! Who are you? Where've you sprung from?" this officer called out.

The Orphan told him, and, thirsting for information, asked what was happening. "What's going on, sir?"

"I'm hanged if I know."

"But what were you firing at? Those maxims were firing a minute ago, weren't they?" he asked, disappointed.

"Were they?" the Sub-lieutenant repeated to the figure next to him, who replied dryly: "I fancy I heard them."

"I feel sure I heard some little noise too, now I come to think of it," said the Sub-lieutenant jocularly.

"What are those things?" the Orphan asked, pointing to the two dark, square, box-like structures along the port side of the fo'c'sle.

"Come along and see," said his new friend; took him to one, slid back an iron plate, and pushed him into a little space where three men crouched, in the darkness, round the breech of a maxim whose barrel stuck out through a loophole in the front.

"Quiet little cosy place, that," he heard the Sub-lieutenant say from the outside. "Come along and we'll shut them in again, or they'll catch cold."

He slid the rear plate into place, and led the Orphan back to the maxim in the bows. "They're comfortable enough in their little boxes, aren't they? Steel plates all round them, and a steel plate on top—all home comforts!"

"But what's going on? Do tell me," the Orphan begged, looking down over the bows.

"Would you like to start a battle? I bet you would;" and before the excited Orphan had time to think what he meant, he sang out: "Get hold of that gun," and pushed him down astride the tripod.

Mechanically the bewildered and flustered midshipman gripped the two handles, and stood by to press his thumbs on the firing-button.

"Now don't be in a hurry; point the thing over there. No, not there; that's where our chaps are; they wouldn't like it—beastly 'touchy' they are; point the other way; that's better."

The Orphan found himself training the gun towards where he could just distinguish the biggest and nearest of all the bastions, straight ahead of the ship.

"There's the front door of the castle, down there," continued his friend. "Turks are always coming in or out—lazy beggars they are—they want 'gingering up'. Wait till those field-guns, up beyond Cape Helles, fire; then you'll see it; the front door-steps show up white. Ah! there they go! That's about right! Keep her there! Let her rip!"

The Orphan, not really realizing what he was doing, pointed the gun towards a white patch, and jerked both his thumbs against the button. His eyes were blinded as "tut! tut! tut! tut!" flashed the gun, and the jar on his unaccustomed thumbs and wrists took off the pressure.

"Keep her going!" he heard his new friend shout; and setting his teeth and pressing with all his might, he tried to keep the maxim gun pointing in the right direction as it shook and rattled, and the empty cartridge-cases tumbled on to others upon the deck.

Immediately there were answering twinkles and sparks of rifles—a maxim somewhere above the castle doorway flamed out—the firing rang along the length of the beach, was taken on up above the cliffs; hundreds, thousands of shots were fired, and bullets whizzed over the fo'c'sle of the *River Clyde*, one or two thudding against the sand-bags.

"All right; let 'em go to sleep again," the Sub-lieutenant laughed, as the Orphan's tired thumbs and wrists refused to press the button any longer and the maxim stopped. In two minutes there was absolute silence.

"Well! Enjoy your battle?"

"Thank you very much!" the Orphan answered, tremendously pleased, and picking up a couple of the cartridge-cases he had fired, to keep as curios.

"What did happen?" he asked as he stood up again.

"A strong attack on the *River Clyde* was beaten off with heavy loss, thanks to the brilliant handling of the maxims under the charge of—what did you say your name is?"

"Orpen of the *Achates*."

"——under the charge of Midshipman Orpen of H.M.S. *Achates*."

"But there wasn't any attack, was there, sir?"

"Not as I know of; but it sounds better, and we'll leave it at that," laughed the Sub-lieutenant.

He kept on peering into the darkness; he seemed a little anxious, taking advantage of the frequent glares from the field-guns to look very closely through his glasses.

"There's something going on down there—I'm blest if I know what! You have a look," and he handed the glasses to the midshipman. The Orphan peered through them, waited for the sudden coming of a glare, thought he saw figures moving, and said so.

"So do I; but I can't make out whether they are our fellows or not."

"Where are our men?" the Orphan asked.

"More to the left, along the beach—there's no cover just in front of the bows down there. You see those dark shadows under the bows; they're the lighters your chaps fixed up. The Turks have some maxims in one of the bastions of that old castle; they're the guns which did all the mischief this morning. We've been trying to knock 'em out all day, but can't seem to get hold of 'em."

"Was it very bad this morning?"

"Bad! My God! it was awful. You see those pontoons or lighters—wait for a flash from the field-guns. Ah! now you see them! By half-past eight this morning they were actually heaped with our men—dead and wounded. If a wounded man moved a finger, they filled him with bullets. Not one man out of three got ashore. They're still lying on them; thank God, the night hides them! Keep your eyes skinned; I'm certain there's something going on down there," he added sharply.

A messenger came from the bridge, climbing the fo'c'sle ladder, and calling out: "The officer! Where's the machine-guns officer?"

"Here I am."

"The Colonel thinks the Turks are going to try and rush the pontoons. He wants you to 'stand by' with your maxims."

"All right; let 'em try," and he calmly filled his pipe, struck a match, the flare of which seemed to the excited Orphan to illuminate the whole fo'c'sle, and proceeded very slowly to light it; whilst the Orphan hardly knew whether he was standing on his head or his heels for excitement.

"Tell those two guns in the 'boxes' to train on the shore, near the pontoons, and 'stand by' to fire," the Sub-lieutenant said, casually giving the order, and sucking at his pipe as though he was thoroughly enjoying it.

"I'm certain there are some chaps down there, but we've landed nearly twelve hundred more since dark, and those may be some of them. I'm hanged if I know!"

"Ah, look!" he said quietly, as a glare from the field-guns showed, unmis-

takably, a figure approaching the end of the pontoons. "What kind of a cap has he? The Turks wear a shapeless thing, almost like one of our Balaclava helmets."

The Orphan, hugely excited, had caught a glimpse of him, but could not see the shape of his cap. He was scrambling from one pontoon to the next, moving about and then disappearing in a particularly dark shadow. It struck him that the man seemed to be putting his feet down very cautiously, almost as if he were looking for something and was afraid of treading on it.

"He has to move carefully, there are so many dead lying there," his friend explained.

"He's going back now," the Orphan whispered.

"That's rummy; so he is! and there are a lot more other chaps—a whole mass of them—coming towards him."

As he spoke a tremendous fusillade broke out on shore, above where the dark line of pontoons ended and these dark figures were moving, and the air over their heads seemed to be filled with whistling bullets. Bullets rattled up against the bows of the ship and smacked into the sand-bags, one or two pinged against the plates in front of the other two maxims; rifles began firing from the other side of the ship, from the lower sea walls. An answering crackle of musketry broke out along the shore to the left; and as the Orphan ducked his head below the sand-bags, his friend the officer, not waiting for any further orders, opened fire with all three maxims, and two more, down on the port side of the fo'c'sle well deck, joined in as well.

It was the most furious firing the Orphan had heard since he came aboard the *River Clyde*. He pushed his hand and arm between the sand-bags, and tried to look through the gap. Rifles began firing below him, close to him, and *towards* him; the men firing them must be on the pontoons themselves. The Sub-lieutenant saw them; jumped to the gun, yelling, "Depress! depress! fire on the last two pontoons." A sand-bag was pulled away to allow the maxim to depress, and it spurted fire and bullets; left off to correct the depression, and started again. The Orphan thought he heard shrieks (afterwards he swore he did); those rifles on the pontoons dropped from twenty or more to three—then to one—then to none; but the firing behind, up above the bank, went on more furiously than ever, and the bigger flashes of the English rifles, along the beach to the left, seemed to be blazing all the time. Two maxims among them made spouts of flame quite three feet long.

The din was so terrific that the Orphan could only just hear what his friend yelled in his ears: "Pretty to watch, sonny; but you'd better scoot back aft—they may come on again, and that doctor of yours may want you. Keep your head down, well down, as you go."

The Orphan, who had entirely forgotten Dr. O'Neill, and would have given

his soul to stay and see the end of this, found himself stumbling down the ladder from. the fo'c'sle, up again and along the superstructure, down and along the line of stretchers; bumped into the donkeys at the top of the hatch, crawled over the coaming, and very gently went down the ladder, hoping that Dr. O'Neill had not missed him and would not see him coming back.

He need not have bothered himself about that. There was a great deal of confusion down there; orders were being yelled out, men were gathering at each side of the gangway port, rifle-butts were banging on the deck, and bayonets snapping on the muzzles. He was pushed out of the way, and found himself next to Dr. O'Neill and the chief sick-berth steward. He expected to get a "wigging", but Dr. O'Neill only snarled: "They've started a silly yarn that the Turks are trying to board along the platforms—all this silly, stupid fuss—it's confounded nonsense. You've slept through the last two hours, you lucky little devil!"

The Orphan was just going to say that it wasn't nonsense, that he had seen the Turks trying to get across the pontoons to the platform, but he thought it wiser to keep quiet. He asked the chief sick-berth steward where Dr. Gordon was.

"Gone back, sir, an hour ago; a steamboat came along, and the Fleet-Surgeon sent him back to the ship. I wish he'd sent me. I'd be just as happy there, sir."

That snotty—Piggy Carter—was still sitting with his back to the stanchion, at the foot of the ladder, his chin on his chest, and snoring. The Orphan thinking that he would love to know that the Turks were trying to board through the gangway port (about twenty feet away from him), shook him till he woke, asking: "What's the matter?"

The Orphan told him excitedly.

"Oh, bother the Turks! I don't care a tuppenny curse for them; what d'you want to wake me for?" and promptly went to sleep again.

For a few minutes everyone was in a state of nerves, expecting at any moment to see the heads of Turks appearing at that big opening in the ship's side; the noise of firing, on the other side of the ship, rose to a perfect frenzy.

Although the Orphan had seen the first attempt crumpled up, he could not know what would happen to a second, and felt very jumpy, too; but presently the firing gradually subsided, and word was passed down that all the soldiers there were to go ashore. These men unfixed bayonets, strapped on their packs, and went on deck, knocking against the sleeping midshipman, who cursed them in his juvenile voice. That was about three o'clock, and for some time afterwards things were very quiet. The Fleet-Surgeon, the Orphan, the chief sick-berth steward, and Piggy Carter snoring against his stanchion, were alone, as far as they could see although from the dark recesses of the space round them they heard a great

multitude of snores of every variety. The Orphan's launch's crew had not been seen since they had come inboard, and no doubt four of those snores belonged to them.

The Orphan himself dozed off once or twice, but kept on being awakened by bursts of firing. He did not want to go to sleep, for fear of missing any of the excitement, so went and leant up against the edge of the gangway port, only putting his nose out, because bullets were still coming along from those snipers on the low sea walls which jutted into the sea on this side. A cool breeze blew in through the port and made a pleasant "popple" against his launch, which was bumping gently against the side of the *River Clyde*. It was raining a little, and the cool drops on his forehead were jolly refreshing.

Even standing there he could not keep awake; his brain began to lull itself with the burbling noise of the sea and the boat, until suddenly the most appalling, panic-stricken shrieks came from overhead, and the noise of heavy boots trampling along the deck.

The Orphan, with his heart in his mouth, dashed to the foot of the ladder, just in time to see a half-naked figure, his chest and neck swathed in blood-stained bandages, throw himself over the coaming of the hatchway above him; dragging a blanket after him he came scrambling down the ladder, yelling that the Turks had boarded the ship and were bayoneting everyone on deck. There happened to be the sound of many feet running about overhead at the time, and for a moment the Orphan was entirely terror-struck—his heart really seemed to stop beating; but the Fleet-Surgeon, jumping to his feet, seized the man, who was still yelling, "Save me! save me! the Turks will get me; they're bayoneting everyone!" cursed him, and told him to lie down in a corner and cover himself with his blanket.

With another yell the man tore himself away, shrieked out that "it wasn't safe anywhere in the ship"; and before the Orphan could stop him, he dashed to the big gangway port and half-fell, half-slid down the ladder into the launch. There, in the stern-sheets, he coiled himself up, covered himself with his blanket, and appeared to go to sleep.

"Nightmare, that's what's the matter with him," the Fleet-Surgeon said, a little shakily. "If he prefers to lie there in the rain and the sniping, he can. Phew! it gave me a bit of a fright."

Piggy Carter snored peacefully—even through this incident.

After it, nothing exciting happened for a long time. Occasionally a few solitary rifle-shots rang out, and sometimes there were rapid bursts of heavy musketry and volleys. Those two field-guns kept on, at intervals, all through the night, but by now they were accustomed to them. Dr. O'Neill, who was trying to sleep, would curse whenever he heard three or four sniping shots, and then perhaps a volley in reply. "Curse those snipers!" he would growl; "they'll start

the whole lot of them off again, and I can't sleep."

Eventually the Orphan must have fallen asleep, for the next time he remembered anything it was growing dimly light. He looked out of that big opening in the side, away over the grey water—absolutely still now—and made out the obscure shape of a battleship, the *Albion*, he knew. To the left he saw, gradually becoming distinct, the lower walls and fantastically crumbled ruins of the Sedd-el-Bahr castle stretching out into the Straits. Putting his head out and looking for'ard, along the side of the *River Clyde*—rather nervously, because he did not know that the snipers behind those projecting ruins had been withdrawn—he saw two great round bastions and a huge curtain-wall with its battlemented parapet—the main "keep" of the old castle. Down at his feet the "nightmare" man lay in the launch's stern-sheets fast asleep.

Inside the *River Clyde* there was now sufficient light to see that they had spent the night in a big cargo space, littered with boxes of stores and ammunition, and quite a hundred men lay there soundly sleeping. By the Red Cross badges and by the Red Cross marks on the panniers and store boxes among them, he knew that they were R.A.M.C. orderlies. Two men with blood-stained bandages lay on stretchers—also asleep—and near them his launch's crew. On the opposite side of the ship he saw the planks which filled in the opposite gangway, and close to it a heap of "something" covered with a tarpaulin.

Piggy Carter had gone, and so had Dr. O'Neill and the chief sick-berth steward.

Everything seemed quiet and peaceful, except for some solitary rifle-shots which came, every now and again, from the direction of the cliffs.

A man walked down the ladder smoking a pipe, and winding a woollen scarf round his head in turban fashion. The Orphan recognized him as his R.N.D. friend of the maxims.

"Hullo, youngster! want a smoke? Try one of my 'gaspers'."

The Orphan, who was dying for a cigarette, took one and lighted it. "Did the Turks try again?" he asked.

The Sub-lieutenant shook his head. "Come over here," he said, and showed him the holes made by three 8-inch shells in the deck above, and in the side of the ship where they had gone out.

"That was when we were coming along here. Lucky they didn't burst, for our chaps were packed as thick as thieves. One had his head taken clean off—nothing left of it; two others were killed—we stuck 'em down there in the hold."

The Orphan, looking down through the hatch, was glad he couldn't see them.

"There are a lot more 'deaders' under that tarpaulin. Come on deck—your Doctor is 'nosing round' there."

When they went up the ladder, the Orphan concealed his cigarette in his hand. But Dr. O'Neill was not worrying about a midshipman, under eighteen years of age, smoking; he was examining the wounded on the stretchers lying under the bulwarks, and looked very old and haggard in the dim light of the dawn.

The two donkeys seemed horribly miserable, nosing wearily at some dirty straw and cabbage-leaves on the deck. "Poor little blighters!" said the Sub-lieutenant. "They've not been really happy since one of those shells went through the deck between them—look at the hole it made. We've brought them along with us, from Port Said, to carry ammunition—poor little chaps!" and he fondled them as they put up their noses to be petted.

He was a very restless individual, and seemed not in the least affected by the strain of the last twenty-four hours. He pointed out the grey cliffs of Cape Helles. They seemed uncomfortably close, and looked right down upon the deck.

"That's where those snipers are—they're there still—I thought so—d'you hear that?" (a bullet pinged past); "you needn't worry—they can't shoot for toffee. If we move about and show ourselves, some more of them will start potting at us. Let's try!"

The Orphan found himself crouching behind one of the donkeys, but stood up again as his extremely cool friend laughed at him.

Dr. O'Neill now sent him to collect a dozen of those sleeping orderlies and start handing the wounded men, in their stretchers, down the ladder from the upper deck, and then down into the launch. They were very sleepy, and not too inclined to stir themselves; but he found a weather-beaten R.A.M.C. sergeant—a regular "terror"—who soon began "rousting them up". For the next hour this job kept him busy, his maxim-gun friend sitting all the time on top of the hatchway, smoking his pipe contentedly and warning him whenever the snipers from the cliff became too busy. "Better keep under cover for a bit, sonny," he would sing out; "your chaps are getting on their nerves." He never shifted his own position, although he was entirely in view; and after a few minutes, would call down: "All right; you can carry on!", and the Orphan and the orderlies would rush up, and start moving more men down. It was quite safe moving them along, under the bulwarks; but what the Orphan did not like was taking them across the deck, and lifting them over the coaming, with the delay there, whilst men standing on the steps of the ladder took charge of the stretcher. Those cliffs seemed so horribly near.

At last they had all been struck down below, and the Orphan was listening to a very humorous dissertation from his loquacious friend, on the merits of different kinds of rifles (they were both standing at the foot of the ladder, and it was broad daylight), when suddenly there was a roaring noise, followed imme-

diately afterwards by a most terrific explosion, which made them both quail, and made the *River Clyde* tremble as though a mine had exploded under her bows. The youthful orderlies handing the stretchers down into the launch dashed for cover, their nerves much "rattled"; but the Orphan and his friend, recovering themselves, jumped across to the gangway port to see what had happened. As they did so, the *Albion*—perhaps a thousand yards away—fired one of the 12-inch guns in her fore turret, and another terrific thunder-clap crashed out as a lyddite shell burst against one of the big bastions of the castle. When the smoke cleared away, they saw that the top half of it had been almost destroyed.

The R.N.D. Sub-lieutenant grinned. "'Finished' that battery of maxims they had up there all day yesterday; we couldn't turn them out." The *Albion* continued to fire her big shells, and the bursting of the high explosive against the solid masonry of the castle, not more than 250 yards from the *River Clyde*, made the most overwhelming and overpowering noise inside the poor old ship. Some of those youthful orderlies were very nerve-shaken indeed.

A steamboat came alongside soon afterwards, and Dr. O'Neill, singing out that he would borrow her to tow away the wounded, went up on deck.

The Orphan, very anxious to have another look round, followed him to the superstructure deck, and there he left him talking to a white-haired naval Captain in khaki—the Beach-master of "V" beach—and a big, burly, red-faced man, in very much stained khaki, with Commander's shoulder-straps. This was Commander Unwin, who had won the Victoria Cross the day before.

The midshipman went for'ard to where some army officers and signalmen were standing watching the shore. From there he saw the foc's'le, the maxims, and the sand-bags behind which he had crouched. He could not see the lighters and pontoons because they were hidden by the fo'c'sle, but right in front of him was the great mediæval castle of Sedd-el-Bahr, with its bastion towers—one of which he had just seen demolished—its curtain-walls, and arched gateway at which he had fired that maxim. Farther to the right, the height of the walls decreased as they jutted out into the Straits; they were much battered about, and, in several places, huge breaches had been blown in them by the ships' guns. Fallen masonry sloped down from these breaches into the sea itself. Scrambling along the rocks below the walls, and wading through the shallow water round the masses of fallen masonry, he saw many of our soldiers. Officers were evidently forming them up below the breaches; men were crawling up these slopes and kneeling down in front of barbed-wire entanglements, which he could plainly see across the top of one breach; somewhere close by a maxim spluttered, and a few single shots—whether English or Turkish he did not know—rang out. The *Albion's* shells were now bursting some way in rear of these breaches.

Close to the water's edge, sheltered by some rocks, a dark-blue army signal-

flag began waving to and fro. The Orphan could "take in" Morse, and spelt out "R-E-A-D-Y T-O A-D-V-A-N-C-E". He heard one of the signallers standing behind him repeat this, and a tired, weary voice called out: "Signal to the *Albion* to cease fire." He heard the rustle of the Morse flag signalling to the ship; a minute later the signaller called out: "They've taken it in, sir."

The weary voice sang out again, in the most matter-of-fact way: "Tell Colonel Doughty-Wylie to carry on the advance—as arranged;" and, fearfully excited, he heard the blue flag behind him whipping backwards and forwards, and saw the blue flag on shore answering.

Then men seemed to appear in hundreds; they swarmed at the feet of those breaches, and began dodging and climbing up them. Rifle-fire burst out, maxims rattled, and the Orphan held his breath to watch what was happening; but then he was pulled away, and Dr. O'Neill, savage with rage, ordered him back to the boat. "I've been looking for you everywhere; now's our chance to get away to the hospital ship." So, very reluctantly, he went back to the launch.

As he and Dr. O'Neill were going down the ladder, at the foot of which they had spent most of such an exciting night, a big man, his face wrapped in bandages, rushed down after them, and wanted to know if it was necessary for him to go off to a hospital ship. His tunic was soaked in blood.

"I feel all right; I don't want to go," he said.

"Take off those bandages," Dr. O'Neill snapped, and he rapidly unwound them.

Dr. O'Neill sniffed.

"It's my nose, I think, sir."

"Hang it, man! you've not got a wound anywhere. Who was the fool who wrapped you up like that and sent you back?"

"One of the ambulance men. Can I go back?"

"Of course you can. Get out of it!" and, intensely relieved, the man, a magnificently built sapper of the West Riding Field Company, darted up the ladder on his way ashore.

"That comes of having half-trained idiots," Dr. O'Neill snapped, as he went down into the launch. "A stone thrown up by a bullet must have hit his nose and made it bleed. He looked confoundedly pleased to get another chance of being killed—the fool. Shove off? Of course you can! D'you think I want to stay here all day? Tell the steamboat to take us to the hospital ship."

So off they went with their wounded, and as the boats cleared the stern of the *River Clyde*, and the high cliffs came into view, a sniper up there sent a last bullet pinging over them. He did not fire again, and in a couple of minutes or so they were out of range, and being towed towards the crowds of ships of all sorts which were lying off the end of the Peninsula; the noise of the rifle-firing

gradually fading away as they left it behind.

It was a perfectly glorious morning—about six o'clock—and the Orphan was fearfully hungry—too excited still to feel sleepy. As they were towed across the bows of the *Cornwallis*, she saw the wounded lying in the launch, and waited for them to pass before firing her fore turret again—she was shelling Achi Baba. In twenty minutes the steamboat towed the launch alongside the hospital ship *Sicilia*, and left her there.

Dr. O'Neill scrambled up the ladder, and told the Orphan he could come too. "We may get a cup of coffee," he said, less harshly than usual.

After the scenes they had just left, the *Sicilia* was so quiet and peaceful that when they were taken into her saloon, trod on the thick carpet, and sank on soft, plush-covered settees, the Orphan fell asleep, even before his cup of coffee was brought.

It was after half-past eight when the launch, now emptied, reached the *Achates*. The Sub was on watch. "You won't be wanted until the afternoon; go and have a bath, something to eat, and turn into my bunk," he said.

Down in the gun-room Uncle Podger, the Pimple, Rawlinson, and the China Doll were just finishing breakfast. They all shouted questions at him, and he was also talking and answering them when the Sub came down and cleared them all out.

"Leave him alone!" he roared angrily. "Let him have his food in peace and turn in; he hasn't had any sleep for forty-eight hours."

"I had a bit last night," the Orphan expostulated; he rather wanted to tell them about firing the maxim.

"Do as I tell you."

"Are things going on all right?" he ventured to ask.

"I don't know," growled the Sub. "Go on with your breakfast."

CHAPTER XI
The Beach Party

We must now follow the adventures of the Pink Rat, Bubbles, the Lamp-post, and the fifty men of their beach party whom we had left being towed across to the *Newmarket* on Saturday night.

On board her had embarked details of Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps, and a weak company of the "Anson" Battalion, Royal Naval Division; also a Commander (from another ship) who took charge of the beach party, and a naval Captain to take charge of "W" beach—to act as Beach-master there—as soon as the landing commenced.

This little steamer slowly steamed across from Tenedos Island during Saturday night, and on Sunday, at daybreak, anchored about twelve hundred yards from "W" beach, just as the first of the Lancashires jumped out of their boats on to the shore. Almost immediately afterwards, stray bullets began to whistle over her or splash in the water round her.

The three midshipmen, almost too excited to notice these, stood with their hands shading the sun from their eyes, trying to pierce the cloud of smoke and haze over "W" beach and see what was happening beneath it.

The *Swiftsure*, quite close to them, fired her 7.5-inch guns very rapidly, and they were spectators of a most beautiful bit of gunnery work. This ship had already cleared the Turks away from the trenches running along the edges of the lower cliffs, on the left of "W" beach, and had driven them over the ridge above; now she began bursting shells on the higher cliffs, to the right of the beach, and as the smoke cloud melted and gave her a clear view of them and the little groups of Lancashires forming up beneath them, her shells, which had been searching those cliffs in a blind, indeterminate way, began bursting with the most marvellous accuracy, first in the galleries the Turks had cut in the cliff face, and when these were cleared, in the trenches above. Shells from the *Achates* helped her; but the *Swiftsure* was within shorter range and could enfilade them, so that most of the credit of stopping the murderous fire of rifles, maxims, and nordenfeldts from this position, and of driving the Turks away, is due to her. This made it possible for the Lancashires, who had already gained possession of the top of the low cliffs to the left, to press on across the head of the gully, and for those still on the beach to advance up it.

As they advanced, the three tongue-tied midshipmen could see them plainly, and as they gained ground, so did those shells drop farther along, always some fifty or seventy yards in front of them. It was grand and most efficient gunnery, a remarkably fine example of the co-operation of supporting guns and advancing troops. To realize this thoroughly, you must put yourself in the place of the men who were actually firing her guns, and who, looking through their telescopic sights, could actually see the Lancashires in the lower half of the field of vision. The slightest unsteadiness, the lowering of a sight by a hair's-breadth, at the moment when they pressed their triggers, would have sent a 200-lb. lyddite shell to burst right among them. If there had been the slightest roll on the ship this feat would have been impossible, but, as you know, the sea was absolutely

calm.

All the three midshipmen could do was to gaze, open-mouthed, and burst out with excited "Oh's!" and "Look at that one!" "Look at them there—up there; those are our fellows!" "There's another shell, just in front of them! Isn't that grand!"

Then the emptied transports' boats were towed alongside by the Orphan, and down into them they and their beach party had to scramble. The boat in which they found themselves had a pool of blood in her stern-sheets, and the thwarts and gunwales were smeared with it. They were too excited to pay any attention to this, because bullets were flying round the *Newmarket* pretty thickly at that time, and they had to shove off as quickly as possible, being towed inshore with the *Swiftsure's* shells passing over their heads.

This beach party was actually the second unit to land, and Bubbles said afterwards that it was exactly ten minutes past six when he scrambled out on to a large boulder, and found himself at last in the enemy's country. As a matter of fact, his watch must have been nearly twenty minutes slow.

They landed, without casualties, among the rocks and under the low cliffs to the left of the sandy stretch of "W" beach, the calmness of the sea enabling the boats to run alongside, and shove themselves between the boulders scattered there, without damage. This place was hardly exposed to fire, and the whole of the beach party scrambled ashore and reached the foot of the low cliffs without loss.

Here they were met by a Staff officer, who ordered the Commander in charge of them to scale the cliff and occupy the trenches along the top.

The men had brought their rifles; were extremely pleased at the prospect of getting a shot at the Turks, and climbed up eagerly, throwing themselves into a broad, shallow trench running along the top. They waited for a few stragglers and for the men of the "Anson" Battalion, and then the little party of perhaps a hundred and fifty men trotted up the slope and towards the right, passing across one or two communication trenches, many craters made by the ships' shells, and one or two dead Lancashires. No one was hit in this little "jaunt", although many bullets were flying past. At last they were told to lie down in a trench—a deeper one—and remain there.

It was interesting to see the different behaviour of the three midshipmen. Bubbles, big and burly, bustled along with his elbows bent, his head thrown back, a laugh on his face, and his mouth wide open as usual, his red face perspiring and the collar of his tunic unbuttoned, charging through the little scrub bushes and running straight, never looking behind. The Pink Rat, with his eyes bulging out of his head, dodged and stooped, and set his teeth, very obviously conscious of the bullets; whilst the Lamp-post trotted along, swinging his long legs, and

looking as little discomposed as if he was at some silly manoeuvres—possibly he was setting the noise of the bullets and the ships' shells to music. He was the only one of the three who looked back, at all, to see how the men were coming along, and to keep his section in something like order, preventing them from bunching together—as sailors always will—and steadying those who wanted to run too fast.

Once in this trench, the Pink Rat was sent along to make the men spread out and take cover properly, for again they were "bunching". The "Ansons", though they were mostly sailors, had had six months' military training, and so did not want telling what to do.

Next to where Bubbles sprawled, panting and blowing, was a bluejacket who, even at this time, had begun collecting "curios", and now showed with pride a Turkish bayonet and a trenching tool which he had picked up on his way. "If I'd left 'em there," he told Bubbles, "I'd 'ave never seed them again."

From the moment he had commenced to scramble up the low cliffs and then to trot along the slope above them, Bubbles had been entirely oblivious of anything except pushing on and saving his breath, but now he was able to look about him and see what was happening.

The trench in which he knelt ran almost at right angles to the sea and the cliff they had just climbed, and whilst the lower portion dipped into the gully which led down to the sandy portion of "W" beach, the upper part reached the sky-line formed by the ridge which extended from the end of the Peninsula, parallel to the sea, above the cliffs.

He, Bubbles, was almost in the middle of the trench, with most of the beach party lower down, and the "Ansons" above him. Looking along it and up the slope, he saw that the sky-line was, here and there, dotted by soldiers lying prone, and apparently firing inland. Straight in front of him the ground sloped a little downwards to the gully, to the ruins of a little house—a farm-building, perhaps—and then gradually rose again, rising with the higher cliffs beyond "W" beach, till it reached the spot where the white lighthouse buildings of Cape Helles stood very conspicuously. There it made another sky-line, perhaps eight hundred yards away from Bubbles, joining up with the sky-line of the ridge on his left. Behind, where these two sky-lines met, was a small eminence, and through his glasses he could see the barbed-wire which surrounded it. This was Hill 138, still strongly held by the Turks, and had to be taken before "W" beach could be used in comfort. Looking downwards to the right—where the gully sloped to the sea—a strip of "W" beach showed at the foot of the steep cliffs facing him there, with the galleries and the trenches along the upper edge, from which the *Swiftsure's* lyddite and the shells from the *Achates* had driven the Turks only three-quarters of an hour ago.

The green slopes were brown with a maze and network of trenches, rifle-pits, and shell craters; and beyond these the Lancashire Fusiliers still advanced towards the lighthouse—pressing forward by rushes of little groups; men running a few yards, throwing themselves down among the bushes, and firing; springing up and advancing again. When Bubbles saw a man fall, he could not know whether he was hit—so naturally did he fall—unless the line of scattered khaki figures went on and left him lying there. The *Swiftsure's* shells screeching over the trench in which Bubbles knelt, burst continually just in front of them. Firing was very brisk at this time, both on the ridge to his left and also from the skyline near the lighthouse, and the crackling of musketry and the angry swish of bullets over the trench were almost continuous—minor noises among the deep, thundering bellow of the ships' guns and the rush of their shells. The Pink Rat came along the trench, stooping well down.

"What's going on? What are we supposed to be doing?" Bubbles asked as he stopped for a moment.

"Doing support to the firing-line," he squeaked, and hurried along with a message for the "Ansons".

Left to himself again, Bubbles looked out across the blue waters of the Straits to the Asiatic shore and its high mountains fading away in the distance. The reddish ridge showing on the Asiatic shore was Kum Kali fort, and under it the French fleet was hammering away at the shore, the most conspicuous ships being the *Jeanne d'Arc*, with her six funnels, and the curiously shaped *Henri IV*. Not far from them was the lighter grey of the Russian *Askold* and her five tall, thin funnels, lighted by continuous flashes from her guns—the "Packet of Woodbines" the sailors called her. Farther away lay the big Messageries Maritimes transports, the huge *La Provence*, and rows of boats being towed inshore. Destroyers and French torpedo-boats dashed about; the whole surface of the sea was a mass of ships—one solitary white-painted hospital ship among them; and away beyond the lighthouse on Cape Helles—far up the Straits—Bubbles could hear the heavy guns of the *Lord Nelson* and *Agamemnon*, and the 6-inch salvoes of the *Queen Elizabeth*. He could not see these ships because the cliffs hid them from sight.

Firing died down, and the Lamp-post came sauntering along, looking bored, and sat down beside him, with his long, thin legs drawn up, resting his chin on his knees. "Those are the Plains of Troy," he said, pointing across the Straits to the belt of green pastures lying behind Kum Kali fort. "We should be able to see the ruins of Troy itself," and he got out his glasses, and looked disappointed when he failed to find them.

Bubbles watched him with amusement. "Go it, old Lampy, keep your head in the clouds, and get a bullet in it! Who wants to see your silly old Troy! let's

have some grub. I'm terribly hungry."

They pulled some stale sandwiches from their haversacks, and commenced munching them contentedly.

"I'm jolly glad I'm not the Orphan—out there," said Bubbles, talking with his mouth full, and waving a half-eaten sandwich across beyond "W" beach—"pegging away in his old steam bus. I wouldn't be him for anything."

"Jolly hard luck on Rawlins to be left in the ship," added the Lamp-post.

"Hello! there's a chap badly knocked about—look—dragging himself towards us through the grass!" The Lamp-post had "spotted" him about a hundred yards away from the trench.

"Let's go and give him a hand," suggested Bubbles.

"Right oh!" said the Lamp-post, pushing his field-glasses back into their case, and together these two midshipmen stepped out of the trench and walked towards the man. Only a few stray bullets were coming along just then. "Hullo! What's up?" they asked the soldier when they reached him.

"Got me in the knee," he said—his face ghastly white—as he turned over on his back, with one leg helpless and that trouser-leg soaked in blood.

The Lamp-post knew all about "First Aid"—there were not many things he did not know something about—and the two midshipmen, kneeling down beside him, lashed his two legs together with his puttees, and began to carry him back.

On the way the Lamp-post stumbled once, and the wounded man let out a groan: "For God's sake be careful!"—but they got him into the trench and laid him down. Then the Lamp-post crumpled up. "Something gave me an awful whack when I stumbled," he said; "I believe I'm hit," and put his hand to his side.

Bubbles, frightened, made him lie down, and examined him. "There's no blood outside—I can't find any—oh! but look here!" and he lifted up the field-glass case. It had a slanting hole right across it, and when he wrenched out the glasses themselves, the "joining" piece had a ragged notch in it, and a small piece of torn white metal had been caught in it.

"My aunt! Old chap, that's a bit of nickel casing—a bullet hit it—you *are* a lucky chap! If you hadn't put those glasses away you'd have been a 'deader'."

The two snotties examined the field-glasses eagerly, and passed them to the men close by. They all looked at the Lamp-post as if they envied him very much, and Bubbles kept on gurgling: "You are a lucky chap, Lampy!"

They hunted to see if there was a bruise under the Lamp-post's shirt, and were disappointed when they found none.

"It feels jolly sore," the Lamp-post said as he felt the place.

"There'll sure to be a bruise to-morrow," Bubbles gurgled excitedly; "you *are* a lucky beggar."

By this time the stretcher-parties were already out, and they handed over

their wounded "knee" man to some of them. The others went up past the trench towards the firing-line, searching the grass and bushes. The two snotties watched them moving about. They would go across to a bush, stoop down, and Bubbles and the Lamp-post would know that a man was lying hidden there. If someone sat up between them, or they put down and opened out their stretcher, they knew they had found a wounded man. If nothing happened, and they went on with their stretcher, still folded, they knew that it was a dead man who was lying there.

More soldiers now began coming up the gully, extending in long lines as they debouched at the top of it. They turned to the left, coming over the trench, and marching up to the slope behind and to the left. A bluejacket shouted out: "Who are you, matey?" "Essex!" they called back as they scrambled past, panting beneath their heavy packs. A youthful subaltern, struggling under the weight of his, stopped a moment to get Bubbles and the Lamp-post to hold it up, whilst he pulled the webbing-straps more tightly.

"Thanks! that's better," and off he went.

"Good luck!" they sang out after him.

Almost directly after this, the order came for the "Ansons" and the beach party to fall back to the beach. "That finishes soldiering; now we've got to be labourers," the men grumbled as they straggled down the gully, helping any wounded they met on the way.

And now they saw that horrible line of dead, lying at the water's edge, with the sea lapping round their legs and bodies, and the men hanging over the rows of barbed wire.

"It's rotten. It spoils all the fun," said the Lamp-post, as he stepped across the body of a very finely-made man lying face downwards in the sand, one hand still gripping his rifle, and the fingers of the other still dug into the sand. "Look at those bits of firewood in the straps of his pack. Poor chap! He'll never want them to cook his food with. It's rather rotten, isn't it?"

"Don't be an ass," Bubbles said comfortingly. He wasn't much of a philosopher, and these sights did not affect him.

It was now about half-past nine, and by this time a large number of boats, full of stores, had wedged themselves among the rocks—farther along, where the beach party had landed—and the crews were throwing them out, shoving off, and going back for more. Army Service Corps men were already taking charge of them and taking them higher up the beach; the Sappers were already busy building a pier with casks and pontoons; and among all this hustle and bustle, the wounded sat or lay huddled up against the foot of the cliffs, waiting whilst the army doctors went from one to the other. The first thing that the Lamp-post and Bubbles had to do was to drive six stakes into the beach whilst six buoys were

being moored, some sixty yards out, in the sea, and then stretch hawsers from each stake to its opposite buoy—as you have read before. That took a good hour, and when the big lighters came hauling themselves into these rope "gangways" they and their men had to unload them.

Whenever there was not a boat to unload, there were wounded men to carry down to the empty boats. They were not idle for a moment, and all the time stray bullets were falling on the beach and occasionally wounding some of the men there. One of the Lamp-post's "section" got a bullet in his side and had to be sent off to the *Achates*, but no other of the beach party was hit that day. However, they were all much too busy to worry about, or even notice, these bullets, and never had a "stand easy" until about two o'clock, when they watched the shells from the *Albion* and *Cornwallis* bursting round Hill 138, beyond the lighthouse ridge, and listened to the *Swiftsure's* shells screaming overhead again to burst in front of the advancing Worcesters. They hastily munched a bit of biscuit and tore off a bit of bully beef, had a pull at their nearly empty water-bottles; but more lighters coming in, crammed with stores, they went on with their work. Much heavy firing went on, stray bullets flipped about in all directions, and by half-past three they heard that the Worcesters had captured the hill; and, half an hour later still, had to help the wounded who streamed back down the gully from that gallant little assault.

The Orphan brought them in a barricoe of water about this time, but that the wounded drank. Fortunately, a water lighter was brought ashore and beached shortly afterwards, and the Sappers pumped the water into a canvas tank they set up at the water's edge, so they didn't really want for long. It was rather unpleasant to go and get it, because you had to pass along and step across those dead men lying there. There was no time to move these, and they lay where they had fallen, when scrambling out of the boats, all that day and all the night, until next morning.

After the Worcesters captured Hill 138, there was very little firing for some time. Later on, before sunset, the beach party had the joy of helping to run two field-guns out of horse-boats, and helped to haul them up the gully with hook-ropes—hauling them almost as high as the trench they had occupied in the early morning, then hurrying back for their limbers.

"What a thing to remember!" the Lamp-post said, patting the tarpaulin-covered gun, and panting with the exertion of hauling it up the steep gully. "Fancy helping with the very first gun to land!"

Dusk came, and night fell grey and calm. Flares—oil flares, the same as those one sees over a green-grocer's barrow, in a market, at home—were lighted and placed along the beach. No one had a "stand easy".

"What have you got?" would be shouted as a loaded boat crept in through

the dark. "Come over this way—haul on that rope under your bows—that's better—there's room here."

Perhaps they were Ordnance stores or Army Service stores—each had to be kept apart—the coloured stripes on the boxes would be scanned by the light of a lantern or of the flares. The bluejackets hoisted them on to the shore, and placed them in separate heaps for the soldier working-parties to take away to their proper "depots", already formed, one on one side of the gully, the other on the other side. Hour after hour this work went on; the men commenced to realize that they were almost "played out", and, without thinking, would throw themselves down and rest whenever there was the chance. Rifle-fire grew as the night went on, and wounded came back with stories of strong Turkish counter-attacks on the ridge beyond the cliffs. If they had had time to notice it they would have heard one continuous splutter of musketry, but they were too tired to do anything except go on working mechanically.

At about midnight things became serious. Several men on the beach had been hit by stray bullets, and word was passed round to put out all the flares; news came that the troops up above were exhausted and running short of ammunition, and eventually the order ran along the beach: "Everyone with a rifle to fall in!"

The bluejacket beach party dropped their boxes and groped for their rifles, fell in, and were marched by the Lamp-post and Bubbles up the gully again. The Pink Rat dashed about carrying orders from the Commander and the Beach-master.

Those who had no rifles were told to get hold of ammunition-boxes and find their way up to the firing-line. The position was really serious at this time, though Bubbles and the Lamp-post were much too stupefied with fatigue to realize this.

Once up at the top of the gully, someone gave the order to turn to the left, and led the beach party up the slope. Things were evidently pretty lively; the air seemed alive with bullets, and the ridge was outlined by spurts of flame. They came to a trench running parallel with, and below, this ridge, and were told to lie down in it. "Line out, men! You may be wanted to reinforce the firing-trench in front. Don't fire unless you get the order," and the officer, whoever he was, disappeared in the dark, leaving Bubbles and the Lamp-post—now thoroughly awake—to spread their men along the trench. Some of their friends—the Ansons—joined them, and presently the Beach-master, the Commander, and the Pink Rat found them too.

For an hour they lay there doing nothing, Bubbles and the Lamp-post lying flat on their stomachs, next to a Staff officer at a telephone, who told them from time to time how things were "going". They both hoped that the front trench *would* require reinforcing.

Then they were taken out of that trench, and brought back to one still farther in the rear—almost on the edge of the cliffs. The men, losing interest, coiled up and went to sleep.

Some time afterwards there were calls for "volunteers to carry up ammunition"—the firing-line was "shrieking" for more cartridges.

"Let's go!" the Lamp-post suggested. "We're not doing any good here; we can carry boxes all right."

They found the Commander, who gave them leave. "Be careful," he said; "and you're not to stop up there."

They scrambled to their right, to the foot of the gully, and found the stacked ammunition-boxes by marking the line of men who came from them carrying boxes on their shoulders.

They seized a box between them. A small man—it was the Beach-master's servant—was trying to lift one on his shoulder. The three of them took the two between them—Bubbles gripping a loop of each box—and together they "lugged" them up the gully.

At the top stood someone shouting out: "You go straight on along the edge of the cliff.—Keep along the Turks' trench there, as far as you can go; that'll take you right.—You go straight up the slope, away from the sea.—You get along to the left, as far as you can go—keep going uphill."

As the Lamp-post, Bubbles, and the little servant came panting up, he sent them along the edge of the cliff, in the lighthouse direction. "Hurry along!" he called after them. "Keep along the trench."

Off they went as fast as they could; an ill-assorted trio, for the Lamp-post's long legs and the servant's short ones did not keep step. The little man panted in the rear, but kept on bravely; Bubbles's two hands soon began to be cramped.

They found the trench and followed it. The night was almost pitch-dark; but the rifle-firing ahead, to the left of them, gave an unsteady light, just sufficient for them to see the dark line of the trench. On their right, the cool wind blew gently up from the sea and the edge of the cliffs; it seemed to be humming with bullets. People kept meeting them—appearing out of the darkness, bumping into them, and disappearing; all had the same cry—"Hurry up!" as they dashed down for more ammunition.

"How much farther?" Bubbles, whose hands were so cramped that he could not now feel his fingers, called to a passing soldier.

"A hundred yards," the man shouted as he ran past.

The Lamp-post caught his foot in something and fell; the box of ammunition fell out of Bubbles's cramped fingers—fell on something soft—a dead man. The Lamp-post jumped up, seized the box, hoisted it on his shoulder, and disappeared ahead; Bubbles and the servant followed with the other.

[image]

"THE LAMP-POST JUMPED UP, SEIZED THE BOX, HOISTED IT ON HIS SHOULDER, AND DISAPPEARED AHEAD"

They were very near the front trench now; the whole ridge near the lighthouse and to the left of them was almost continuously outlined by the flashes of incessant musketry.

Bubbles panted—his ear-drums were splitting—the little servant was catching his breath with half-frightened gulps. Then they cannoned against a bend in the trench, and were going on, when a gruff voice sang out: "Put it down here! Keep your heads down, damn you! Cut away back for more!"

The Lamp-post joined them, breathing hard, and together, empty-handed, they ran back as fast as the narrowness of the trench and the darkness would allow them; the noise of the bullets coming along from behind, and pinging round their ears, making them go faster.

Those two field-guns began firing just about then, lighting up the whole place with the glare of their flash, so that they could see, every time they fired, the trench in front of them, and the "drawn" faces of the men coming along it with more ammunition-boxes.

The noise of these guns and their bursting shrapnel was most comforting. They realized then why it is that soldiers so love the sound of supporting guns.

They regained the gully, dashed down it, and got hold of more ammunition. Each of the midshipmen put a box on his shoulder this time, and left the little servant to bring up a case by himself as best he could. On their way along the trench, at a place where it was deep and narrow, they had to push past two men crouching together.

"What's the matter? What are you doing?" they asked, taking a breather.

"We're wounded," they answered in a dull, stupid way.

"Can you walk?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't block up the place. Get away back to the beach."

When they returned, these two were still there.

The Lamp-post had tripped over their feet and their rifles, and they blocked the trench.

"Where are you wounded?" he asked savagely.

"In the arm," one said, holding his right arm; the other growled sullenly that he'd been hit in the shoulder.

Like lightning the Lamp-post pulled up the man's sleeve and his shirt-sleeve, and ran his fingers up the arm. He tore open the other man's tunic, and passed his hand under his shirt and over his shoulder—felt nothing—felt no blood on his hands—looked at them as a field-gun flashed, and found none.

"Get out of it!" he yelled at them. "You're neither of you touched."

"We ain't 'ad nothink to eat since last night," one of them whined.

"Get out of it!" the Lamp-post kept yelling. "Go back to your regiment," and losing his temper completely, as the two men never attempted to move, struck one in the face—hard; but he was so absolutely cowed and exhausted that he only uttered a pitiful moan, and sunk a little farther down in the trench.

"If you are here when I come back," the Lamp-post hissed, "I'll shoot the two of you!" and the two snotties doubled back for more ammunition, passing the little servant staggering along under his load. "I'm all right, sir!" he gasped as they passed along the trench. When they did come back for the third time, those two men had disappeared, they never knew where. They were the only panic-stricken men they saw that day or night.

On their third return journey the volume of fire was appreciably lessening, and they brought back word that no more ammunition was wanted in that direction. They were sent back to the beach party, and wandered about for a long time on the exposed slope above the gully until they stumbled across them, and reported themselves to the Commander. "We took up six cases between us, and the Captain's servant—that little chap—took up two at least." Then they flung themselves down beside their friend with the telephone, who told them that "all was gay".

Most of the men in that trench were sound asleep, and the two tired snotties would have fallen asleep too, had not the Pink Rat glided along the trench to ask them where they'd been and what they'd done.

"I should have loved it," he kept on saying, "only the Commander wouldn't let me go."

They did not altogether believe him.

Rifle-firing had now dwindled to an occasional shot from some nervous rifle. The Turks by this time had given up any idea of pushing our people back into the sea, and only the two field-guns kept up a monotonous barking all night through.

Just before dawn the beach party was withdrawn, and staggered down to "W" beach to commence another day's work; and, later on, Bubbles overheard one horny A.B. explain to a fat A.S.C. sergeant: "If those soldier chaps 'ad given way a bit, us chaps would 'ave 'ad a chawnce; but they 'eld on—the silly blighters!"

That beach party, ever afterwards, had a grievance.

Before the men "set to" again, they were given a little time to get food. Then they started to unload more stores. Stores simply poured ashore: clumsy bulky things like water-carts—more guns—two 60-pounder "heavy" guns and their limbers (these were placed in position behind the ridge, almost at the end of the Peninsula)—reels of telephone cable—tents for stores—hundreds and hundreds of boxes of ammunition—balks of timber for piers.

Horses began to arrive—big fellows for the heavy guns—Clydesdales perhaps—great lovable fellows with a roguish eye for the beach, which made the sailors love them all the more. These last they handled as no one else in the world can handle them. Give a bluejacket anything on four feet, from an elephant to a pig, and he'll get it ashore all right. They've got "a way with them", and can coax a nervous horse or an obstinate mule better than anyone else—or think they can, which is more than half the battle. Perhaps the whole secret lies in the fact that they are so accustomed to shifting heavy weights that, if a beast resists all their blandishments, they know that hauling on to a rope passed round their "sterns" will work the oracle.

Luckily, by the time they reached the shore in horse-boats, these poor, patient creatures had gone through so many extraordinary experiences that they did not worry much what happened to them. It was grand to see their pleasure when they felt firm ground once more under their feet and, when they were taken up the gully, saw grass growing once again. Mules came—mules in hundreds; but nobody can be really fond of a mule—not in a passing acquaintance, anyway.

The Sappers made great headway with their pier of trestles, casks, and planks—No. 3 Pier—some way to the east of the pontoons they had placed in position, the day before, and called No. 2 Pier. They also discovered a freshwater spring at the foot of the cliffs, about two hundred yards beyond "W" beach. The discovery of this seems now a little matter, hardly worth recording; but quite possibly it was the most important event of the twenty-four hours.

That day, also, the few Turkish prisoners who had been captured, unwounded, set to work with a will to build a small breakwater, which eventually became the base of No. 1 Pier.

The "Howe" Battalion, R.N.D., also began making roadways.

Work for the beach party became slacker towards night, not because there was less to do, but because the men were absolutely "played out". Officers and men had a regular "stand off", after dark, and a proper meal. They also had time to peg off the site for the naval camp with ropes, just below the Ordnance Store Depots, and to lay down some strips of canvas on the sandy ground. They were also put in two "watches", half of them working for four hours, and the other half working for the next four, and so on.

Bubbles, who had the first watch "off", crept under his bit of canvas and

fell asleep in a "brace of shakes", whilst the Lamp-post stalked back to the beach with his own section of men, and went on working. If it had been light enough to see that young officer's face, you would have noticed that his eyes seemed to have sunk back into his head, and that he kept on biting his lips to keep himself awake.

CHAPTER XII
Off Cape Helles

The movements of the transports, store ships, and auxiliaries of all kinds were controlled from the *Achates*, and to cope with this work additional officers had been attached to her. An Admiral hoisted his flag in her, and brought his Staff, including two Assistant Clerks; three Captains joined as Naval Transport Officers—"N.T.O.'s"—and round her gangways hovered, night and day, a restless crowd of steamboats, picket-boats, and pinnaces—lent for various purposes from other ships. Each of these steamboats had its midshipman—some of them two, working watch and watch, twenty-four hours "on", and twenty-four hours "off" duty—with the result that the Honourable Mess was completely overrun with strangers.

With the Pink Rat, the Lamp-post, and Bubbles away *all* the time, the Orphan, the Hun, and Rawlins—who relieved these, two in turn—away *most* of the time, and the Pimple spending most of his days and a good many of his nights visiting transports with the Navigator, when that officer went away to anchor them in their proper places, there was practically no one left except Uncle Podger, the China Doll, and the Sub. Now the Sub was in charge of all steamboats; it was his duty to hoist them out of the water when they required repairs, to get the repairs carried out as quickly as possible, and then hoist them into the water again. He also was in charge of all the coaling and watering of these boats. These duties kept him so constantly employed that he very seldom spent much time in the gun-room. In fact, Barnes generally left something in his cabin for him to eat, whenever the opportunity permitted.

Of all the Honourable Mess, practically only Uncle Podger and the China Doll remained and came to meals as before. The result was that, twenty-four hours after the *Achates* had anchored off "W" beach, the mess groaned under the weight of the Barbarians, and the Midianites, in the guise of tired, hungry snotties from other ships, and the Admiral's two Assistant Clerks had descended, pretty

completely, on the fruitful land of her gun-room. They crowded down into it in their Condy's-fluid-stained "ducks"; they lay on the cushions and slept; lay in the one easy-chair and slept; came in at all hours of the day and night, demanding food, and drove the patient Barnes and the little messman nearly off their heads.

The miserable little rat of a messman, thoughtless of the morrow, and eager to turn an honest penny just as quickly as he could, produced all the stores he had laid in at Portsmouth and again at Malta—stores which had been intended to delight the stomachs of the Honourable Mess for many "moons": tins of dainty biscuits, cakes, boxes of chocolate and preserved fruit, bottles of anchovies, jars of bloater and anchovy paste, jars of Oxford marmalade, and tins of Oxford sausages and of tongue—and many other rare delicacies, impossible now to replace; and this insatiable crowd of sojourners realized, like one man, that though their work was hard and the hours long, their feet were indeed cast in fruitful and pleasing places. Now the Pimple and the China Doll worshipped their stomachs with an unswerving devotion, unalloyed by the pangs of indigestion, so watched these intruders working havoc among the gun-room stores with feelings of keen agony. They realized, only too well, the barrenness which would soon fall to their lot, and they implored the Sub to stop these devastating demands on luxuries and "extras" before it was too late. Worst blow of all: that one last barrel of beer wouldn't drip another drop, however hard you blew down the vent.

But the Sub was so seldom in the gun-room that he did not, for the first few days, realize the impending danger. It was on the third day, just as he had received an imploring, urgent order from the Commander, "to hoist in the General's picket-boat and hack away a coil of rope which had wrapped itself round the screw and shaft, and get her into the water again as quickly as ever he could", that he was waylaid by these two young gentlemen, who rushed to him with anxious faces. "Can't something be done? It's simply awful! One of the *Lord Nelson's* snotties has just had his second box—his second box to-day—of those "chocs" with walnuts on the top!"

They ran back much faster than they came; but that very day the Sub had the whole tragedy brought vividly before him, when, later on, going down to his cabin for a cup of tea, and feeling he wanted something "tasty", he ordered a pot of anchovy paste.

Barnes came back with a long face. "That 'ere rat of a messman, 'e's been and gone and let all of 'em strange young gen'l'men 'ave all the han-chovy, sir. 'E ain't got none left, sir, but 'e 'as just one pot of chicken-and-'am what's gone an' got a bit mouldy. There won't be 'ardly nothink left of nothink, what with them strange young gen'l'men, and the young gen'l'men what's gone with the beach parties a-sending off chits for this and chits for that, as if this 'ere ship was a Lipton's store-shop."

"It's just as bad along in the canteen, for'ard, sir," he added dolefully; "beach parties and all of these stranger boats' crews, they've just been and gone and raided it, that they 'ave; nothink there now, scarcely, but penny bottles of Worcester sauce and tins of blackin'. It ain't 'ardly fair; no, nor it isn't."

Even Uncle Podger thought things were going too far when one day a midshipman from one of these ships ordered four tins of Oxford sausages to be sent down to his boat's crew.

"It may be very pretty to watch," he said, finding the Sub in his cabin, "but it's rotten bad luck on us."

The Sub was worried. "You see, it's like this," he answered; "they're rather like guests, and we can't be rude to them. But I'll write out a notice which won't hurt their feelings, and may be some good; we'll stick it on the notice board."

He wrote out several; he didn't like any of them, and tore them up, saying: "We can't be rude, can we?" And then, getting impatient, tore up the last, and burst out with: "Well, let the blessed things go, and don't let's worry, Uncle, old chap! You and I aren't particular."

So things took their course unchecked, till the messman, at the end of ten days or so, announced to the rapacious throng, and the miserable Pimple and China Doll, that he had nothing left in his private store except one bottle of pickles and a bottle of Eno's fruit salt. Even that pot of mouldy "chicken-and-ham" had been "taken up".

It is certain that if the Pimple or the China Doll were asked, now, what went on during the days following the landing of "The Great Adventure", and what struck them most forcibly, both of them would tell of the snotty who had eaten two boxes of "walnut chocolates" in one day—the two last boxes in the messman's store.

The China Doll would also recount days of unaccustomed toil, when he was attached to one of the Naval Transport Officers as Clerk, and had to copy out sailing orders and check lists of arrivals and sailings of ships; work which frequently interfered with his great delight of climbing to the main-top, and looking through the range-finder there (against all orders, it may be said) at the shells bursting on the slopes of Achi Baba and among the windmills and houses of the village of Krithia. For the first few days he had felt very proud of his new job, carried a big correspondence book about with him, and felt himself as important as those very important young officers, the Admiral's Assistant Clerks; but as the days wore on, it became monotonous and irksome. The Captain whom he thus "assisted" was none too gentle with his mistakes—which were many—and he wished that the old days would return, when he had nothing to do but sit on the office stool in front of a ship's ledger, and kick his feet against the bulkhead until Uncle Podger told him to clear out of it. If only he kicked that bulkhead hard enough and often

enough, Uncle Podger would never keep him long. It had been such a pleasant kind of a life, and in those days he had only to run into the gun-room and make some cheeky remark, to be rolled on the deck and be ragged; but even that was finished; the gun-room was no longer like home nowadays, for the snotties were mostly strangers, who took no notice of him if they were awake; and even if the Orphan, Rawlins, or the Hun happened to be there, they were much too tired to skylark. With the Pimple, who was more often available, he did not like skylarking, for the Pimple generally hurt him—intentionally.

So, what with one thing and another, the China Doll was not entirely happy whilst he copied out these "silly" orders, and guns thudded from the ships all round him—guns whose shells he could not always run up on deck to see burst.

There was so much to see, and it was so irritating to come out all this way to the Dardanelles, and then to find that he had to stick in a stupid office just when some of the most exciting things were going on. However, he could always make sure of watching a duel between the howitzers on the Asiatic shore—somewhere behind Kum Kali fort—and the ship told off to keep them quiet—the *Prince George* or the *Albion*, sometimes the *Agamemnon*. At almost any hour of the day he went on deck, he could make certain of soon seeing a splash leap up, close to whichever ship was on duty, and then see her fire her 12-inch guns, and watch till the brownish-red or black clouds flew up behind Kum Kali ridge as the shells burst, hoping intensely that bits of "Asiatic Annie" were flying up in it, and wondering what the spotting aeroplane, circling high above in the blue sky like a hawk, had seen and signalled.

Then there were the shrapnel bursting behind "W" beach, and the little shells which sometimes burst there, but, more often than not, only buried themselves with a little spurt of dust. He would wonder whether Bubbles or the Lamppost had been hit, and hoped they had not, because they had promised to send him off a shell, or anything interesting, as a curio. And, later on, there were the high-explosive shells, which sometimes burst in the air over that beach, and at other times burst on the ground with a horrid noise which frightened him, even where he was, in the ship, and made him rather alter his mind about going ashore to see the fun.

The Turkish aeroplanes, or German most probably—the "Taubes" he had heard so much of—they came often; and at the first news of "hostile aeroplane approaching from the north-east" he would dash on deck, and try to spot them as they appeared over the top of Achi Baba—little moving spots which he lost sight of, if he was not very careful, until they came nearer and nearer, and the sun made their wings glisten like silver. He knew that each carried bombs, and often he could actually see these little things at the moment they were released from the body of the aeroplane, to burst somewhere near "W" beach, raising

a cloud of dust and smoke, or drop in the sea among the ships, sending up a rather silly splash—such a waste of energy. And it was so "ripping" to hear guns firing at the aeroplane and see the shrapnel bursting. He did so long to see one crumple up and come tumbling down, but he was always being disappointed; and when that particular aeroplane had seen what it wanted, dropped all its bombs—seldom where it wanted—and turned back up the Straits, the China Doll felt rather miserable.

Sometimes British and French aeroplanes went up after the Taube, and chased him to his home up above the Narrows, whilst the Turkish shrapnel burst round them just as they had done at Smyrna, only making better shooting as the days went on and their practice improved.

At first the British and French aeroplanes had their home at Tenedos; and if they rested, slid down on the open ground close to Helles lighthouse, flighting back to their island before dark to spend the night. That, too, was always "pretty to watch", as Uncle Podger would have said.

Then the bombardments of Achi Baba and Krithia, on the days that the troops attacked, gave him intense enjoyment; and sometimes, though not often, the China Doll, from his post up aloft in the main-top, could see, through the forbidden range-finder, little groups of khaki figures darting about among the scrub and the ravines which intersected that plain, though he could never be sure whether they were British or Turks. But what excited him most, and kept him in some quiet corner for hours, holding on to the rigging or a stanchion, stretching his head out in the dark, and hardly daring to breathe, were the night attacks by the Turks. The noise of them would wake him, and up on to the after shelter deck he would slip, in his ragged pyjamas, and watch the glare of the field-guns, the bursts of shrapnel-flame, the bright star-shells as they sunk in graceful curves of dazzling white light, and would listen to the rattle of the musketry and the Maxims, and the fierce barking of the guns—especially of the French "75's".

On one of these nights Mr. Meredith found his funny little figure squeezed up against the rails, close to the life-buoy.

"Hullo, youngster!" he said cheerfully. "Would you like to be right in among it all—there on shore?"

"No, sir! I mean yes, sir! No, sir!"

"Which do you mean?" he asked.

"I don't know, sir. It sounds so awful."

"Well, you'd better turn in. They're packing up for the night now."

And so the China Doll would patter down the ladder in his bare feet, listen for a moment at the top of the hatchway to make sure that they had stopped fighting, and then go back to the dark half-deck and his hammock, and lie listening until he could not keep awake any longer.

In the picket-boat and steam pinnace the Orphan, the Hun, and Rawlins (who first relieved one and then the other) had never, all that first week or ten days, six hours' consecutive sleep.

Steamboats! Why! fifty more would have found plenty to do; and of those which were actually available, so many were constantly in the Sub's hands being repaired, or back on board their own ships being repaired, that those remaining were running practically day and night continuously. The Hun's pinnace smashed in her stem and stove in her bows against a trawler on the Thursday, and that laid her up for two whole days whilst she was being patched. On one of these two days he took charge of a boat whose midshipman had been killed by a stray bullet at another beach—"X" beach—round the corner, and on the second he and the Orphan kept "watch and watch" in the picket-boat. For all practical purposes their only chance of a rest was when their boats ran short of coal and water and had to go back to the *Achates*. The job of filling up with water and coal often took half an hour—time enough to get some food, sometimes even a bath; more often, all they wanted was sleep. Occasionally they had a stroke of luck after getting back to the ship, and might be told that they would not be wanted for an hour, perhaps longer. Then the Orphan, Rawlins, or the Hun—whoever it was who had such luck—would coil up on a cushion in the gun-room and sleep, or lie down on the Sub's bunk—if he was not there—which was more peaceful. More often than not, something would happen: an urgent signal would come from somewhere or other, to take a Staff officer "off" from "W" beach to the *Arcadia*—the General Head-quarters Staff ship—-or to tow inshore a lighter full of stores, urgently needed—bombs, barbed wire, empty sandbags, whatever it might be; his boat might be the only one available, and away he would have to go.

This used to happen day and night, for during those first ten days there was no relaxation of effort whatever, all the twenty-four hours round the clock.

Very often the Orphan had to take his boat alongside hospital ships, and several times it happened that men climbed down their tall, white sides and asked for a passage ashore. One of these, on one occasion, was a stretcher-bearer of the Worcesters, an old soldier evidently. The air, just about this time, was full of rumours of Turkish atrocities, and these caused much anger until they were contradicted—as they generally were—although the contradictions never went the rounds as did the original rumours. The Orphan had just heard one particular story, vouched for, of four English—evidently prisoners—having been found burnt to death in Sedd-el-Bahr castle. So, thinking this man might know something about it, he asked him.

"Know about them? I should think I did; all nonsense, that story. They were burnt right enough—I saw them myself—but so was the wooden storehouse the Turks had put them in. Everything was burnt, and there was the base of a

6-inch lyddite shell lying close by them; one of our ships' shells which had set the place on fire during the bombardment."

He told him of his own experiences. "Why, sir," he said, "twice the Worcesters have had to fall back a bit at night, and leave wounded behind; and at daybreak we got back the ground again and found them all right, though we never expected they would be alive. 'We thought to find you scuppered,' we told them—at first, that was; not afterwards. I remember one—the Sergeant-Major of my company. We found him in the morning, and we asked him how he'd managed to keep clear of the Turks. 'Keep clear of 'em,' he says; 'keep clear of 'em! why, they crept up after you'd fallen back, found me in the dark, and gave me water; pulled me along behind some cover—your firing being so hot—and covered me with a blanket.'"

"Then haven't you seen anything wrong?" the Orphan asked.

"Well, I wouldn't exactly say that; there's a young chap in there"—and he pointed to the hospital ship—"what has some thirty-five bayonet wounds—just pricks—in him. They caught him in a trench and did handle him pretty rough, till he pretended to be dead; then they left him. He'll be up and about in ten days' time. Then I saw two of those Senegalese chaps see 'blue murder' one day; but what can you expect?"

"Are our fellows playing the game?" the Orphan asked.

"You don't know Bert Smith, he's in my section. Well, he and I was carrying a wounded Turk in our stretcher, he taking the head, and me going along in front with his feet, and I notices that he starts a-jerking his end up and down pretty violent, so I says to him: 'Here, Bert, what are you a-doing of? you'll hurt the poor blighter!' and he up and says: 'Poor blighter be darned; he's only a blooming Turk!'"

"What did you do?" asked the Orphan, smiling at the man's so very transparent earnestness.

"I just told him that, Turk or no Turk, he was a-fighting for his home and country, and it wasn't for us to say he was doing wrong—us who was trying to drive him out of it—and to go a-hurting of him."

"He carried him proper like after that, but of course, sir, you don't know Bert Smith; he's a fair 'card'."

The Orphan, noticing that he had a blood-stained bandage round his neck, asked him what he had been doing aboard the hospital ship.

"They sent me off," the man said indignantly. "Just had a bit of a clip—went in in front—came out at the back—under the skin—nothing. I stayed aboard there a little, and then, when the doctors were too busy to notice, I skipped into the first boat that would take me ashore, and am off back again. I can do all the doctoring I wants, and they're getting pretty short of chaps like me up there," and he jerked

his thumb Krithia way.

During these days the Orphan allowed a good many men to scramble down from the hospital ships into his picket-boat—men slightly wounded, and who wanted to go back to their regiments. Many of these were Australians and New Zealanders, a brigade of whom had been brought round from Anzac, and had suffered extremely heavy losses in a most gallant but unsuccessful endeavour to capture Krithia.

He often had to take his picket-boat into "W" beach when shells were dropping on it or into the water close by; and these were times when he had to pull himself together, so that Jarvis and the crew should not know that he hated it; especially did he dislike the buzzing noise which just gave him sufficient warning to make him wonder where *that* shell was going to hit. He also had an extremely narrow escape one day when he was taking a General and his Staff officers to "V" beach. As he approached the *River Clyde* he saw that some big shells were dropping close to her, and just before he reached her, swish—sh—sh came along the noise of one and it flopped into the sea just ahead, fortunately without bursting. It heaved the bows of his boat right clear of the water, and the splash that fell over them fell on the deck, the General, and on his Staff officers. The Orphan's breath came very fast then; but he could not help laughing as he saw Plunky Bill, who'd been standing in the bows with his boat-hook all ready for going alongside the *River Clyde*, turn a complete somersault and disappear, head first, down the little hatch there. It was such a relief to have something to laugh at.

One day he was sent to the French flagship—she was probably the *Suffren*—with a note to the French Admiral, and had to wait on her quarter-deck for an answer. The Admiral brought it up himself; a dapper little man he was—all springs—and when he saw the Orphan standing stiffly to attention, he darted across, laid both his thin, aristocratic hands on his shoulders, gave him a friendly, encouraging shake, and talked French to him, the only words the Orphan was able to understand and remember being: "Ah, mon petit brave! mon pauvre petit garçon!"

On the way back with the answer he told Jarvis about this. "He called me lots of things, and he called me 'his poor little boy'—rather cheek, wasn't it?" In fact, the Orphan rather thought that his dignity had been hurt.

"A funny old bird, that 'ere Gay Pratty, sir," Jarvis said. "D'you know Porter—'Frenchy' Porter, they calls him now—that 'ere leading signalman what comed from the *Swiftsure*? 'E was lent to that 'ere French ship for the 18th March—when the *Bouvet* and *Ocean* and *Irresistible* were 'outed'. 'E tells me that that 'ere little ladylike gen'l'man was on the bridge all the time, a 'opping about like a bloomin' sparrow, and wouldn't go down in the conning-tower nohow. They had shells all over 'em and all round 'em, and Frenchy Porter couldn't 'elp

ducking 'is 'ead. Just as a big one come sloshing along—right over the bridge, it seemed—an' Frenchy 'ad ducked—that 'ere little box-of-tricks comes up to 'im, a-smiling and as jaunty as you please, and says to 'im, a-jerkin' 'is arms and 'is 'ands: 'When the noise come, you duck your 'ead—but then she 'as gone—you are too late'—it ain't no bloomin' use, or words to that heffect. A great, little gen'l'man, that be, sir."

After hearing this story, the Orphan was jolly glad the Admiral *had* spoken to him.

During the days whilst the piers were being built, the weather was magnificent and the sea quite calm. It never blew at all until the 3rd May, when a breeze got up from the north-east and swept clouds of sand off the ridge above "W" beach—a regular sandstorm, which hid it from the view of the ships for several hours. This fact is very good proof of the enormous amount of trampling which had converted the green ridge and gully into a waste of dry sand in only nine days. The wind increased all the night of the 3rd May, and blew quite hard on the 4th; and though "W" beach gave a "lee", a very unpleasant swell swept round the end of the Peninsula, and made the going alongside the pontoon and trestle pier very tricky work. Lighters empty and lighters loaded broke adrift, and the Orphan had the job of rescuing several; and in doing so knocked his picket-boat about a good deal, and stove a hole in her side, abreast the engine-room, which made it absolutely necessary for her to be hoisted in and patched. The Commander cursed him for his carelessness, and made the poor Orphan miserable until Captain Macfarlane happened to see him. "A day off to-day, Mr. Orpen?" he asked, with a twinkle in his eye, for he knew what had happened.

"I knocked a hole in the picket-boat, sir," the Orphan answered gloomily.

"Only one?" the Captain said, tugging at his yellow, pointed beard. "Only one? Why, when I was a midshipman—— Oh! Here comes the Admiral! I have not time to tell you what I could do in those days in the way of breaking up boats. Come to my cabin and have tea with me in half an hour." The Orphan felt a different "man" after that.

He took the opportunity of his boat being inboard to give her a coat of paint, which hardly had time to dry before she was hoisted out and back again in the water.

Now all this time the Orphan had scarcely set foot on shore, because whenever he took his picket-boat alongside one or other of the piers at "W" beach, there was so much risk of her being damaged that he dare not leave her. He was as wild and harum-scarum a young officer as could be met with, when not in his beloved picket-boat; but once he took charge of her he never forgot that he *was* in charge of her, and responsible for her safety; and this not because he feared the Commander's sharp tongue or the displeasure of Captain Macfarlane, but from a

very firm sense of duty, which he would probably have most indignantly denied if told that that was the reason.

"Hang it all!" he often said, when Bubbles tempted him "to just leave your old boat and come along and see our dug-out"; "but, old Bubbles, I can't, that's all, I'd love to, but I can't."

However, virtue was rewarded, for when the *Achates* became "bombarding" ship, he and his picket-boat were placed under the orders of the Beach-master at "W" beach. Nothing could have given him greater pleasure. Whenever she was not actually required for duty, and could safely anchor off the beach, he lived ashore with Bubbles and the Lamp-post, and shared their tent, or their "dug-out" if they were being shelled. He had a splendid time: the best time of the three of them, for he was away in his boat most of the day, so escaped nearly all the heavy shells and the abominable pestilential flies; had every other night "in"—often two or three "running"—and could wrap himself up in his blanket and sleep splendidly, outside the tent and under the open sky, with his picket-boat safely anchored a hundred yards off the beach, with Jarvis in charge of her.

Probably of all the Honourable Mess, the Orphan enjoyed himself the most thoroughly.

CHAPTER XIII
The Army comes to a Standstill

On the day after the landing—the Monday—the French troops who had been disembarked on the Asiatic shore and had captured 500 prisoners were re-embarked, and the whole of the French Expeditionary Force commenced to land on "V" beach, where the poor old *River Clyde* lay, aground, under the castle.

On Tuesday the whole Allied forces advanced for two miles along the plain towards the white village of Krithia and the high ridge of Achi Baba, which barred their way. They met with very little resistance.

On the Wednesday a further advance was made; but at the end of the day the Turks counter-attacked so fiercely that it became necessary for our troops to dig themselves in, when they were yet a mile from the village. The Allied army was now "up against" the position which the Turks had so carefully prepared with all the ingenuity and skill their German instructors had taught them, and,

for all practical purposes, no real further impression was made on this position during the remainder of "The Great Adventure".

It was on the Tuesday afternoon that Bubbles and the Lamp-post first came under shrapnel-fire. They had obtained leave, for half an hour, to climb up the ridge above "W" beach, and watch the progress of the advance in the plain below them; and whilst there, the Turks began bursting shrapnel above and all around it. This they took all as part of the game, and were rather pleased than otherwise when one shell, bursting not very far above and in front of them, scattered bullets in the ground close by.

Bubbles burst out with a loud guffaw of enjoyment, and would have remained standing where he was—on the sky-line; but the Lamp-post, who had a very old head on his young shoulders, made him take cover in the Turkish trench there—a trench which our Sappers had already begun to deepen.

"It's no use for us to be knocked out," he said; "and it's a rotten kind of bravery not to take cover when you aren't doing anyone any good by making a target of yourself."

It was on that afternoon that Captain Macfarlane, coming ashore to stretch his long legs and to see how things were going with the beach party, happened to find Bubbles and the Lamp-post. The Beach-master's servant had just made them a cup of tea, so they, rather nervously, asked him if he would have one. Of course he would; so they sent the little man away to borrow the Pink Rat's enamelled mug. The Captain had just walked back from the lighthouse, and along the trench up which the midshipmen had carried those boxes of ammunition on the Sunday night. He had heard of this, and was speaking about it when the servant came back. Frightened out of his life he was, the miserable-looking little man, to wait upon so important an officer as Captain Macfarlane. The sight of a strange naval Captain simply terrified him, and made him quite incoherent.

"He helped us," they said. "He took up two by himself, and then helped with another. He was jolly plucky, sir!"

"You must have found them very heavy, didn't you?" the Captain said kindly. "It was a very plucky thing to do, under those conditions. What is your name? I must remember it."

But the little man looked more frightened than ever, dropped the cup he was carrying, opened his mouth, couldn't speak a word, and simply fled.

Captain Macfarlane smiled and pulled his beard. "A strange thing is courage," he said. "It comes at times to the most unlikely people. You can't legislate for it. Now, that little chap probably deserves the D.C.M.[#], if anybody does; and if he had it he would very likely suffer agonies all his life, dreading lest he should have to 'live up to it'."

[#] D.C.M. = Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Before he went away, the Captain advised them to dig "dug-outs" for themselves.

"But the shrapnel hardly comes as far as the ridge," they said; "and they tried to reach the beach this morning from the Asiatic side and couldn't. We saw the shells falling three or four hundred yards short—four of them. Nothing but a few bullets come near here."

"Young gentlemen,"—he smiled, with that kindly, humorous expression of his—"the Turks will bring up more guns in a few days, mark my word, and probably advance those they have. When they do, it won't be only shrapnel and small stuff, so you had better be ready."

But they thought this rather useless waste of time; they didn't mind what came—or thought they didn't—and besides, the soldiers would capture Achi Baba in a few days, and then no Turkish guns could reach them.

"We *shall* capture that hill in a day or two, shan't we, sir?" they asked; but he only smiled his inscrutable smile, and added: "Young gentlemen, take my advice."

He took them round to select a spot, but nowhere within the limits which the Navy had pegged out as its camp was the ground anywhere steep enough to dig a cave, which, as he told them, "was of course the best of all." He tugged at his beard and smiled again as he looked at a very suitable place just to the left and below the Naval Camp boundary. "Well, you will have to do your best—where you are: the Navy cannot poach, can it?—not on these occasions."

So that very night, whenever they had any time to spare, they began to dig a hole for themselves in the gentle slope on the left of the gully, just behind where the naval mess-tent was eventually put up. Spades were plentiful, and they thought it great fun, although they were rather shy of being the first to do this. However, everyone followed their example—in fact the Beach-master ordered some form of protection to be dug for everyone.

They scooped a place away about four feet wide, and by digging downwards, and nibbling, and broadening it, they soon had a "funk-hole" where all three of them could squeeze uncomfortably. They did try, by undermining the slope, to get some protection overhead; but the slope was too gentle for this to be a success, and the top kept falling in, especially if someone happened to walk near it. No timber was as yet available, so their "dug-out" had really no cover at all, but was simply a deep furrow, deeper at one end than the other.

Though they did this at first for fun, and because Captain Macfarlane had advised them to do it, they were very glad they had taken his advice when, a few days later, the Turks did advance their field-guns and peppered the ridge, the

gully leading to it, and "W" beach itself very liberally, not only with shrapnel, but also with common shell. Few of these common shell burst, and when they did, seldom hurt anyone; but no one, however brave or however small, can stand in a place which is being shelled, without feeling that he is the biggest thing there—for miles round—or the most conspicuous person, however many others are round him. The casualties from this first day of thoughtful and thorough shelling were very slight, considering the crowded state of the area, and the men's principal anxiety was to obtain fragments of shells or intact unexploded ones, digging those out before they had time to get cool. However, the competition in making "dug-outs" certainly became much more keen afterwards.

Neither the periods of being shelled nor the making of "dug-outs" was allowed to interfere with the work of the beach parties.

Those men who happened to be off duty crawled into their "funk-holes", but the others went on working; and of course, as most of them were employed below the cliffs, they really were not—as were the soldiers' working-parties stacking stores on the slopes—exposed the whole of the time.

In those first four days an enormous amount of work was done; mountains of stores were piled on either side of the gully, mules and horses in hundreds were landed, guns and their limbers—18-pounders, long 60-pounders, heavy guns and squat 6-inch howitzers—water carts, transport carts, and ambulance wagons. Hundreds of light two-wheeled carts were brought ashore, in readiness to follow the Army when the advance, which was fated never to take place, commenced; and by the end of the first week the slope between the ridge and the cliff, from the end of the Peninsula to Cape Helles lighthouse, was one orderly mass of mule and horse lines, transport "parks" and stores, and the ground which had been so covered with grass and scrubby bushes had been worn bare, as barren as the beach and the cliffs themselves.

Until the fifth day the beach parties had lived in the open, but on that day several marquees and tents were brought ashore and pitched for them. Quite a cosy little collection of white tents they made, at the bottom of the left-hand slope of the gully.

On the Thursday and Friday very little happened. The Army was digging itself in a mile and a half from Krithia, and about three miles from the ridge over "W" beach; practically all guns had been landed; the whole of the Royal Naval Division and other reinforcements had disembarked; and several thousand wounded had been safely sent on board the hospital ships, and transports used as hospital carriers.

On the Saturday night the Turks, at about ten o'clock, commenced a desperate effort, first to pierce our lines (which they did, momentarily, but only momentarily), and afterwards to drive the French into the sea.

The Lamp-post had a night "in" that night; and when the noise of firing woke him, was comfortably snuggled in a corner of the mess marquee, rolled in his blanket. The crackling of rifle-firing broke out on the left at first, and grew so fierce and incessant that he realized this was something quite different to anything he had heard before.

That counter-attack on the first Sunday, when he and Bubbles had helped to take up ammunition, was as nothing compared to it, and had not made him feel nervous—or perhaps anxious is a better word—as this did. He then had had something to do; but now, after a very hard day's work, and two spells of being shelled, he had nothing to do but lie there and listen to the really appalling din of musketry, field-guns, and the roar of the two 60-pounders on the end of the Peninsula, above him, which, every time they fired, lighted up the inside of the marquee and shook the ground beneath him.

As he lay, undecided as to whether or no he should get up and see what was happening, the intensity of the firing grew, until it reached such a pitch of frenzy that he felt certain that this must be the prelude to hand-to-hand fighting. He could not help but feel nervous. He was not blessed with a dull imagination, and he could not prevent himself picturing what was happening beyond the ridge, and what *would* happen if the Turks drove in our thin lines and forced them back to the sea below. He worked himself into such a state of nerves that at last, when the French "75's" broke into rapid firing—one continuous screech—he could stand it no longer, pulled on his boots, and went outside the marquee. Out over the Straits the sea was all a glitter of transports' lights as usual, and the row of "flares" along the beach lighted up the beach parties unloading boats, and the working parties wearily carrying stores towards the two flares which marked the depots on the slopes of the gully—all went on just as usual. But horse teams with their limbers were coming down from the ridge, past him, towards the ammunition depots, at the bottom of the gully—coming down at an unaccustomed speed; and he heard their drivers shouting impatiently for their limbers to be filled.

He ran to one of these, who had swung round his limber and was now trying to calm the big horse he was sitting—the "near leader" of the team.

"What's going on?" the Lamp-post asked.

"They've broken through the 86th," the man told him; "came on without firing a shot—the beggars!" But the midshipman could get nothing more out of him.

"I don't know nothing more. Curse this darned horse! Keep still, can't you? My job's to get more of the stuff up to the guns. I don't know nothink. Chuck it, yer blighted fools! Ain't yer been long enough together? Cawn't yer smell who you've got next yer?"

The two horses were nosing each other, one trying to bite, and both fretting.

"They ain't worked together afore," he said, as the Lamp-post, who loved horses, separated their heads and rubbed their noses soothingly. "I 'ad to get a fresh 'off leader' this morning; the other was killed just t'other side of that 'ere ridge—shrapnel summat cruel there, all day—cawn't move a team but bang bursts a shrapnel—and they've been bursting shrapnel now, all along the road we've just come and have to go back by—curse them! This darned fool brute—chuck it, you blighter!"—as the horse he was sitting slyly bit the neck of the new "off leader", who sidled and trembled—"'e cawn't abide a stranger. 'Ere, stop that kicking! 'Old yer 'eads up, cawn't yer?"

He jerked the two horses apart as the two "wheelers" behind them began to plunge, and their driver to curse as he steadied them.

"'Struth! Ain't they fair cautions? Almost 'uman," growled the Lamp-post's friend.

Someone in the rear of the limber banged down the limber covers and shouted: "Right away, Bob!"

"Stand clear! Get up, you brutes!" and the drivers cracked their whips; but the wheels of the limber had stuck in the sand, and the four horses, excited and plunging, and not pulling together, could not move them.

"Clap on, you chaps! Give us a start!" shouted the drivers; and the Lamp-post and some more men hauled on the spokes of the wheels; the whips cracked, and this time the horses moved the limber, and away it went, jolting up the gully, on its way back with more shells for its battery, somewhere in the valley.

The Lamp-post followed it up the ridge, and there, for two hours and more, he watched the battle in the dark, hundreds of men standing near him. Compared to that Sunday night fight, the noise was as the inside of a boiler-shop, with work in full swing, to the noise of a country blacksmith's forge; and the sight of it like a Crystal Palace firework night, to the five or six shillings' worth of squibs and rockets he and his brothers used to have at home on the 5th November.

He had read of the famous French "75's", but he had thought the descriptions probably more picturesque than real. Now, as he listened to their extraordinarily determined voices, they seemed so self-confident, so absolutely sure of themselves, that he no longer wondered why the French almost worshipped them; and when they started rapid fire, as they did occasionally, a whole battery, sometimes two together, he realized that this was the glorious *rafale* he had heard so much about.

More empty limbers came toiling up from the valley, unable to go fast because of the darkness, and only dashing across the area over which shrapnel were bursting. The drivers of these passed the word, as they went down the gully, that the Turks had been driven back again, and the line made good. That was reassuring.

He heard Bubbles laughing and guffawing somewhere near, and found him. "The Commander let me come along for half an hour. Isn't it a grand show?"

Whilst they stood there, many tilted wagons passed down into the valley, their wheels creaking and the mule chains jangling; and as those 60-pounders fired, their glare lighted up the white patches and the red crosses painted on them.

A regiment (it had only come back from the trenches the previous afternoon) came up the gully, the men dragging their shuffling feet through the sand, and voices calling wearily: "Step out, men! Don't go to sleep, lads! Close up, lads! Pull yourselves together!" The head of it bent over the ridge and trailed down into the valley, till, like a long snake, it disappeared in the darkness.

When the half-hour which Bubbles had been allowed was "up", the Lamp-post went back with him. The Turks had evidently broken themselves, and their attack was weakening; also, he was dead tired. He threw himself down in the marquee and slept till daybreak, not even wakened by a still more furious attack delivered, later on, against the French flank—an attack which was only repulsed after very heavy losses.

The ambulance wagons came back in the morning crammed; wounded who could walk, stumbled down to the beach, lay down, and slept; also, a large batch of Turkish prisoners came along with a grinning escort. That day there was another general advance, with heavy casualties but little progress; and on the following night the Turks attacked again, more impetuously than the night before. This time they threw their whole weight against the French flank and against the section held by the Senegalese troops, who had been very severely punished already. These troops are not suited for defensive night-work, and again they gave way. The Lamp-post—on duty this time—down on the beach, could be almost certain that they had given way, by the continuous roar of the *rafales*, and again he could not help being anxious until news came that all was well.

These two nights completely cured him of the nervousness which is only natural for anyone who has had no previous experience; and though there were countless attacks and counter-attacks in the nights to come, they never worried him, nor, if he were asleep, was he often wakened when those 60-pounders "chipped in" and shook the ground under him.

In the early mornings, after these nights, the tired, haggard, earth-stained "working-parties" came back from the trenches, where they had been fighting all night, bringing tales of creeping bombing-parties, of furious rushes right up to their parapets, and of encounters between their night patrols, helping back the wounded, and perhaps escorting a few Turkish prisoners. These tales made each night's fighting a little epic of its own.

To Bubbles, the Lamp-post never confided his ideas or emotions, because

that fat, joyous midshipman looked upon the whole thing as one vast "spree", with a spice of danger that only added to its attractions. Each wounded man who was sent off to the ships, he envied his honourable wound, and the fact that many of them were maimed for life never entered his mind, nor the tragedy of the women and children dependent on them.

The day after that second big counter-attack, during a bout of shelling from some field-guns concealed below Achi Baba, a shell came into a "dug-out" where a petty officer and two men of the beach party were sitting, and killed all three. After this, more spare time than ever was spent on deepening these "dug-outs". Then followed two more days of desperate fighting for the capture of Krithia village, and ghastly, never-ending streams of wounded came down the gully to the casualty clearing-station, whose white tents had been pitched above the cliffs, to the right of it. Our losses were terrific, and our gains practically nil. As a set-off to the splendid failure of the centre, the Gurkhas captured a commanding cliff on the left flank—Gurkha Bluff—and under protection of fire from the *Talbot* and *Dublin*, dug themselves in so securely that these gallant little men never let go their hold on it.

The continual strain of those first two weeks was already beginning to tell on the three snotties—hardly noticeable, perhaps, in the case of Bubbles, though he was undoubtedly thinner; but the Pink Rat was one mass of nerves—he jumped if anyone spoke to him suddenly—and he lost his appetite. The Lamp-post became more silent and thoughtful than before, and his nerves, too, were very "rocky", but he had such strong control over himself that no one could have thought that this was so.

Their clothes were stained with good honest dirt, and torn and ragged from honest hard work. They became such unpresentable scarecrows that at last the Beach-master suggested that an improvement was desirable. So they went across to the Ordnance Stores and hunted out the stock sizes of the soldiers suits in store, which would fit them best. They also obtained puttees, and after those first ten days or two weeks the only thing "naval" about them was their caps.

On the 12th May—a most perfect day it was—the three snotties were sitting outside their tent after lunch, smoking cigarettes, and watching an aeroplane, circling gracefully above them, looking for a good landing-place on the cliffs, close to the lighthouse Suddenly a great, tearing, rending noise seemed to fill all space. Everyone dropped, automatically, what was in his hand and bent his head; then, looking up, saw a cloud, black and oily—a hellish-looking balloon of smoke—suspended in the air above the ridge.

This was the first high-explosive shell which burst near "W" beach. "Gal-

lipoli Bill"—a stumpy 6-inch howitzer—fired it, and fired many more that afternoon and again an hour before sunset, some of his shells bursting on impact, others in the air—all with that rending, awe-inspiring crash.

There was by this time, on top of the ridge, a broad sandy track, which must have been most conspicuous from Achi Baba. On each side of it, six or eight hundred horses and as many mules had been picketted, and those poor creatures suffered most. The snotties had fled to their dug-out; the Pink Rat lying flat on his face with his hands over his ears, whilst the other two peered over the edge, watching where the shells dropped. They did not—not even Bubbles—want to see them, but the terrible roar fascinated them, and they were obliged to do so. They would hear the noise of another approaching, and, three or four seconds later, up would go a cloud of black smoke and that thunderclap of an explosion—not one farther away than three hundred yards. "Right among the horses!" the Lamp-post would say, with a catch in his breath; and when the smoke drifted clear, there would they see six, a dozen—often more—of these gallant animals lying dead, or feebly trying to regain their feet horribly mutilated.

Other shells burst in open spaces, doing no harm; others among the mules and transport-wagon "parks". After every explosion, men would leave their "dug-outs" and rush to the place, a couple of stretcher-men would perhaps dash down from the casualty clearing-station; and then the noise of another approaching shell would send them scurrying back—scurrying fast, all of them, except the stretcher-men, who if they had found an injured man had to bear him slowly and steadily.

One shell, on that first day, fell right among a warren of crowded "dug-outs", and the Lamp-post turned away his head with a shudder, so as not to see what would come to view when the smoke cleared away. When he did turn round—it was so horribly fascinating—he saw men scrambling from those "dug-outs", jostling each other in the crater just made among them, shouting and laughing, and squabbling and searching for "souvenirs".

Farce and tragedy are, thank God! perpetually associated; if they were not, and only tragedy stared one continually in the face, human brains could not endure the strain of modern warfare as they do.

Writing of "dug-outs", it did not really make much difference where one took shelter, for those "funk-holes" gave no protection from a direct hit, only from sideways-flying splinters and fragments; a hare crouching on its "form" is no more protected from being trodden under foot than a man in one of these from the actual shell itself.

All through these periods when high-explosive shells burst on the ridge and the slopes down to the gully, the empty limbers, water-carts, and transport wagons would jolt down to the depots, fill up, and go back again, up the slopes

through the area where those shells were falling, up that broad road between those huddled masses of quivering mules and horses, just as though nothing unusual was happening.

"Gallipoli Bill" at first fired for half an hour in the middle of the day, and again for another half an hour before the close of it; but presently, when he had received a more plentiful supply of ammunition, often gave an additional "hate" in the forenoon.

The one thing in his favour, as compared to the field-guns, was that after he had fired his ten or twelve rounds, you knew he would not fire again for several hours. With the field-guns it was different—their little shells fell at all hours and all through the day.

To add to the attractiveness of "W" beach—or "Lancashire Landing", as it was afterwards called—as a health resort, hostile aeroplanes often dropped bombs there. Nobody attempted to take cover when these aeroplanes flew past, for the simple reason that no "cover" existed, except actually underneath the very foot of the cliffs. They had to carry on their work, wait until they heard the rushing noise of the bomb, and when the explosion followed, wait for the second one which almost invariably followed it. Afterwards they knew that this "show" was concluded, and that "Cuthbert", as they called the aeroplane, would not drop any more on that trip. "Cuthbert's" average "bag" in three days would seldom exceed two men wounded and one killed, and perhaps three or four horses or mules killed, or so much injured that they had to be shot. Generally, at about seven o'clock in the morning the first aeroplane would come, on its way to wake the General Head-quarters Staff aboard the *Arcadia*, anchored close by; and then occasionally in the evening, when he was off to see if he really couldn't—this time—manage to flop a bomb on top of the captive balloon or its parent ship.

This last was one of the pleasures of the day, and the Lamp-post and Bubbles would often sit and watch "Cuthbert" flying towards the big yellow balloon—flying well above it to keep out of range.

The parent ship would haul the balloon down just as fast as she could—"to lessen the bump if it was hit", as Bubbles used to gurgle. Then the Lamp-post, through his glasses, would see first one, then another bomb drop from the aeroplane; would shout: "He's dropped one—two!" and in a few seconds, whilst they held their breath and watched, up would go the splashes these explosions made. Never did they hit either balloon or parent ship. It really became a perfect farce; though, as Uncle Podger told them, when one day, coming ashore to pay the beach party, a small shell had buried itself quite close to him and his money-bags, and a bomb had dropped and burst not fifty yards away: "It's all very pretty to watch, but I prefer watching it from the ship."

Directly it became evident that "Gallipoli Bill" had come to stay, all those

horses and mules were brought down and placed in safety beneath the cliffs, and along ledges which the Turkish prisoners and a large number of imported Greek labourers cut for them in the face of the cliffs.

When they were all safely stowed away, the end of the Peninsula presented a most extraordinary sight, and if only the crippled *Goeben* could have come out and had half an hour's practice, she would have killed them all. Magazines also were dug beneath the cliffs, and the vast stores of small-arm ammunition, shells, charges, bombs, grenades, and explosives of all sorts were placed out of danger.

Water, or rather the scarcity of it, made life still more unpleasant; water for drinking was sufficient, but had to be used carefully; the amount allowed for washing was entirely inadequate. However, whenever the snotties had the chance, they would scramble along to the rocks right at the end of the Peninsula, under Cape Tekke, and have a bathe.

Many a grand hour they put in down there, and forgot, for a time, the discomforts and perils of the day which had passed, or of the days which were to come.

But now, worse than the bombs, the field-guns' shells, or those roaring, rending high-explosives, came the flies. A fortnight after the landing they had been a nuisance; at the end of the third week, bred in the horse and mule lines, they became an unbearable plague. The food on one's plate was covered with them, they crawled over it; they crawled over hands and faces; rest during the day was almost impossible. It was horrid to see a man asleep, with his lips, nostrils, and eyelids hidden in a dense mass of them, clinging there and sucking the moisture. At night, and only at night, was one free from these beastly things, and then they gathered in countless millions on the upper parts of the insides of the tents, waiting till the warmth of next day's sun woke them to start their intolerable persecution.

The mental torture caused by these was infinitely greater than the total effect of the shells and bombs; worst of all, they brought dysentery.

The Pink Rat was the first one to go down. He had worked hard and well, but the strain of the shells had, very evidently, upset his nerves; he had been moody and depressed for some days, and the flies finished him. He had to be sent on board to Dr. O'Neill, thinner, and more like a rat than ever. He was quickly followed by six or seven of the men; but Bubbles and the Lamp-post, though both were affected by a mild form of dysentery—as was practically everyone—and their hands were covered with small "chipped-out" bits which would not heal, "stuck it out" until they, and all who remained of the original beach party, were replaced by officers and men from the sunken *Ocean* and *Irresistible*.

The same day on which the Pink Rat left them, the Orphan joined the little naval camp at the foot of the gully, with its marquees and tents, and boundaries

marked neatly with white-washed stones.

"My aunt! Isn't this splendid?" he said, as Plunky Bill gave him a hand up the beach with his uniform tin case.

His coming was a great event, just what the other two snotties required to cheer them up. There was so much to show him, and so much to do when all three happened to be off duty—the bathes among the rocks at the foot of Cape Tekke, the 60-pounders above it to show him, the trenches down in the plain, the trench up which they had carried ammunition, the big Turkish guns on Hill 138; and one afternoon they all three had time to walk across to "V" beach, and wander about the neat, orderly French camp, ingratiate themselves with the sentries to let them pass forbidden places, and to look over the old castle itself. The Orphan proudly took them to the "front door", as his friend the Royal Naval Division Sub-lieutenant had called the great arched entrance, and explained to them how he had fired at the Turks coming through it, with a maxim, and started a battle "on his own", pointing to the bows of the *River Clyde* to show where he and his maxim actually had been.

"You *do* come in for all the tit-bits; you are a lucky chap!" Bubbles gurgled excitedly.

The late afternoon was not the most pleasant time to choose for such an excursion, because "V" beach was seldom "healthy" at that time of day, and proved to be more than usually "unhealthy" on this particular occasion, for "Asiatic Annie" plumped fourteen or fifteen big 8-inch shells among the stores and the camps whilst they were there.

They all took shelter behind a small mountain of corned-meat packing-cases, in company with a couple of gaily dressed, shiny-black Senegalese, who were not in the least happy, and a young, equally gaudily dressed "Foreign Legion" soldier, who was quite happy—a slim, sunburnt, laughing man in a red fez with a long tassel, a grey-blue embroidered Zouave jacket, a blue sash, and baggy scarlet trousers. One shell came very near them, and burst with a terrific crash on the other side of the packing-cases, blowing in two or three, so that the meat-tins showed through the cracks, but only covering the three midshipmen with dust. This was the first high-explosive shell which had burst near the Orphan, and he did not like it a little bit. Bubbles and the Lamp-post, who had had more experience of them, liked it still less; but the Zouave only smiled: "Mon Dieu! le méchant! le miseréble!" and offered them little twisted cigarettes of black tobacco. They were not in the least miserable when a long pause ensued after one shell, and a bugle sounded to tell everyone that "Asiatic Annie" had "packed up", and they were able to leave the protection of their tinned-meat packing-cases.

On the afternoon when the first German submarine arrived, and sent the old *Achates* flying to Mudros in the scurry of transports and store-ships, they watched her go without any real regrets. The Orphan and Bubbles certainly preferred to stay where they were; and though, perhaps, the Lamp-post, at the bottom of his heart, longed to get away from the flies and shells, they could never get him to admit it.

Then, three days later, the *Triumph* was sunk—along the coast, off Anzac—and all the battleships left Cape Helles; all except the old *Majestic*, who came along and anchored so close to "W" beach that you could almost throw a stone on board her from the casualty clearing-station tents on top of the cliffs.

"They won't 'get' her there, not with all those trawlers and little steamers round her," Bubbles said. But on Friday morning, just as they were turning to work, and the Orphan was "standing by" in his picket-boat to "run an errand", they heard a rumbling explosion, looked round, saw a huge column of water spout up alongside her, close to her after bridge, and heard and felt another explosion.

"They've got her!" everyone sang out as she began to turn over very rapidly; and the Orphan, shouting to Plunky Bill to shove off, dashed towards her to pick up men already jumping from her sloping deck into the sea. She heeled over so extraordinarily rapidly that the Orphan never had a chance of going alongside, but stood off, and with other steamboats, with trawlers, drifters, a French torpedo-boat, and any number of other boats of all descriptions, made a ring round the doomed ship, to which her crew swam. The Orphan pushed his boat so close that he had to back out to prevent her fore mast-head and "wireless" gear fouling him as it heeled down to the water's edge. It was a horrid and sad sight; but the Orphan was too busily engaged pulling people out of the water to pay much attention to that; and when his picket-boat could hold no more, he turned them over to a small coasting steamer anchored near, and went back again. By this time she was bottom up.

The sinking of this ship had a most depressing effect on everyone; and even the casual Orphan and thoughtless Bubbles wondered what "Gallipoli Bill" would do, now that there was no ship left with guns big enough to annoy him. However, that elusive howitzer had evidently very little ammunition to spare—probably one of our "E" submarines in the Sea of Marmora had sunk a steamer with a supply she was expecting—so six shells, twice a day, were as much as he could allow himself.

You will notice that no mention is now made of the small shells. They still fell on "W" beach and in the sea, close to the piers, at all hours of the day; but unless they came in numbers, no one took any notice of them. Their fuses were so poor that they seldom burst, and when they did, they seldom did any harm.

The three midshipmen's time ashore was now drawing to a close, and four days after the *Majestic* had been sunk—how they did wish her ram wouldn't stick out of the water and remind them of her!—a signalman brought down a signal: "Officers and men of *Achates* beach party will embark in Trawler 370 at 11.30 to-day. Trawler will take *Achates* picket-boat in tow."

It was not until they had embarked, and the Orphan had made "fast" a hundred feet of rope from his picket-boat to the trawler's stern, that they learnt that the *Achates* had been sent to Mytilene, and that they were to join her there.

They waved good-bye to "W" beach just as "Gallipoli Bill" dropped a big shell half-way down the gully, and the Lamp-post and Bubbles realized the relief of not having to wonder where the next one would come.

"Well, we've had a jolly good time—take it all round—but for the flies," Bubbles said. "It will be a good thing to get back to the ship for a while."

"Won't we have a bath, and won't it be grand to get into uniform—clean uniform and under-things again!" said the Lamp-post; and Bubbles gurgled: "Won't I have a grand feed!" forgetting what the Orphan had told him of the state of the gun-room stores.

CHAPTER XIV
Submarines Appear

Down in the gun-room of the *Achates*, during this month after the landing, the air was full of rumours—buzzes of all sorts and little "titbits" of information, gleaned haphazard everywhere and anywhere. Every snotty—the Orphan, the Hun, Rawlins, or any of the "stranger" midshipmen—who took his boat alongside a transport or man-of-war, or to one of the piers at "W" or "V" beaches, came back stuffed with yarns which lost nothing by the telling: the Dublins had lost every officer; the Worcesters all but two; the Turks were torturing prisoners; there was a fearful shortage of doctors; the beaches were simply crowded with wounded, and there was nowhere to put them; Krithia had fallen—the yarn spread after every attack; the *Prince George* had a huge hole made in her by one of "Asiatic Annie's" 8-in shells; the poor old *River Clyde* would have to be abandoned—she was being hit so often; the *Goeben* and two Turkish battleships were just above The Narrows—the aeroplane had seen them—and they might come down at any

moment; the *Agamemnon* had knocked out three "Asiatic Annies" in one afternoon; the *Queen Elizabeth* had fired three of her big 15-inch shells across the Peninsula—the first had sunk two big lighters filled with ammunition, the second had dropped short and only wiped out a regiment on the march, and the third had sunk a nine-thousand-ton steamer, anchored above Nagara, crowded with troops, none of whom was saved. The Pimple, who brought this last piece of news, knew it was true, because the Navigator had heard it from a man, who had heard it from the friend of a man, who had been told by the "observing" officer in the captive balloon which "spotted" for the *Queen Elisabeth*.

Then there was the constant rumour that "last night's counter-attack by the Turks was just their last final effort; they were going to make peace now it had failed". Poor old Turks! they had nothing to gain by being so obstinate, and they had no food and were short of ammunition—everything; they were simply longing to "throw up the sponge" if only the Germans would let them.

Russia intended landing five hundred thousand troops quite close to Constantinople; Italy was about to declare war and send fifty thousand to help in the Peninsula; the French had a hundred thousand already on the way; and Kitchener, good old Kitchener, had made up his mind to send out two hundred thousand. Shan't we walk through them?

Another snotty would burst in with the news that he had heard, on good authority, that directly all the mines had been swept up, the ships were to make another dash up The Narrows, this time towing pontoon "things" alongside them to stop torpedoes. Another heard that all destroyers had been ordered to rush through one night, steam up the Sea of Marmora, and bombard Constantinople.

There was no limit to the inventive genius of the "rumour spreaders", and the appetite for fresh, spicy news became so keen that anybody who brought back no titbit was thought a "hopeless rotter".

But one day, on the 12th May, Uncle Podger came into the gun-room with a long face: "Two German submarines have been reported passing Malta," he said. This yarn was too incredible to be believed by the young warriors coiled there, on the cushions, in their dirty Condy's-fluid-stained clothes; and they greeted it with such derisive yells, shouting, "Go away and make up something else, Fatty!" that Uncle Podger, who did not appreciate any such familiarity from strangers, did not bother to tell them that it happened to be the simple truth. This was the first day on which it became generally known that German submarines were approaching; and the certain fact caused much consternation to all, especially to those who had previously buoyed themselves with the hope that these craft could not make such a long voyage in time of war.

A very general feeling of uneasiness made itself felt.

That same day the first high-explosive to burst on "W" beach had brought

everyone on deck, drawn there by the sound of its mighty thunder-clap; and sent them down again wondering whether it would be possible to hold "W" beach under such conditions much longer. The most optimistic looked grave, and even the cheery, irresponsible Navigator realized that this was not the occasion to invent yarns and send them rolling.

Discussion in the ward-room that night was carried on fitfully and in low tones, and whenever the door opened everyone would turn to see if the new-comer's face showed that he had heard anything "fresh". Among all brooded a very pervading feeling of depression. The tall, aristocratic, and also pessimistic Major of Marines explained in a low voice to the anxious little Padre, sucking nervously at his big pipe, the terrible anxieties of a General whose army has no secure base and whose lines of communication—in this special case, the sea—are threatened; the Navigator, on the other side, pointed out to the Fleet-Paymaster how impossible it would be for the battleships to stay where they were, when the submarines did put in an appearance. The cheery Fleet-Paymaster kept on saying: "But, my dear chap, we've got plenty of destroyers and trawlers; they ought to keep them away at night-time, and surely we can look after ourselves in the daylight."

The Fleet-Surgeon, more gloomy and querulous than ever, growled: "What the dickens d'you know about it? They'll come right enough. We're just like sheep waiting for the little dog that's coming across the field to worry them; they pretend they'll stick together and show a bold front, and know all the time they'll be off like redshanks directly he gets near. We're rats in a trap, that's what we are." He seemed to obtain great satisfaction from the last idea.

The Gunnery-Lieutenant, stamping nervously from one end of the ward-room to the other, joined in all the conversations, and kept on bursting out with: "We must have a 'go' at that high-explosive chap to-morrow, and try and knock him out before they come;" they being, of course, the submarines.

The War Baby—that youngest thing in subalterns of Royal Marines—sprawled over the ward-room table, with his chin on his fists, anxiously listening to everybody, hoping to glean something or other which would point a way out of the difficulties and comfort him. The Commander, coming down from making certain that the ship had been darkened properly, snapped out: "I can't get those transports to 'darken ship'. The Admiral has ordered everything, big or little, not to show a single light; and there they are, many of them, showing a blaze of lights as bright as the Strand by night." He rang the bell and sent the sentry to find Mr. Orpen. Presently that young officer appeared, and was ordered "to go round every ship in that darned anchorage and make 'em put out their lights—and don't let me catch any of your boat's crew smoking alongside the ship, as they were this morning, or I'll——" But the Orphan didn't wait for the penalty to

be mentioned, answered "Very good, sir," exchanged undetected winks with the War Baby, and went out again.

Everybody turned in, that night, with their thoughts full of submarines.

An hour after midnight the poor old *Goliath* was struck by three torpedoes, and sank. She had anchored only that afternoon, up beyond Sedd-el-Bahr and opposite a promontory known as "De Tott's Battery" to protect the left flank of the French army and she lay farther up the Straits and nearer to Chanak Fort—the big fort at the entrance to The Narrows—than any other ship. Beyond this fort a Turkish destroyer was known to be lying, just above The Narrows; and to prevent her making a sortie, four of our destroyers patrolled the waters between Chanak Fort and De Tott's Battery, dodging a very brilliant search-light on Chanak Fort which lighted up this area night after night.

Now the previous evening, just before sunset, a heavy and most unusual bank of fog had rolled slowly out of The Narrows, and made the night so dark that the look-outs on board the patrolling destroyers and on board the *Goliath* could hardly see a cable's length in front of them. It was just the night that that Turkish destroyer would be waiting for; and when Chanak search-light was not switched on at all, and the Straits were shrouded in thick, ominous darkness, the *Goliath's* people had a suspicion that "something" would happen, and kept a more ready watchfulness.

Shortly after one o'clock the "look-outs" on her bridge, and round the guns on the fore shelter-deck, sighted a dark mass on her starboard bow, and made it out to be a destroyer, drifting, stern first, with the current, towards the ship, just as our own patrolling destroyers had been accustomed to do. They used to steam towards Chanak and its search-light, stop engines, and drift back with the current which always flowed down through The Narrows, drift down until they were abreast De Tott's Battery, and then steam back again.

At first she was thought to be a British destroyer, but something roused suspicions, the "challenge" was flashed across; she flashed back, but incorrectly; and, realizing that she was an enemy, orders were given to open fire on her. Two shots blazed out, but they were too late; she let fly three torpedoes, one after the other, all of which struck "home"; and in four minutes the *Goliath* had rolled over, taking down with her more than five hundred of her officers and men.

Those on deck in the *Achates* had heard the muffled explosions, and seen the search-lights from the other battleships above Sedd-el-Bahr searching the surface of the water there; but not for some time did anyone know what had really happened—not until a signal flashed across to say that the *Goliath* had been sunk, and to ask for steamboats to be sent to search for survivors.

The Orphan, who had only just returned from his long job of making all the obstinate transports and other ships "darken ship" properly, was immediately

sent up to the scene of the catastrophe, and the Hun, with his steam pinnace, followed. They picked up and brought back one dead body and a mere handful of very much shaken men. As you know, everyone had turned in that night with "submarines on the brain"; so when Dr. Gordon went to the Fleet-Surgeon's cabin and woke him with "Get up, turn out, P.M.O., the *Goliath* has been sunk, and our boats have gone for survivors!" you can imagine that the Fleet-Surgeon naturally thought that a submarine had done this, so was none too happy. "It'll be our turn next; rats in a trap! My God! I wish I'd never come to sea," he kept groaning as he slipped into his clothes, found his swimming-belt,[#] and hurried on deck.

[#] By this time the swimming-collars had been replaced by belts with greatly increased buoyancy.

The news, when it came at last, that she had been sunk by a destroyer came almost as a relief, because, in spite of the official signal to the contrary, everyone hoped, down at the back of his brain, that perhaps a mistake had been made, and that those submarines reported from Malta would turn out to be a myth.

In fact, next morning at breakfast, the Torpedo-Lieutenant was quite bright and cheery. He was a destroyer expert, and always pooh-poohed submarines as much overrated craft, so now never tired of saying "Destroyers are some good after all, you see," and seemed to take as much pride in the success of the Turkish destroyer, as if it had been an English one which had sunk a Turkish battleship.

Without a doubt, everyone admired the pluck and cunning of this destroyer and its German crew (it was known afterwards that the crew was German), however much—or little—the loss of the *Goliath* affected him; and, truth to tell, it was not the loss of the ship nor of the men that affected most people, but the moral effect and the addition to the general feeling of depression and uneasiness—uneasiness which, it must be remembered, was not by any means chiefly caused by fear for the actual safety of the ships and themselves, but by the dread of what would happen to the Army when left unsupported in its very insecure position on the Peninsula, with the difficulties of supplying itself with stores and reinforcements so enormously increased. Those howitzers, too, might render the position untenable, especially as, given time, there was no reason why the Turks should not bring up more and still heavier guns.

Some of the surviving officers lived on board the *Achates* for a few days, and slept in hammocks on the half-deck, close to the China Doll. He will never forget those nights when he turned in—always nervous of submarines, and with his swimming-belt all ready round his chest, in case of need—and then had to

listen to them relating their gruesome experiences before and after the old ship rolled over and they had jumped into the water. They were suffering the after effects of their shock, and could talk of nothing else all day long, and most of the night as well.

The China Doll would hear, out of the dark, coming from one of them: "You remember when that second explosion came—you were standing close to me—in the battery—the one that shot up that column of water which cut the cutter in half—you remember—it fell on old Tompkins—it was old Tompkins, wasn't it?—it crushed him—don't you remember him howling?—just for a second—and then, not answering when you sung out to him."

Another voice—a big, gruff one—would "chip in": "I'd just said to the Gunner, 'That's not one of our destroyers—look at her funnels—you mark my word—that's not one of ours'—just before we fired that first shot—it didn't hit—I swear I heard a torpedo fired—the first one—the one that hit us under the bridge—and I'm certain I heard someone sing out: 'Gut! sehr gut!'—he must have been a German—he sang it out after each torpedo hit us."

Another voice out of the darkness, from a hammock close to the China Doll, broke in with: "My word! she did topple over—I could never have believed it I was in my cabin—just had time to rush up to the gangway—the water was pouring over the coaming—couldn't stand on the quarter-deck—I don't know how I got to the rails—I dragged myself up somehow, and crawled right round her—oh, my God! the cries inside her—men who couldn't get out."

The big, gruff voice, which had stopped to listen, interrupted again: "I got out through a gun-port, crawled along the side—when she turned over the bilge keel caught me and dragged me under—I never knew how I came up again—a man close to me—swimming in the water—had his face smashed in by a plank which shot up from below—I got hold of the plank—it kept me up till the *Lord Nelson's* picket-boat found me."

It was not as if these disjointed remarks were made only once, but they were repeated over and over again; just as if the thoughts they expressed had been fixed so indelibly in their brains, to the exclusion of everything else, that when night and darkness came they were again so vivid that they had to be given utterance to.

The poor China Doll, with his swimming-belt round his chest, would listen, with hair on end, until he could stand it no longer; then he would jump out, and run up on deck and wait, perhaps for an hour, until they were silent. How grateful he was to wake up and see daylight coming through the gaps in the hatchway awning-cover, and to know that another night was over! A good many more were as thankful as he was.

Next day the early morning "air" reconnaissance—made by aeroplane—

reported having seen five submarines travelling past Kephez Point.

"That puts the hat on it," moaned the Fleet-Surgeon when he heard of them; and everybody marvelled how they had managed to elude the scouting trawlers and destroyers. But most people felt a sense of relief that the days of waiting for their coming were now over, and that whatever was going to happen would do so soon. However, the evening "air reconnaissance" reported that these five submarines were still there, but had now turned out to be buoys which we ourselves had moored—so the grim tension was relieved for a little while.

On that day "Gallipoli Bill" burst very many high-explosive shells on "W" beach, apparently chiefly out of bravado, to express his glee at the sinking of the *Goliath*. Next day the *Agamemnon*, the *Swiftsure*, and the heavy batteries on shore "went" for him, but could not hit him. The "spotting" aeroplanes did their best to locate him and to direct the firing; but a dummy gun is so easily put somewhere, where it can be seen from above, and a real gun can so easily be shifted and hidden, where it cannot be seen, that quite possibly the ships and the shore batteries were never firing at the real gun. At any rate, directly they ceased fire, "Gallipoli Bill" threw half a dozen more shells along the ridge above "W" beach, and "pulled their legs" pretty thoroughly.

Things went on quietly for the next two or three days, although the howitzers did a lot of mischief on shore. Rumours came that a trawler had sighted a periscope off Imbros island, thirteen miles away, and it seemed definitely ascertained that two submarines had arrived at Smyrna.

On the 18th May the *Achates* relieved the *Swiftsure*, and from this date, until driven away by submarines, she became a "bombarding" ship. She once more ceased to fly a flag; the Admiral left her, taking with him his two Assistant Clerks; best of all, the devouring host of strange snotties and their steamboats also departed, and quietness and peace reigned in the gun-room. But, like Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard, the gun-room store was bare—a fact which brought bitter grief to the Pimple and the China Doll.

There was another submarine scare that night. A trawler fired two Very's lights, which meant "have sighted a hostile submarine", and things "hummed" considerably until it turned out that she had mistaken E11, on her way up the Straits, from Mudros, for an enemy submarine.

Also, during that same night the Turks commenced their desperate thirty-six-hour attack on Anzac, and for all that period an almost incessant roar of heavy guns came down wind from there. This attack ended most disastrously for the enemy, who lost more than three thousand men killed. The Honourable Mess heard afterwards many yarns of this fight—yarns of the Turks pressing through

gullies against the Australian and New Zealand trenches, pouring through in dense masses, shouting "Allah! Allah!" and never ceasing that cry, because they believed that no bullet would touch them with the sacred name on their lips, and being shot down in hundreds and hundreds, until, in fact, some of the Australians, who had clambered on top of their parapets the better to shoot, refused to shoot any longer. Pressed along by the masses behind them, the front ranks could not retreat—some, throwing away their rifles, ran towards the trenches with their hands above their heads, apparently demented, shouting "Allah! Allah!"

Perhaps they thought that God would give them victory over the "infidel" with their bare hands; perhaps they wanted to surrender; but none reached those trenches. In front of one maxim alone, 380 dead were counted when at last the attacks had melted away, and the Turks had obtained an armistice to bury their dead.

Now that she was "bombarding" ship, the *Achates* had the job of looking after "Gallipoli Bill", and often an aeroplane would fly up to "spot" for her whilst she tried to knock him out.

Such a day's firing would be arranged and start something like this.

Perhaps Captain Macfarlane had been ashore the afternoon before, to stretch his long legs, and on coming back to the ship would send for the Gunnery-Lieutenant. "Oh, look here, I've been ashore this afternoon. That 6-inch howitzer is bothering everyone a good deal; it dropped one near me—it may not have known I was there—but I thought it distinctly rude; the Left Flank Observation Post—I was up there this afternoon—think they have spotted him—just to the left of that single tree near the windmills—you know it—the place where those dummy field-guns used to be; how about having a try for it in the morning?"

"Yes, sir! Certainly, sir! We had better ask for an aeroplane, I suppose," the very "strict-service" Gunnery-Lieutenant would suggest.

"Certainly! Certainly! Ask them to send a specially nice one this time, perhaps a white one with blue spots would look pretty."

The Gunnery-Lieutenant, who was absolutely devoid of all sense of humour, would look up startled, only to see the Captain thoughtfully tugging at his pointed yellow beard.

"I don't think there are any like that, sir. They have tried various colours, but none are invisible. I think they have none like that, sir."

"Oh! Very well, we must just take our chance. Perhaps they will send us one with pretty red, white, and blue rings," the Captain would reply gravely, without a tremor of an eyelid; and off would go the bewildered Gunnery-Lieutenant to write out a signal "requesting permission to bombard Target 159G7", or whatever

was the dot on the military map nearest to "Gallipoli Bill", and wonder whether Captain Macfarlane was going "off his head". Whilst waiting a reply from the Admiral, he might run across the Fleet-Surgeon and tell him what the Captain had said. "I suppose there's nothing the matter with him, Doc.? You don't think the strain is telling on him?"

"Nothing the matter with him! Of course not," would snap Dr. O'Neill. "It's yourself, you fool; your silly noddle's so stuffed with wretched gunnery, you haven't room for a joke. He was pulling your leg."

"But where's the joke about 'white with blue spots'—I've never seen one like that?" and the Gunnery-Lieutenant would scratch his head.

"Oh! get out of it; you're hopeless!" Dr. O'Neill would growl.

Presently the signal would come that the proposed bombarding had been approved by the Admiral, who would make arrangements for a "spotting" aeroplane at ten o'clock.

Thus were details fixed for another attempt to destroy "Bill".

In the morning the Gunnery-Lieutenant waited to see how the current, or the breeze, or both together, made the ship swing. Perhaps that especial morning she swung with her stern inshore, so that "X" group of 6-inch guns—the group on the starboard side, aft—bore most easily. So, after breakfast, the Gunnery-Lieutenant sent for the War Baby—in charge of these guns—and showed him the exact spot on the map and, taking him up into the main-top, the special tree close to which "Bill" had last been seen—the tree on which he had to train his guns.

The aeroplane with its pilot, the "observer" and his wireless apparatus, started away from the "advanced" aerodrome near Helles lighthouse, commenced to climb up into the "blue", and, when ready, signalled "Ready to Commence".

By this time the Gunnery-Lieutenant in the fore-top, the Captain on the bridge, the War Baby in the sighting hood of X1, and the guns' crews in X1 and X2 beneath it, just abaft the gun-room, were all ready and waiting. "Ranging shot at eight—five—o—o, common shell," the Gunnery-Lieutenant sang down through his voice-pipe; and watched, as X1 fired, away along to the right of Krithia, between the last of the windmills and that single tree, where he hoped that the aeroplane could see "Bill", although he could not do so himself. Up went the cloud-burst, and in perhaps fifty seconds the voice-pipe from the "wireless" room called "Short 200"—the signal that had just come from the aeroplane.

Frequently, on these occasions, the enemy "wireless" stations would "block" the "wireless" signals from the aeroplane, or make "spotting" signals of their own, to confuse the annoyed Gunnery-Lieutenant. Always if the aeroplane ventured too near "Bill", the Turks burst shrapnel round her.

Sights were corrected, and another shot fired; out of the "blue" came the signal "Right, one hundred and fifty yards". That meant altering the training or,

if the gun was kept on that single tree all the time, altering the deflection scale on the sight.

And so, for perhaps twenty rounds, firing went on. "Bill", wherever he was, had never spoken a word; the aeroplane signalled "O.K.", the interpretation of which being that, as far as she could see, the last shell had made a direct hit; and presently the Gunnery-Lieutenant, who generally had the idea that the aeroplane "spotter" didn't know his left hand from his right, or "overs" from "shorts", and also was as blind as any bat, thought it was about time to finish, and would climb down and ask the Captain if he should "pack-up".

The War Baby's guns' crews were then ordered to secure and "sponge out" their guns, and a searchlight signal was made to the aeroplane that the firing was finished. Down she would circle to her aerodrome, and if she had anything exciting to tell, would signal it across from the Naval Signal Station close at hand.

After such a proceeding it often happened that, almost before the aeroplane had come down to land, "Bill" would plump three or four high-explosive shells on "W" beach or in the soldiers' "rest" camp. He was a facetious fellow, very wanting in tact, and most elusive.

To understand the difficulties of hitting him, you must try and imagine yourself on the deck of an ordinary steamer, standing somewhere about twenty feet above the level of the water. The distance of the sea horizon is then just a little over five miles. If you now imagine that, instead of a continuous, uninterrupted curved line, the curve of the horizon is broken up by small gullies and ravines and depressions, in any one of which "Gallipoli Bill" may be concealed—in fact, *is* absolutely hidden from you—and all you know is that he is supposed to be in line with, perhaps, a particular tree which you can see; that up above, there is an aeroplane quite possibly "spotting" on a dummy gun, and that only a direct hit will destroy "Bill", you obtain a good idea of the difficulties of hitting him from where you are—standing in your steamer.

One day, in order to reduce the range, the *Achates* anchored in another billet, off "X" beach, farther along the "outside" coast of the Peninsula, and had hardly dropped her anchor before a cheeky battery of 4.1-inch guns began dropping their shells all round her. It was impossible to locate the battery, and there was no option but to shove off again, out of range. Again, you must bear in mind that the flashes these guns make when fired are very slight, and quite momentary, also that dummy flashes were also fired some distance away. The only sure proof that the actual position of the firing gun had been located was by observing the cloud of dust blown up from the ground in front of the gun. The size and density of this depends naturally upon the kind of ground, and also, of course, a position behind ground thickly covered with bushes is generally chosen to reduce the dust to a minimum; so that, at a range of five miles, what dust is thrown

up is very, very seldom visible.

In the course of the campaign many of the Turks' guns were knocked out by the ships; but every shell must fall somewhere, and if you fire a sufficient number, sooner or later a lucky one may do the "trick" and fall on the exact spot required.

But a ship's magazines are not inexhaustible; with very little effort she could empty them in an hour, and be as useless as a Thames barge until they were refilled. If there had been an inexhaustible supply in the ammunition ships at Mudros, and if a ship had made full use of it, she would have worn out her guns in next to no time; accurate firing would be impossible, and the ship again practically useless.

Knowing all these things, you should now be able to realize the extraordinary difficulties of hitting a single gun from ships at those necessarily long ranges, and be able to understand their comparative failure to do so.

To return to the submarines. It was on a Saturday, the 22nd May, that the first German submarine actually made its appearance off the Peninsula. Just as the Honourable Mess had finished their meagre lunch, a signalman brought the Sub a signal, just received from the *Triumph*, at anchor off Anzac. The Sub read it aloud: "Hostile submarine sighted N.E. of Gaba Tepe".

"Well, it's a good thing to get the show over," the Sub said; and Uncle Podger remarked that "At any rate it will be pretty to watch." They all went on deck; and the sight of a long line of transports, store ships, and hospital ships hurrying across from Anzac to the little protected harbour of Kephalo, in the island of Imbros, made it certain that they evidently did not doubt that a submarine had been seen.

"They're in earnest, at any rate; there's a pretty picture for you," said Uncle Podger as he watched them, the smoke simply pouring out of their funnels as they made haste to get out of danger. All ships round Cape Helles—some forty or fifty ships of all kinds—were ordered to raise steam, and the *Achates*, shortening in her cable, waited for whatever would turn up. Close to her lay the *Swiftsure*; and both had to rely for protection on the keenness of their "look-outs" and the quickness of their guns' crews, because neither ship had torpedo-nets—the *Achates* never possessed any; the *Swiftsure's* were lying in a store-house in Bombay Dockyard, where she had left them a year before war broke out.

Everyone felt sure that "something" would happen shortly, and actually experienced a sense of relief to at last be faced with the danger which had so long threatened. Very many took good care—very good care—to secure their swimming-belts under their tunics, in readiness to blow them up should the ne-

cessity arise.

It was a glorious day, with a very slight "ruffle" on the sea; and, as Uncle Podger told the nervous China Doll: "My dear chap, you couldn't want a better day for a swim."

At half-past one the *Prince George*, in a new coat of paint, steamed under the *Achates'* stern. She had returned from a twenty-four-hours "spell" up the Straits, looking after the Asiatic howitzers, and as she turned slowly into position, to anchor, she suddenly began to blaze away with her small guns, for'ard, and went full speed ahead. At the same moment the cruiser *Talbot*, about a mile away, hoisted the signal "hostile submarine in sight", and fired a blank charge to draw attention to it. "Close water-tight doors" was piped along the decks; the crew dashed down below; and the China Doll, trembling with excitement, made his way for'ard, and saw the splashes of the *Prince George's* shells following and bursting all round what looked like the swirl and heave of water which a big fish would make when swimming just below the surface. One of the gun's crews near him shouted that he saw a periscope; another, an obvious liar, swore that he could see the tail rudders.

Two destroyers came dashing down—a smother of black smoke and white foam—dashing right in among the shell splashes—or so it seemed to the nervous Assistant Clerk—and then began scurrying round and round in circles, seeking something to pounce upon.

But the submarine had dived, and, whatever her skipper's intentions were, she never showed herself again that day.

The *Prince George* came solemnly back and let go her anchor, like some half-worn-out old watch-dog who had gone barking round to drive off intruders and then returned to his kennel door; whilst the *Swiftsure* started off to join the destroyers in their search.

But then commenced a most extraordinary exodus of shipping from Cape Helles. Transports and store ships hove up their anchors and started off on their sixty-mile journey to Mudros to seek safety behind the submarine net across the entrance. The *Achates* received orders to proceed there too, and, you may be sure, was not long getting under way, steaming on a straight course until a signal came from the Admiral, "*Achates* zigzag". The sea from Cape Helles was one long line of hurrying steamers. Two big "crack" French liners, the *France* and *La Provence*, the first of which had only arrived that morning, and had not yet begun to disembark the four thousand troops on board, lingered at anchor for nearly an hour. They were such huge ships, and were such tempting submarine targets, that everyone wondered why they delayed. Presently, however, they joined in the race for safety, and catching up the *Achates*, steamed past her as though she had been at anchor.

Was not the China Doll, and many more, too, aboard her, delighted when the *Achates* slipped through the "gate" in that submarine net!

That night the *Albion* and *Canopus*, off Anzac, remained under way, for safety. During the night the *Albion* "took" the ground off Gaba Tepe, and, not being able to get off, was exposed to a very heavy fire at daybreak from howitzers, field-batteries, and also from the 12-inch guns of a Turkish ironclad, somewhere above The Narrows, and firing across the land. Fortunately, this fire was as inaccurate as it was heavy; but the situation was most dangerous and unpleasant until the *Canopus* came along, in the thick of the shells, laid out some hawsers to her, and at the second attempt towed her clear, with a total loss of only one man killed and nine wounded.

The next two days passed quietly; no submarines were seen or heard of, until on the second morning, at half-past eight, a periscope was suddenly observed passing along between the *Swiftsure* and *Agamemnon*, at anchor off Cape Helles not six hundred yards from each other. Fire was opened immediately, and down dipped the periscope, to appear again just ahead and on the *Swiftsure's* starboard bow. The *Swiftsure's* 14-pounders blazed away, under went the periscope and did not appear again.

It is a mystery why she did not fire a torpedo; presumably she had no time to get into position to make a good shot. A signal sent to the ships off Gaba Tepe and Anzac warned them; but just before half-past twelve the *Triumph* there was struck by two torpedoes. The news that she had a list brought all the *Swiftsure's* officers and men on deck. Sure enough, they could see her through telescopes listing heavily, and two destroyers standing by. In twenty minutes the red composition on her bottom showed above the water; she rapidly fell over, remained bottom upwards for some eight minutes, and then disappeared. Fortunately, very few of her crew were lost.

Another exodus of ships followed, and only the poor old *Majestic* and the *Henri IV*, that quaint old Frenchman—with the Captain who feared neither mine nor torpedo—remained off the Peninsula. Three days' grace the *Majestic* received, and then she too met her fate, a submarine creeping up, with her periscope just showing, and firing two torpedoes at her through a gap between two small store ships. At 6.45 a.m. on Friday, 28th May, the poor old ship received her deathblows, and seven and a half minutes later capsized. For months her ram just appeared above the water off "W" beach, until the autumn gales made her settle farther down and mercifully hid her from sight.

It is not surprising that the general feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness due to the approach or German submarines should, now that they had arrived, sunk two big ships, and driven the others away, give place to one of foreboding and depression.

The army, which had landed with such proud hopes of opening the gates of The Narrows for the fleet to pass through, had fought itself to a standstill at Helles and Anzac; its supply beaches were constantly under shell-fire, and even the "rest" camps daily gave up their toll of dead and wounded from shells shrapnel or high-explosive.

The big ships could not use the narrow waters with freedom or safety; and if one, two, three, or five submarines, whatever their number was at this time, had already made the long voyage from Germany, ten, fifteen, or twenty might follow; and even if the big ships forced their way to Constantinople, these submarines could make it impossible for them to stay there.

Everyone wondered what would be the next move—what would happen next.

There were two bright patches of cheerful sky between the dark clouds: our own submarines, working with unparalleled daring and skill, passed up and down The Narrows, through the nets laid across to catch them, almost at their ease, and prevented the Turks from using the Sea of Marmora to bring up troops or stores; the Commander-in-Chief himself remained optimistic, in spite of all.

Dr. O'Neill, meeting Captain Macfarlane, who had just returned from the yacht *Triad*, which now flew the Commander-in-Chief's flag, asked him: "How about the Admiral, sir? I suppose he is even more depressed than we are?"

"Not a bit of it," Captain Macfarlane told him. "He is quite cheery; he has a lot 'up his sleeve' yet."

From now onwards, the battleships remained behind the nets at Mudros or Kephalo. From these, every now and again, one or other of them would dash out with escorts of destroyers; an aeroplane would circle overhead to 'spot' for her; and she would bombard the Asiatic guns, Achi Baba, Sari Bair, above Anzac, or the Olive Grove, near Gaba Tepe, where the Turks always had several guns. Having done as much damage as possible, back she would steam, zigzagging all the way into safety.

And from this time all stores, ammunition, and reinforcements were carried across to the Peninsula at night in trawlers, small coasting steamers, and what were termed "fleet sweepers"; these being small steamers, of a thousand to fifteen hundred tons, which had—most of them, at any rate—previous to the war, been employed in the passenger and freight traffic on the cross-Channel, Irish, or Channel Island services.

Splendidly did they carry out their work—very frequently under fire.

CHAPTER XV
A Peaceful Month

The day after the *Triumph* had been torpedoed, and two days before the *Majestic* met the same fate, the *Achates* left Mudros for the island of Mytilene, zigzagging all the way, because Mytilene lay at the mouth of the Gulf of Smyrna, and Smyrna harboured several submarines which might possibly be in wait for her.

A grand day it was, the sun shining out of an almost cloudless sky, the sea bluer than the sky, and ruffled pleasantly by a gentle breeze. In the evening she passed through a narrow channel between tree-clad heights, and anchored in the land-locked harbour.

For the last month it had not been possible to go on deck without seeing a gun fired or a shell burst. Down below, in cabin, ward-room, or gun-room, you did escape the sight of them—and the sight of those high explosives bursting among men and horses on the beaches can never be forgotten—but you could not escape the sound of them. Each time the air, coming through scuttle, doorway, skylight, or hatchway, thudded against your ears, the shock, big or little, from far or near, made you wince, and made your mind stop momentarily to picture the actual explosion; your ears tingled, alert and braced, to receive the next shock, until the constant, expectant waiting and wincing became a strain which affected many people, even those who were not then exposed to personal danger. It made them irritable or taciturn, or brought about little alterations of character and disposition, not sufficiently definite, perhaps, to state in words, but real enough to notice at the time. In addition, the constant sight of trawlers and boats full of wounded, passing the *Achates* on their way to hospital ships, had a constant depressing effect, not perhaps fully realized at the moment.

Later, when there came the more imminent personal danger from submarine attack, culminating in the capsizing of two battleships, torpedoed in broad daylight and in full view of thousands, in circumstances which showed how impossible it was, under those conditions of service, to meet submarine attack successfully, the effect of the strain became more pronounced.

Above all, there lacked the success of the expedition, which alone could act

as an antidote to the strain.

When, therefore, the *Achates* wound her way through the tortuous channel into Ieros harbour, her yards almost touching the thick brushwood which clothed the cliffs, and these cliffs, shutting out all sight of the sea, opened out to give a view of an inland lake surrounded by olive-clad hills fading away in the distance, and glowing at the warm touch of the evening sun, their many-tinted green slopes reflected in its placid waters; of villages, quiet little peaceful villages, with the peasants clustering along the water's edge as the ship floated past, or white-sailed boats crowded with smiling, gaily-welcoming Greek men and women, it seemed as though a magician's wand had suddenly guided and wafted her into some fairy harbour, where war and the brutalities of bloodshed could never have been known and would never dare to intrude.

Officers and men stood, drinking in, in their various ways, the beauty, the peace, and the overwhelming quietness of it all.

"Old 'Gallipoli Bill' will drop one among those people in a moment; they're exposing themselves terribly," the Hun grinned.

"They've got 'dug-outs' all handy, somewhere close by; you bet they have!" Rawlins said.

"I wonder how our three chaps are getting on at 'W' beach;" said the Sub, smacking the open-mouthed and staring China Doll on his back, so that his doll's eyes nearly fell out. "My jumping Jimmy, what a place! My blessed stars! What a bathe we'll have when we've dropped the 'killick'. I'll ask the Commander," and stalked away to find him, banging every member of the Honourable Mess he met with his fist, with shouts of "My jumping Jupiter, what a place!" The Pimple pointed out to the China Doll one of the boats they passed. Half full of oranges and bananas it was; and their mouths watered and their eyes brightened as they thought of the feast they would have if it came alongside and the ward-room messman did not buy them all.

The ship slowly turned round another bluff, and a collier with two English submarines lying alongside her came into view.

"They rather spoil the picture," Uncle Podger said, "but we needn't look at 'em."

Then the *Achates* let go her anchor, the cable rattled noisily, stopped, and the ship lay still.

A quarter of an hour later, "hands to bathe" was "piped", and in less than ten minutes, at least five hundred officers and men were bobbing in the water alongside, and the air was alive with their cheery shouts. The men dived off the booms, the nettings, out of the gangways, or climbed down her sides; the water for'ard was so thick with black heads and white shoulders, that when another man and yet another, a constant stream of them, dived in, one could not help

wondering if there was a clear space for them to dive into, though the others always did manage to "open out" and let the newcomer in without accident.

Aft, some of the Honourable Mess were diving off the top of the accommodation ladder; others, the more cautious ones, preferred to drop off the foot of it. The Hun went off the top, so did Rawlins. Uncle Podger walked sedately down the ladder, turned a back somersault, and bobbed up again, in time to see the Pimple make a show of diving off the top, decide that it was too high, and walk down it. The China Doll, trying to attract attention, wouldn't even dive from the foot of the ladder. "You'll promise not to duck me, won't you?" he squeaked, and lowered himself down, holding on to a rope. The Sub, with his gnarled muscles showing under his bathing dress, and disdaining the twenty-foot dive from the ladder top, climbed to the edge of the after bridge with a water polo ball under his arm, threw it far out from the ship, climbed the rails, balanced himself for a moment, roared out "Look out, you jumping shrimps!" and dived forty feet into the water, cutting it like a knife, and coming to the surface some thirty yards farther away. The more sedate ward-room officers, disrobing in their cabins, heard his stentorian, roaring shouts of, "My jumping Jimmies! What a place!" Presently they too appeared on deck, twisting their towels round the quarter-deck rails before they joined the merry splashing throng; the little Padre had his swimming-belt round his chest, and his everlasting pipe in his mouth. The Hun and Uncle Podger, seeing him come down the ladder, winked at each other, and waited to see what would happen when he jumped into the water; but were disappointed, for he lowered himself carefully; the swimming-belt kept his head well above water, and he paddled about, still smoking.

Around and among all these swimmers paddled the Greeks in their quaint, picturesque boats, watching them and smiling with amusement.

The Hun and Rawlins, slightly out of breath, after having disappeared for a few brief moments below the surface of the water in their efforts to decide which had ducked the other, caught hold of the stern of a boat which happened to be near, and drawing themselves half out of the water, grinned happily at a bevy of plump young damsels sitting there. The girls, laughing merrily, gave them each an orange; whereupon they slipped back into the water and proceeded to eat them. But the sight of these two lying placidly on their backs and devouring their oranges was too much for the others. Uncle Podger with his trudgeon stroke reached the unsuspecting Rawlins first, seized his orange, ducked him, and dived, only to come up among the enemy—the Pimple, the Sub, and the outraged Rawlins. The War Baby threw himself into the mêlée; the Hun, swallowing the rest of his orange, joined in too; and the life of Uncle Podger was only saved by a shower of oranges, and peals of girlish laughter from the boat.

Securing their prizes they shouted, "Thanks, awfully! Merci beaucoup!"

hoping that they might understand French; and the War Baby, who knew a few words of Spanish, called out, "Gratia! Señoritas!" hoping they could understand that. But language did not matter; they knew what was meant to be expressed, and shrieked with laughter.

The Fleet-Paymaster, puffing along by the side of Dr. Gordon, who looked exactly like a walrus in the water, grunted out: "We're too old, I suppose, for 'em to chuck oranges at us? Let's try!"

And they did; and each got his orange, and his shriek of laughter when he tried to eat it without spoiling the taste with sea water.

All this time the China Doll, who could only swim a few strokes, did not venture far from the foot of the ladder, very miserable that everybody seemed to have forgotten him, and knowing that if he did venture out among the others he would certainly be ducked—which he hated—and very probably drowned.

Up on deck, Captain Macfarlane, grimly looking on, met the Gunnery-Lieutenant coming up from performing his trick of tossing a hoop off the top of the ladder, and then diving through it as it lay on the surface of the water—he had done this about ten times already, as if he were carrying out some drill or religious exercise.

"Mr. Gunnery-Lieutenant," Captain Macfarlane said, tugging thoughtfully at his beard; "the Great War is still on, is it not?" and the startled Gunnery-Lieutenant, the hoop in one hand, the other raised to his dripping hair in wild salute, replied: "Oh! Yes, sir! As far as I know, sir!" and, later on, gave it as his opinion that "the Skipper must be going off his head".

Presently the bugle sounded the "retire", and everyone splashed back to the ship, the members of the Honourable Mess going down to the half-deck, chattering like magpies round the Pink Rat's cot whilst they rubbed themselves down and dressed.

"I never got an orange. I do think you chaps might have brought me one," the China Doll squeaked, a little upset because no one had taken any notice of him; so they chased him round the half-deck with their wet towels, till he shrieked for mercy and was happy again.

Then they rushed up on deck, because the Hun and Bubbles meant to ask those girls on board to show them the holes made by the Smyrna shells, as some little "return" for the oranges.

The others had "dared" them to do this; and they would have asked them, but were too late—their boat had paddled back to the village.

What a dinner they had that night!

The miserable little messman, for once, had risen to the occasion, and bought potatoes, cabbages, lettuce, and onions, and fruit—oranges and bananas—which of course were "extras".

"I'm jolly sorry that the other three aren't here," Uncle Podger remarked, as he skinned his fourth orange. "Wouldn't old Bubbles have loved them? Wouldn't he have been pretty to watch?"

On these occasions, when "extras" had been provided, a comic scene always followed in the pantry. In order that the messman could know who devoured his precious "extras", and could put the names down in his book, he had to keep a very smart "look-out" through the sliding doors in the pantry bulkhead; and Barnes, who hated him like poison, would block one and then the other with his huge head and shoulders, so that he should not see which of the "young gen'l'men" had taken an orange or banana. As Uncle Podger always said on such occasions: "It was pretty to watch him and Barnes dodging each other backwards and forwards, from side to side."

Barnes would slide across one of the trap-doors, then block up the other; across would dart the little messman, slide back the one which had just been closed, and peep through it. Bang would go the other, and Barnes would be seen pushing the messman aside, muttering "'Ere you; you're getting in the way, you are", reaching through, and making pretence of drawing back any dirty plates or dishes which stood on the sideboard. And so this game went on; whilst the Pimple and the China Doll, keeping their eyes about them, would seize fruit at the most favourable moment, drop the skins on someone else's plate if possible, and if not, throw them far under the table.

Barnes, afterwards, when he cleared the table and swept up the deck, would do it to a muttered accompaniment of: "That nawsty little beggar, a-countin' up and a-puttin' down everythink of 'is beastly hextras. 'Umph!" (bang would go the broom against a leg of the table). "And who eats 'em? 'Umph! the nawsty, slimy toad. I'll learn 'im, me as what 'as a pub of 'is own at 'ome—or 'ad, afore this 'ere war a-started."

The days which followed were days of real delight, never to be forgotten by the Honourable Mess, who revelled in them and in the noiseless, peaceful nights when they slept on the quarter-deck, and woke to slip off their pyjamas and plunge over the side into the transparent water.

In a week's time, very early one morning, up the harbour came the grey picket-boat with the Orphan; behind her followed Trawler No. 370 with Bubbles, the Lamp-post, and all that was left of their beach party.

"Come along, you chaps!" called Uncle Podger, waving his towel, when at last they came aboard. "My! but you do look scarecrows! Off with your grubby clothes and flop in. It's simply splendid!" They did flop in; and that morning's bathe, when the Honourable Mess was once more united, was a memorable one,

especially to the "War Baby"—the officer of the watch—who could not make them come out of the water until long after the regulation time, and until the Commander had twice sent for him to know why he didn't stop that confounded noise round the foot of the ladder.

They arranged a grand picnic next day, and hired two of the little Greek sailing-boats which ferried people across from one side of the harbour to the other. They bought a basketful of oranges from the Greek boats alongside—it was cheaper to do this than to get them through the messman—they took a kettle of water, tins of jam, milk, and butter, loaves of bread; and away they went, with a merry breeze, the whole crowd of them, the Sub, Uncle Podger, the Orphan, Rawlins, and Bubbles in one, the Lamp-post and the remainder in the other. They raced the two boats to a tiny island at the mouth of the entrance of the harbour, beached them without rubbing off much paint, stripped, and larked in the water and out of it, on the grass under some trees.

Then the China Doll and the Pimple were appointed "cooks of the mess", and wandered off to collect driftwood to make a fire on the beach, whilst the others stretched themselves on the grass to dry themselves until they were too hot, then plunged in again till they were cool. By the time the fire had begun to crackle famously the Sub, Uncle Podger, and two of the snotties—the Lamp-post and Bubbles, who were over eighteen years old—had found their pipes, lighted them, and were puffing away luxuriously. The Sub, whose heart warmed benevolently within him, called out: "Carry on smoking, my bouncing beauties—every mother's son of you—so long as you aren't sick!" So off dashed the others to their clothes, and produced the well-worn pipes which they had brought with them, hoping that the Sub would be in a good temper. Even the China Doll produced a cigarette case, and made a great fuss of lighting a "Virginian", puffing at it like a girl, then holding it in his fingers because the smoke made his eyes water. "No 'stinkers'! No 'gaspers' here! Phew. What a horrible smell!" the others shouted. The Orphan pretended to faint, Bubbles threw himself down in the grass and groaned.

"I haven't any 'Gyppies'," pleaded the Assistant Clerk. "You smoke 'stinkers' yourselves sometimes.

"Only on board, China Doll, to drown the smell of the gun-room, when you're in it," Bubbles gurgled. "Get to leeward, you little stink-pot!" The Pimple and Rawlins made a rush for him; he dodged them, and waded into the water.

"Come back!" they shouted as they followed him. "We're getting wet; we can't swim a stroke," and drove him out until only his head and neck were above the water. They made him smoke it there, throwing clods of earth at him whenever he attempted to take it out of his mouth to prevent his eyes watering.

"Nice, quiet, gentlemanly lads," said Uncle Podger from the grass. "Very

pretty to watch, aren't they?"

But the Pimple—earnestly occupied in keeping the China Doll and the "overpowering" smell of his tiny cigarette from destroying the aroma from nine fairly foul pipes loaded with "ship's" tobacco—and the China Doll thus engaged, with only his head above water, were neglecting their duty as cooks to the Honourable Mess. The kettle was trying to lift off its lid, and threatened to fall over.

It was saved just in time, and the Pimple, violently seized by the Hun and Rawlins, escorted back to his duties, whilst the China Doll waded out with his cigarette damped and "dead".

The Sub, Uncle Podger, and the Lamp-post lay and smoked, and watched the others carrying all the paraphernalia of tea from the two boats to a little place under a shady tree, cutting slices of bread, and opening the tins of milk, butter, and jam.

"Isn't this an extraordinary change from ten days ago?" said Uncle Podger presently, with a great sigh of enjoyment. "The whole place looks as if it had never even heard of such a thing as war."

"It may look like it, Uncle, but you'd be nearer the mark if you said that it had never really known peace," the Lamp-post said. "Why, Mytilene, and the other islands round about here, have seen fighting all through history—history was made in these parts—right away from the year one—five hundred years before it, too, and they haven't known peace—not for any length of time—ever since. The Phoenicians, Athenians, Carthaginians, Romans, Persians, Syrians, Turks, and Greeks—they've all had a "go" at it—landed and killed the men, garrisoned the place for a few years, till they were "booted" out or killed by the next little lot to come along.

"I was only asking the Interpreter[#] this morning, and he told me that there are villages up there" (and the Lamp-post pointed across the harbour to the slopes of the hills) "which are full of Turks, and they daren't come down to the Greek villages except in numbers and in the daylight—nor dare the Greeks go up to them—for fear of being killed. He told me that the Greeks and Turks are always fighting on these islands, and on the mainland right along the coast to Smyrna. The Greek chaps get on their nerves; they work hard, are smarter business men, lend money, which makes them very unpopular; and there are so many of them in the coast towns that the Turks are really frightened of them, so they kill them whenever they get a comfortable opportunity and can raise the energy. Hereditary enemies they are, and vendettas go on just as they have done for centuries; but the Turk has generally got an old rifle, of sorts, so it's the Greek who gets killed in the long run.

[#] The *Achates* had a Syrian interpreter on board.

"You see," went on the Lamp-post, "all the Turkish soldiers who used to keep the peace—sometimes—in the villages and small towns have been withdrawn to Smyrna or the Dardanelles, and now they are away the Turks and Greeks are at each other's throats hammer and tongs. The Interpreter told me that there are more than thirty thousand refugees from the coast in Mytilene alone, and thousands more are trying to escape before they are killed."

"That's why the Greeks here are giving the Turks in the hills such a rotten time, I suppose?" the Sub asked.

"It rather spoils the picture," Uncle Podger said; "I wish you hadn't told us."

"Let us go, some day, and see the castle at Mytilene," the Lamp-post suggested. "The Interpreter says that it was started five hundred years B.C.—by the Phoenicians or someone like them, and has been added on to by everybody else ever since. He says you can see some parts which are Roman and some which the Persians built. I'm frightfully keen on things like that," he added apologetically:

"Come along, you chaps! Everything's ready!" the others shouted, carrying up the kettle of boiling water.

A grand tea they had, although the Orphan upset a good deal of the only tin of milk over himself. That did not matter much, for they managed to save most of it with spoons.

"Pass the Orphan, please," one or other would say, "I want some more milk;" and whoever was sitting next to him, Bubbles or Rawlins, would sing "He's too heavy," and pretend to scrape more milk off his bathing-suit.

The China Doll and the Pimple, however, felt that there were two things lacking to make the picnic a complete success—sardines and some tinned sausages to cook over the fire; but, of course—and they sighed heavily—the gun-room store was empty.

The China Doll, presently, blinked and blushed, and suggested that they should ask the War Baby to the next picnic. There was a shout of "He's all right, but he doesn't belong to the gun-room—this is a gun-room picnic."

"But, if he came, he might bring some sardines and 'bangers'. I know they have some in the ward-room—I asked their messman."

"You're a perfect marvel, China Doll; fancy thinking all that out in your noddle!" the Pimple said admiringly. "I votes we do ask him."

Then the Orphan, catching sight of the wet remains of that "Virginian" cigarette lying in the grass, pretended to faint; and when he'd been revived by a convenient twig twirled round inside his nose, groaned: "I'm awfully sorry, you chaps, but didn't you notice that awful smell again," and pointed to that unhappy

cigarette end.

"Don't be silly," the China Doll kept on saying, blushing and trying to hide it; but they sent him twenty yards along the beach, made him scrape with his hands a hole, a foot deep, in the muddy sand, and bury it there. "You've eaten all the oranges," he almost "blubbed" when he returned. "My back's all sunburnt, and my feet are tingling. I've been treading on something which hurts."

They threw some oranges at him and made him happy, but he kept on looking at the soles of his feet.

"Well, if you will tread on sea-urchins' eggs you can't expect anything else," the Lamp-post said, having a look at them himself.

"Lend us a knife, somebody; he's got thirty or forty of the spikes in his feet." But the pain of having them extracted with a pocket-knife was too much for the Assistant Clerk; he said he'd get Dr. Gordon to take them out when they went back to the ship. He ate his oranges, and looked rather miserable whilst he dressed, slowly.

The others played the newly invented "submarine game", standing in a ring with the water up to their chins, their legs wide apart, and stones in their hands; whilst the Orphan, who took the part of a submarine, started in the middle, dived, and had not to come to the surface before he had torpedoed somebody by swimming between his legs. If any part of him showed up above the surface, or he came up to breathe, the others threw stones at him; and if he was hit he had lost, and started again. The torpedoed one had to change places with the "submarine"; and when the fat Bubbles was at last torpedoed and had to take this leading part, you can imagine that parts of him showed very often, and he laughed so much that he couldn't keep his head under for ten seconds at a time.

"Very pretty to watch," remarked Uncle Podger. Then they all scrambled out, dried themselves in the sun, dressed; stowed away all the tea "gear" in the boats—the kettle, teacups, knives, spoons, and plates; carried the China Doll down to the boat to the tune of "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave"; had a search for a missing spoon; found it; shoved off, and raced back to the ship, the losing boat's crew to pay for the oranges.

"Off you go to Dr. Gordon," the Sub told the China Doll, "and just pretend those feet of yours don't hurt you. If you go limping about looking like a dying duck in a thunderstorm, you won't get the kind of sympathy you want—not from me!"

"That youth behaves like a little girl. He always wants people to take notice of him and pet him. Whatever will he be like when he grows up?" the Sub said afterwards to Uncle Podger.

"A good beating twice a week would make a man of him," advised the Clerk. "He is a good enough little chap, but he does want beating."

"I'll see what can be done," answered the Sub thoughtfully.

At that time the Greek population was extremely polite, and glad to see British Naval uniforms. Everyone who passed took off his hat, the girls were all smiles, and the children flocked round, holding out flowers, though their homage was slightly diminished by insistent demands for "one pen-ny". In fact, they became a beastly nuisance after a while.

Now you must understand that the *Achates* had not been sent to Ieros for the purpose of providing entertainment for the gun-room officers, but to superintend the blockade of Smyrna. To make this blockade effective, she had under her orders two mine-layers, some destroyers, and some submarines. These were always going out or coming in through the picturesque entrance, and the submarine off duty used to make fast alongside the *Achates*. Naturally she proved a great attraction to the gun-room officers, who used to bother the lives out of the sub-lieutenants—seconds in command—to show them round.

One of these, a cheery sportsman, burst out with: "Oh, hang it all! Come along, every one of you; four at a time, and I'll work through the whole blooming Mess and get it over and done with."

He did get it 'over', though the last four, the China Doll among them, were rather a trial.

"But if," bleated the Assistant Clerk, standing on the plates below the open conning-tower, "if you did happen to dive when the lid was open, wouldn't the water come in?"

There was a roar of laughter from the others (which he wanted); but the second in command, whose patience had not yet quite vanished, said: "Oh, that's nothing! that often happens. We just stand down here, puff out our cheeks, and blow up through the conning-tower—blow very hard until someone climbs up and puts the lid on again."

"Is that really true?" gasped the China Doll, not quite certain whether he was being made a fool.

Much as the officers appreciated the change of scene at Ieros, the men appreciated it still more. All except the beach party and the boats' crews (a very small proportion) had been cooped up in the noisy, crowded mess-decks ever since leaving Port Said. They to could now go ashore occasionally; twice a day they could jump overboard and swim in the glorious, buoyant water alongside, and once a week route marches took place early in the morning, before the sun became too hot. These route marches, however, were not very popular.

You may be certain that the first time Fletcher the stoker went ashore, he took "Kaiser Bill" with him.

"You should have seen him nipping off the bits of grass," he told the Orphan later on; "he did enjoy himself, sir!"

Whilst here, the wireless press news came each morning, and was not reassuring, for the Germans had commenced their advance through Galicia and into Poland, and nothing seemed able to stop them. News, too, from the Peninsula was bad—nearly a thousand men had been lost when the transport *Royal Edward* was sunk by a submarine, and another desperate attempt to capture Krithia had failed with heavy losses.

As a set-off against all these dismal tales there were rumours of mysterious monitors on their way out with heavy guns, of reinforcements pouring eastwards, and of the brilliant exploits of our own submarines above the Dardanelles, in the Sea of Marmora.

CHAPTER XVI
A Glorious Picnic

Among the many queer characters they met at Ieros, none was more quaint than a Mr. M'Andrew, who appeared on the scene in a very smart, rakish little motor yacht with two masts and a gay awning, very reminiscent of the River Thames. Sometimes he appeared flying the Greek flag, and bringing the rubicund military governor of Mytilene to "protest" against the British having done "this" or "that"; with a cheery "Au revoir, Messieurs; à Constantinople!" when he left the ship. At other times he flew the red ensign, and took Captain Macfarlane and the Commander for—as far as the gun-room knew—pleasant little sea trips. Generally he flew no flag at all, and had a most motley crew of picturesque brigands with him.

Occasionally the yacht used to lie alongside the *Achates*, and once or twice the Sub tempted Mr. M'Andrew down into the gun-room to take a glass of iced soda-water, of which he seemed excessively fond. He never touched alcohol.

He looked like a retired bank-manager who possibly devoted his leisure to teaching in a Sunday or "ragged" school; he was broad and plump, and perhaps fifty years of age—a most placid-looking individual who always wore an old, but not shabby, blue suit, across the ample waistcoat of which stretched a very thick gold watch and chain. He talked very simply—as if talking was mere waste of breath—and his conversation was chiefly about soda-water and the places he remembered where you could buy it cheapest. He always carried a bunch of raisins

in one of his side-pockets, and ate them deliberately, one at a time, whenever he was not smoking a very old briar pipe. The Sub used to ask him to dinner or lunch, but he would refuse. "No, thank you; I never have meals; I just go on munching raisins, and have some bread occasionally."

Rumour had told the Honourable Mess that he was really a daring pirate, and led forays against the Turks in the little bays on the mainland—over against Mytilene—though never a word could they get from him about his adventures—about anything, in fact, except soda-water, the merits of dried raisins, and the unfortunate family troubles of his crew.

There was one old man who used to sit on the top of the deck-house all day long without saying a word to a soul—a shrunken old Greek with very sharp features and black eyes which seemed to blaze from their deep sockets in the most startling way. When you first saw him he looked a poor, withered, feeble old "dodderer", in spite of the Winchester rifle he always gripped across his knees, and the two filled bandoliers of cartridges round his waist and shoulders; but when he turned to look at you the fierceness of his eyes gave him a most extraordinary appearance. Mr. M'Andrew used to take him down a loaf of bread—provided by the gun-room—pat him on the shoulder, and say a few words to him. "Poor old man!" Mr. M'Andrew told them, "poor old man; he's rather miserable. You see, he and his three sons kept a flock of sheep on some little island near the coast, and the Turks came along, killed his sons and the sheep, and tried to kill him, but he managed to escape. He knew of a crack in a rock, where he hid by day—for three days—crawling out at night to suck the grass and eat berries and leaves, until the Turks gave up looking for him and went away—thought he must be dead. I just happened to be going past there yesterday, saw him wave, and brought him along. He won't be really happy again until he's killed a Turk for each of his sons; he thinks I'll give him the chance soon, so won't leave me."

"But shall you?" the Honourable Mess cried with one accord.

"This really is not at all bad soda-water," Mr. M'Andrew went on in his slow, deliberate way. "I remember when I was in Mexico—no, it reminds me of some I got at Haiti during the revolution, the one of 1901. As I was saying, most of my crew have had a good deal of family trouble one way or the other. There's that little lad who cleans the brasswork. He's the only one left of a family of twelve—father, mother, brothers, and sisters. He hid in the roof when the Turks cut the throats of the others one night. He came along here—no, I don't know how—and wants me to let him have a rifle. Oh, those other chaps; nice, gentle-looking fellows, aren't they? They can't bear the Turks—more or less for the same reason! Some of their relatives have been killed by them, or they've been driven away from the mainland and have nothing left of farms, or shops, or flocks, wives or children. They just come along to me, and I lend them some old rifles I just

happen to have."

"Have they had a chance of using them?" the snotties asked. "Most of them say they have killed a Turk or two; tell me so when they come first. And I expect they have," went on Mr. M'Andrew in his placid voice, feeling in his pocket for another raisin, and fumbling with the fob of his gold watch-chain.

The China Doll, in fact all the gun-room officers, spent a good deal of time watching him moving about among the fierce, black-eyed ruffians, who sat about the deck of the smart little motor-yacht with their bandoliers across their shoulders, their rifles (which Mr. M'Andrew just happened to have lent them) gripped firmly in their hands. They cleaned these interminably, and Mr. M'Andrew walked about and spoke a few words to each, just as you could picture him walking about the boys in his Ragged School in Glasgow, distributing raisins and bread to them just as he might have done to his boys.

One day the motor-yacht towed in a clumsy, old, local trading schooner, and anchored her abreast the *Achates*. She turned out to be a Turkish trading ship which had been becalmed off some Greek village. The Greeks captured her, and had killed at least one of her crew, for his body still lay on the deck, just at the break of the poop.

"Oh, no!" said Mr. M'Andrew, in genuine surprise, "I had nothing to do with it. I simply found her a derelict and towed her in here. The rest of the crew were probably killed as well, but thrown overboard. Oh, no! that's nothing unusual."

The dead Turk was handed over to the authorities, and this lumbering old derelict—she looked at least fifty years old, and was probably a hundred—swung at anchor, close to the *Achates*, for some days.

The Sub had a brilliant "brain wave", and suggested that the gun-room should commission her, one day, for a picnic. Captain Macfarlane gave permission, and then came the question of asking the War Baby. Finally it was unanimously decided to do so; and—"Well", as Bubbles said when he gave the invitation, "if you can bring some sardines and sausages along with you, so much the better." They asked Mr. Meredith, the R.N.R. Lieutenant, and Dr. Gordon, the R.N.V.R. Surgeon, and they asked the Padre too; and, wonderful to relate, that pale-faced little man jumped at the offer—"so long as he could smoke his pipe all the time". The other two of course accepted.

After dinner, and after considerable deliberation and more noise, the following notice appeared on the board in the gun-room, under the alarum-clock and the five broken-down wrist-watches:—

```
NOTICE

To-morrow, Thursday, 17th June, H.M. Schooner *What's Her
Name* will be commissioned, at 1.30 p.m.

The following appointments have been made to her:—

Captain ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...  The Sub.
First-class Passenger   ... ... ... ...  Mr. Meredith.
First Lieutenant and Boatswain  ... ...  The Pink Rat.
Officer of Marines and Master-at-Arms    The War Baby.
Surgeon and Captain of the Main-top ...  Dr. Gordon.
Chaplain and Official Photographer  ...  The Rev. Horace Gibbons.
Paymaster and Man-of-all-Work   ... ...  Uncle Podger.
Captain of the Fore-top ... ... ... ...  The Lamp-post.
Foretopmen  ... ... ... ... ... ... ...  The Hun, The Orphan,
                                             Rawlins
Maintopmen  ... ... ... ... ... ... ...  Bubbles, The Pimple.
Cabin Boy   ... ... ... ... ... ... ...  The China Doll.
Second Cabin Boy    ... ... ... ... ...  Barnes.
The Ancient Mariner ... ... ... ... ...  Fletcher the Stoker.
The Albatross   ... ... ... ... ... ...  "Kaiser Bill".

*Uniform of the day—Pirate Rig.*

Coloured shirt, vest, or jersey.
Trousers or shorts.
Head-dress—any old thing, as long as it's hideous.
```

Fletcher they asked because they thought the old man would enjoy "a bit of an outing", and "Kaiser Bill" was asked because Fletcher wouldn't enjoy it without him.

Barnes, on reading the notice and seeing his own appointment, growled to the messman: "What did them young gen'l'men a-think they was a-doin' of; no, 'e wasn't a-goin' a-sailorisin' in that 'ere craft what murder 'ad been done in, an' the blood-stain on 'er deck an' all—not 'e;" but he changed his mind and went aboard with the Pirate Crew, grinning like a huge schoolboy, with his big basket of food (including the War Baby's sardines and sausages), a bucket of coal and

wood to make a fire, a kettle, frying-pan, and a barricoe of water. They climbed aboard, handed up all the "gear" and their towels, and the Sub ran a boat's ensign, which he had borrowed, up to the main masthead.

"Hello, Doc! brought your Harley Street bag with you, I see." Dr. Gordon laughed. "Yes," he twinkled, "it might be useful." The little Padre, beaming, passed aboard his camera, and climbed up after it.

To give you an idea of what this piratical crew looked like, the Orphan wore a red tam-o'-shanter, a yellow-and-black sweater, running "shorts", and gymnasium shoes; and Bubbles had an old kicked-in bowler hat on the back of his head, a green football shirt stuffed into striped bathing drawers, and a pair of sea-boots. He made a picturesque villain, especially when he gripped a captured Turkish bayonet between his teeth and gurgled at the China Doll. Most of them started with naked Turkish bayonets tucked into their belts; but, on Uncle Podger's advice, the Sub sent these back in the boat which had taken them all to the *What's Her Name*. What a funny old-fashioned tub she was, and what stories she could have told of all the years she had been toiling round the coast, among the islands! Her high poop had rails round it, some of the wooden posts beautifully carved, but most of them of rough wood, which showed that she had "come down in the world" in her old age. Between the poop and the still higher fo'c'sle was a "well" deck, with its dark blood-stain, the foremast right amidships, and two big open hatchways, one for'ard and one abaft the mast. Round her fo'c'sle were more rails, some handsomely carved, and on it was an antediluvian windlass for hoisting the anchor. The cable was so rusted and worn that it seemed hardly possible that she could trust to it to ride out even the lightest of gales.

Her masts—the lower masts at any rate—and the wide-spreading foreyard were good, sound bits of timber, but the top-masts and fore-tops'l yards looked anything but sound, and her "standing" rigging was so chafed and so badly "set up" that her murdered crew must have been "past masters" in the art of sailing her gently to prevent her masts carrying away.

"Well, what about it?" the Sub asked Mr. Meredith, with a note of anxiety in his voice. "The breeze is blowing straight out of the harbour; if we run to lee'ard, 'twill be too narrow there to beat back, won't it? We'd best start beating to wind'ard, hadn't we? Look here," he said, "this is rather out of my line; you'd best run the show. You'd better start a mutiny right away."

As Mr. Meredith had been in sailing-ships for years, and had been Captain of a full-rigged ship before he was thirty, what he didn't know about sailing wasn't worth knowing. "All right," he smiled, "I'm game;" and seizing the unresisting Sub by the neck of his coloured jersey, hurled him to the deck with fierce yells, and planting one foot on his chest, roared: "Clear lower deck! I'm now the Captain of the *What's Her Name*. Now, you dog," he hissed, as the pirate crew

”fell in”, ”get up and ’fall in’ among those rascals; another word and you’ll walk the plank, and your bones shall bleach on the coral islands of the Spanish Main. Ha! ha!”

The crew, overawed by his daring, and the ferocity of his appearance in a Turkish fez, a red shirt, Sam Browne belt, and khaki riding-breeches, gave three cheers for the new Captain; old Fletcher, who had put ”Kaiser Bill” in a safe place where he could not fall down the hatchways, smiled indulgently; and Barnes, trying to enter into the spirit of the game, grumbled in an undertone: ”This ’ere ’clear lower deck’ and ’fall in’ sounds too much like the real thing,” and ”’e didn’t see quite where the fun came in.”

Then the Lamp-post and his foretopmen, the Hun, the Orphan, and Rawlins, were sent off to clear the jibs and slack away the tops’l gaskets up aloft, and to learn where their proper halyards ”ran”; Dr. Gordon, the Pimple, and Bubbles went aft to get the big spanker ready for setting; Barnes and the China Doll were ordered to explore the little cook-house, just under the fo’c’sle; Fletcher had strict orders to keep alight the cigar which the Sub had brought him, and enjoy himself at all costs, and all the others followed Mr. Meredith up on the fo’c’sle to heave up the cable.

In five minutes after getting on board, the Orphan and Rawlins were climbing out along the bowsprit and jib-boom, and the Lamp-post and the Hun were up aloft, out along the tops’l-yard, unlashing the gaskets and having a grand time; whilst the crowd on the fo’c’sle began levering round the old horizontal windlass (”wild cat”, Mr. Meredith told them, was its proper name) with two long levers, like crowbars, stuck in the holes at each end of it.

”Let’s have a ’chanty’,” they called, and the Sub started ”We’ll rant and we’ll roar”; but that did not ”fit in”, so Mr. Meredith gave them a very old one:

”For the times are hard, and the wages low;
Leave her, Johnny, leave her.
Last night I heard the Old Man say,
’Tis time for us to leave her.”

Whilst he sung the first line to a mournful dirge, they shifted the crowbars into fresh holes, and then, hauling aft on them, joined in the chorus: ”Leave her, Johnny, leave her”; shifted them again whilst he chanted the third line, and pulled to ”’Tis time for us to leave her”; and each time they pulled the ”wild cat” round, the links of the old rusty cable came creaking in through the hawse-pipe, and the metal pawls of the ”wild cat” fell, ”clink-clank”, into the ratchet notches.

In a minute everybody had joined in the chanty, the Orphan and Rawlins

out beyond the fo'c'sle on the bowsprit, the Lamp-post and the Hun busy aloft, Dr. Gordon and his "hands" aft. The China Doll, dashing up to have one pull at the levers, chipped in too; whilst Barnes bellowed "Leave her, Johnny, leave her" (thinking it was something about a girl) from inside the cook-house; and old Fletcher, busy with his cigar, beamed at everyone through his gold spectacles.

Presently Mr. Meredith, leaning over the bows, sang out: "She's 'up and down'. Heave away, my hearties! 'Leave her, Johnny, leave her'," and ran aft to take the wheel; the Orphan and Rawlins, scrambling back on the fo'c'sle, hoisted the jib, and in a few more turns of the "wild cat" the clumsy old "tub" began to pay off before the breeze.

Dr. Gordon, the Pink Rat, and the Pimple set the spanker, hauled taut the clumsy "sheet", and the poor old *What's Her Name* slowly pushed her way through the water.

"Stand by aloft!" Mr. Meredith hailed the fore-top. "Let go gaskets! Overhaul buntlines! Come down from aloft! You on deck, there! Sheet home! Sheet home! Haul taut lee braces! Right you are!" as, somewhat confused and muddled, the foretopmen managed at last to set that tops'l. "Belay all!"

Mr. Meredith made a wry face. "She won't reach to wind'ard much, Doc, with that old fore-tops'l drawing.

"Haul taut your lee braces, lads! Hoist your fore stays'l! Ease off jib sheets!"

The foretopmen were having all the sport, so the maintopmen dashed for'ard to help them; and by the time the anchor had been catted and secured, the *What's Her Name* was, as Mr. Meredith said, "moving as fast as a snail and as sideways as a crab". "We shan't get far to-day, Doc."

Nor did they; though what mattered that? They were as happy as kings; the "going about" was such fun; everybody had something to do, especially when the Padre, the China Doll, or the War Baby slacked off a wrong rope at the right time or a right rope at the wrong time. It was grand fun, and old Fletcher, sitting on the poop yarning with Uncle Podger, thoroughly enjoyed himself; whilst from for'ard a little column of grey smoke, and an occasional bellow of "Leave her, Johnny, leave her", showed that Barnes, getting tea ready, was also quite happy.

The China Doll stole aft and called up to the Pimple, standing on the main "cross-trees", above the spanker "jaws": "Pimple, I say, Pimple, there are five tins of sausages. Isn't that grand?"

Suddenly, from for'ard, there came shrieks and agonized yells for Fletcher.

"Fletcher! Hurry! Come quickly! Help! Help!"

The Orphan and the Hun flew up the rigging, yelling "that 'Kaiser Bill' had broken loose, and was attacking them"; Bubbles, bursting with laughter, climbed the dangerously weak ratlines after them; the Lamp-post and Rawlins swarmed up the rigging on the other side, and even the little Padre, catching the infection,

sprang up as well.

"We won't come down till he's chained up. Look at him! Careering round and snapping at everything. Save us, Fletcher! Save us!"

Old Fletcher, smiling kindly, came along from the poop, asking: "Where is he?"

"There; there—near the water-butt! Do be careful! Get at him from behind. Wave a lettuce leaf in front of him. We've brought a lettuce in case he attacked us. Barnes! Barnes! Bring the lettuce! 'Kaiser Bill' has broken out!"

The old stoker, peering about for the tortoise, found him just where he had left him—his legs and head well tucked "inside"—picked him up, placed him inside his "jumper"; got a lettuce from Barnes, who grunted "they young gen'l'men will be a-breaking their blooming necks afore long, I reckon"; and went aft again, to try and tempt the tortoise to put his head out, and show some interest in the picnic.

Then the Padre and some of the snotties ventured on deck, again, though most of them preferred to lie out on the tops'l-yard, which was so frail, and its "lifts" so badly "set up", that it bent ominously, as did the fore-topmast itself.

"Come down off that yard!" Mr. Meredith shouted. "Only two of you are to be there at a time."

They begged him to let them set the upper tops'l, but that yard was more like a broom-handle than anything else.

"The Hun can do it; no one else. The mast is rotten, and the yard too," Mr. Meredith shouted. (The Hun was the lightest of all the midshipmen.) So the others gathered in the "top" and watched the Hun swarm up the topmast, and so out on that tiny yard, casting off the gaskets of the tiny sail.

Then they dashed down on deck, before Mr. Meredith's voice bellowed out: "Let fall upper tops'l gaskets; overhaul your buntlines; sheet home, sheet home. Belay all!"

Then came the "pipe": "Clear lower deck! All hands 'bout ship'!"

When once the ship had tacked away from the shore, most of them made some excuse or other to find their way aloft again or out on the bowsprit; and though it may have looked curious to see the *What's Her Name* slowly beating to wind'ard, backwards and forwards, across the harbour, with most of her crew up aloft or clinging to the bowsprit all the time, what did anything matter? They all enjoyed themselves hugely; those up aloft sniffing as the fragrant odour of cooking sausages floated up to them from the cook-house.

Tea-time came before they knew it.

"Seven bells, Bos'n," Mr. Meredith called out. The Pink Rat found an old tin and beat it. Everybody sang out for Barnes, came down from the mast, the bowsprit, or the poop, and rushed to help bring aft all the luxuries.

Old Fletcher fidgeted and looked at the Sub.

"Right you are, Fletcher!" he said, knowing that the old stoker would enjoy his tea more with Barnes than with them; so whilst they all sat round the poop and had a gorgeous tea—what a tea!—Barnes and Fletcher and "Kaiser Bill" had tea by themselves at the break of the fo'c'sle, and Bubbles, good-natured Bubbles, steered. However, there was so little breeze that it did not much matter whether anybody steered or not; and Dr. Gordon, finishing his meal quickly, relieved him.

"Where are we going to have our bathe?" Bubbles asked.

"Nowhere, my jumping Jimmy! I'm not going to weigh that anchor again, it is too much like work; we'll just sail about," the Sub said.

When nothing but empty plates, empty tins, and an empty teapot remained, and they were just going to fill their pipes, Dr. Gordon at the wheel called out: "Fetch my surgical bag, someone. I knew it would be wanted."

The Hun fetched it, opened it, and inside were three tins of pine-apple.

"You *are* splendid, sir," they shouted, as they opened the tins and cut the pine-apples into fat slices. "Won't these fill up odd corners?"

What a grand feast that was!

Then it was time to go back. The breeze had fallen still more, so the helm was put up, sheets were eased, the foretops'l and its little upper tops'l squared away, and the *What's Her Name* wafted slowly back to her anchorage, whilst everybody lay back, contentedly smoking and thoroughly happy.

They came abreast the *Achates*; sail was taken off her; the anchor let go; the "wild cat" whirled round (they knew then why it was called a "wild cat"); and there was nothing to do except pack up and stow away everything "shipshape", and wait until the Officer of the Watch sent the cutter across for them.

She came. They were taken back to the *Achates*, and the poor old *What's Her Name* left desolate. Never could she have made a more happy voyage or borne a merrier crew than she did that afternoon—not in all her long life.

They had noticed that the motor-yacht had come in and run alongside the *Achates* soon after they had started on their picnic; and when they went on board, the Officer of the Watch told the Sub that Captain Macfarlane wanted to see him directly he had shifted into uniform. In ten minutes he was ready, went aft, and found the Captain in conversation with Mr. M'Andrew.

"Oh! Come in!" the Captain said. "Had a good picnic? No lives lost? Your crew seemed to spend most of their time aloft. I was afraid that you'd kill someone before you'd finished."

"Everyone all right, sir. We had a grand time."

"Well, we have a job for you. Mr. M'Andrew has brought in two refugees,

escaped from a place called Ajano, a little village, up a creek, not far from Smyrna. They say that there is a Turkish patrol-boat hiding up there. I want you to take the picket-boat and "cut her out" to-morrow morning at dawn."

The Sub grinned with delight, and forgetting where he was, burst out with: "My jumping Jimmy! what a show!—I beg pardon, sir. I meant 'what a splendid job.' Thank you, sir, I'd love to go;" whilst the Captain crossed his thin knees, tugged at his beard, and smiled at his eagerness. In ten minutes he had given him all instructions; and the Sub, going out, found the Orphan waiting for him outside his cabin in a great state of excitement.

"What is it? What's going to happen? They're sticking the maxim in the picket-boat, and bolting on those shields in front of the wheel. Jarvis tells me that they are going to fix steel plates all round the stern-sheets as well."

"My perishing Orphan! What a show it's going to be!" And the Sub pulled the Orphan inside his cabin, shoved him down on top of the wash-stand, and spread out the rough chart which Captain Macfarlane had just given him.

"It beats the band, Sonny. We've to go out at midnight. The motor-yacht is coming along with us, and we have to rendezvous with the *Kennet* at about three o'clock. She will take us to the mouth of the creek—here," and the Sub pointed to the creek marked on the chart. "Two refugees from the village are coming with us to show the way in—up we sprint—cut out a Turkish patrol-boat hiding up there in front of the village—tow her out to the destroyer, and bring her back—a prize. What d'you say to that, my guzzling Orphan? What d'you say to that for a job? Fancy catching them asleep, waking them up, and banging them on the head if they don't hand over their old junk quietly."

"Or toppling them overboard," gasped the Orphan, wild with delight. In his wildest dreams he had never imagined such a grand adventure.

"Well, off you go. See that the boat is all right. Oh," the Sub called, as the midshipman began to run off, "we're to take four more 'hands'. I'll choose 'em. I've got 'em in my mind. Everybody has to take rifle and cutlass. You'd better take a pistol, but don't shoot me with it. That's all. I'll arrange about the grub. Off you go."

The Orphan dashed away to supervise the fitting out of the picket-boat.

CHAPTER XVII
A "Cutting-out" Expedition

Down in the picket-boat the Orphan found armourers and blacksmiths busily fitting the additional plates all round the stern-sheets.

"That'll make a snug place aft, sir," Jarvis said sarcastically, as the midshipman climbed down into the boat. "What's in the wind now?"

"That's 'summat' like a job," he grinned, when he had been told; "summat like a cutting-out job in the old days—that."

The motor-yacht lay alongside the picket-boat, her crew looking very fierce with their rifles and bandoliers and long knives, and as though they were wildly keen to go and slay Turks, especially so when Mr. M'Andrew spoke a few words to each of them, and set on fire their passionate hatred of the enemy.

He brought the two refugees across to the steamboat, and explained to them that they would have to lie one on each side of the maxim gun-mounting in the bows, and guide the boat in through the creek of Ajano by pointing their hands in the direction of the channel. One of these two the Orphan called "the Bandit"—an oldish man in a fez, dirty white shirt, black voluminous trousers, a black cloth wound round his waist, blue cloth wrapped round his legs puttee-fashion, and clumsy leather boots. He had an honest face, which the other man had not. In fact, the Orphan immediately dubbed this one "the Hired Assassin". His swarthy face, glittering black eyes, and bushy eyebrows gave him an exceedingly treacherous appearance. He was, at any rate, a picturesque scoundrel, with his knives sticking out of the folds of a dirty red sash, and the sunburnt skin of his neck and chest showing through the open, dirty shirt he wore.

"You are going in first," Mr. M'Andrew said, "and, if necessary, I shall come along afterwards. I expect that it will be difficult to keep back my chaps. Watch that old 'grandfather man'."

The old Greek with the burning eyes sat under the motor-yacht's awning, with his rifle across his knees, and his wizened old head turning from side to side, looking exactly like a vulture that has sighted some likely carrion.

The Sub, coming down, sent the Orphan and Plunky Bill aboard with the cutlasses, to have them sharpened on the grindstone.

That was a grand job—with half the crew looking on.

"I pity the poor Turk who gets that on 'is 'napper'," Plunky Bill grinned, as he felt, with his great horny thumb, the new edge on one of them.

By eight o'clock everything had been done, so the Orphan went down to the gun-room to get a "watch" dinner, and ate it amidst a babel of gramophone tunes and noisy horse-play as the Honourable Mess wound up the day, after their joyous picnic in the *What's Her Name*.

"You've got a job in front of you. Come along with me," said the Sub when he had finished. He took him to his cabin, gave him a rug and a pillow to lay on the deck, climbed on his bunk, and turned out the light. "Now coil down and go

to sleep," he growled.

The Orphan did sleep after a while—slept until the sentry banged on the door and sang out: "Seven bells just gone, sir!"

"Come along, my jumping Orphan! Come along! Wake up! Show a leg!" the Sub cried, turning up the light. "Now we're off for our picnic."

They pulled on their boots, buckled their revolver-belts round them—the Orphan feeling a funny sensation of emptiness under his belt, just at first—and went on deck, creeping under the hammocks in the half-deck, and hearing Bubbles snoring luxuriously.

They climbed down into the picket-boat and found Jarvis.

"Everything ready, sir! Old Fletcher 'as just gone up to bring down that there hanimile of 'is—the old 'umbug. 'E'll be along in a minute. I've got some 'ot cocoa for you two officers—down in the cabin."

Alongside, in the motor-yacht, the Greeks were coiled up asleep, and Mr. M'Andrew could be seen, walking round in his usual ponderous way, waking them. A little oil-lamp in her engine-room showed the Greek engineer overhauling the motors.

The Bandit and the Hired Assassin, with rifles and bandoliers, were brought across and taken down into the forepeak.

From the dark gangway above them the Captain's voice called down: "Everything ready to start?"

"Yes, sir," the Sub called back.

"Well, good luck to you! I hope you'll bring back a prize by breakfast-time."

"We'll have a jolly good try, sir," the Sub answered.

"It's time for you to shove off, Mr. M'Andrew," the Captain sang out. "Good luck to you!"

The motor-yacht let go her ropes; there was a smell of petrol, and a tut-tut-tut from her stern, and off she went in the dark.

"That there old 'umbug ain't come back yet," Jarvis told the Sub. But just as he was about to send a "hand" to look for him, Fletcher came climbing down.

"Very sorry, sir, but I can't find 'Kaiser Bill' anywhere. The picnic must have made him so giddy that he's started climbing over the boat deck."

"Bad luck, Fletcher!" the Sub said sympathetically.

"Well, he did seem a bit of a mascot—as the saying goes."

"The old 'umbug!" snorted Jarvis. "'E ain't no blooming mascot."

"Well, off you go! Good luck!" called the Captain.

"Shove off for'ard!" cried the Sub.

The Orphan rang "ahead" to the engine-room, and the picket-boat followed the motor-yacht out through the narrow, very dark channel into the open sea. The two boats then changed places, the picket-boat leading and the motor-yacht

following, because Mr. M'Andrew's compass could not be trusted. This was the first time that the Orphan had ever had a twenty-mile "run" in a picket-boat before him, and, with no lights showing (except the tiny little glow in the compass-box), on such a dark night it was rather eerie work.

By half-past twelve they were clear of the harbour. In a couple of hours they expected to pick up the destroyer *Kennet*. By twenty past three there ought to be enough light to see a mile and a half ahead, and by that time they hoped to be close in to the mouth of the creek. By half-past four the job might be over—should be finished—and they ought to be on the way home, with the Turkish patrol-boat in tow.

"My jumping Orphan! It's a grand show, isn't it?" said the Sub, swallowing some of the cocoa. "Nothing like ship's cocoa to stand by one's stomach."

The Orphan, awed by the solemnity of the night and the blackness and emptiness of everything, and too excited to talk, gripped the steering-wheel and peered into the compass-box.

A little before half-past two the black outline of a destroyer loomed up. The signalman in the picket-boat, Bostock—a thick-set, criminal-looking man whom the Sub had chosen—flashed across with a shaded lamp. The *Kennet* flashed back, stopped, and took both boats in tow, then very slowly steamed ahead. By a quarter-past three the coast-line became faintly visible, with a break in it—the creek of Ajano. The destroyer stopped, the towing hawser was cast off, and then the Orphan knew that their time had come. How his heart beat!

"Shove along in!" called the Captain of the *Kennet*, coming aft. "I'll keep an eye on you. Get back as soon as you can. Good luck to you!"

The Orphan had a glimpse of Mr. M'Andrew fumbling with his watch-chain, and of the Greeks springing about and fingering their rifles as though they wanted to let them off then and there; and then the destroyer was left behind, and he was steering for the mouth of the little creek, with the picket-boat throbbing and panting under him.

"You've got your revolver? Yes, that's right. For goodness' sake don't fire it unless you are obliged," the Sub said in a low voice.

Jarvis had already buckled on his cutlass. He, too, had a revolver. The Bandit and the Hired Assassin crept out of the forepeak and lay down on each side of the maxim—they looked very keen on their job. Plunky Bill went for'ard to the maxim, opened a belt-box, and slipped the end of the belt through the breech. The other "hands", including Bostock the signalman and the three extra men—great horny chaps—stirred themselves, and buckled their cutlass-belts round them—they would probably find these more useful than rifles, though rifles also lay

handy.

"I'd better have one of these cutlasses," the Sub said. "Got a spare one down there?"

They passed up one and its belt, and he fastened it round him, drawing the cutlass half out of the scabbard to make certain that it would not stick. "Clumsy things," he said, "but mighty good in a scrap; can knock a chap's teeth down his throat with the hilt—fine."

"You men all ready?" he asked. "Two of you go for'ard, abaft the maxim. The others keep down below the plates; and when we run alongside the patrol-boat, and you hear me "sing out", out you jump and give 'em 'beans'." It was almost daylight now, and the picket-boat had entered the mouth of the creek—some four hundred yards wide. The Bandit and the Hired Assassin, lying with their hands pointing straight ahead, were very excited.

"Keep your eye on them," the Sub snapped. "Hello! there's the village; you can see it over the land—masts there too, lots of them."

Everything was absolutely quiet, except for the noise of the engines and the rush of water under the bows. The creek began to narrow rapidly; they were approaching a bend in it, and the two Greeks pointed their hands over one bow, and made a hissing noise to draw attention. "All right; we see you; don't lose your 'wool'. Follow the 'pointer', Orphan."

He touched the wheel, the picket-boat swerved into the channel, and the Sub rang for half speed. Five hundred yards ahead they saw a small building standing some fifty yards back from the bank. It looked like a ferryman's house, or perhaps a small toll-house. The Bandit cried out "Turko! Turko!" but no one could be seen moving about there. He kept pointing away to the left—away from the toll-house—and so did the Hired Assassin.

The Orphan followed the direction they indicated.

"They're taking us mighty close to the other bank," the Sub said anxiously, and sent Jarvis for'ard to look out for the water shoaling. The boat was now not fifty yards from the left bank when, just as Jarvis threw his hand up and waved for the helm to be "ported", she suddenly slowed, the bows gave a heave, she pushed on for some ten feet, and then came to a standstill.

"We're stuck," the Sub muttered tragically, seized a boat-hook, and sounded.

"Deep water ahead," Jarvis, coming aft, reported.

"Turko! Turko!" the Greeks whispered hoarsely.

The Sub ordered the engines full speed astern, then full speed ahead, then astern again, but the boat did not shift an inch.

"Turko! Turko!" the Greeks hissed.

The engines were stopped. "Everyone overboard," the Sub sang out softly, and slid over the side into the water, up to his waist. "It's only soft mud, we'll

push her through."

The Orphan let himself down into some sticky mud, and all the men, except the two Greeks, Fletcher in the stokehold, and the stoker petty officer in the engine-room, followed.

"Now get hold of her and shove her ahead."

Nobody required to be told what to do; they shoved hard, but with no result. Then the Sub made them keep time together. "One! two! three! shove!" he called in a low voice. "Ah! she moved then; now another. There she goes!"

She glided off; the black mud swirled up under her stern, and the crew, clinging to the life-lines, dragged themselves on board.

"Phew! I didn't like that," the Sub said, as the black mud dripped off his clothes. He put the engines "easy ahead", and the two Greeks pointed towards the toll-house, whining "Turko, Turko," and looking frightened. The picket-boat now headed almost straight for the toll-house, some three hundred yards away; and just as the Orphan caught sight of someone moving close to it, crack went a rifle, and "ping" came a bullet overhead.

"Phew! we're discovered; we must chance it now; full speed ahead! We must hurry if there's to be a chance of surprising that patrol-boat. Confound those Greeks; they're pointing to the other bank, again," the Sub said.

The picket-boat increased speed; one or two more bullets came whizzing past—one hit the new plates round the stern-sheets. Plunky Bill swung his maxim towards the toll-house, but could see nothing to fire at. The two Greeks squirmed on the deck, their faces pressed against it, and their hands pointing away from the toll-house. The head of the creek opened out; the little white village of Ajano came into view, with some sailing craft anchored close inshore, but never a sign of any patrol-boat. Another minute, and they saw that the mud-bank on which they had run ashore was part of an island, and that, some eighty yards farther on, a narrow channel ran between the mainland and the end of it.

"Port your helm!" the Sub cried, "we're getting too close; these Greeks are terrified; we'll be ashore again in a minute;" and hardly had he said this, before the picket-boat pushed into something soft, her bows came up out of the water, her stern swung round, in towards the bank, not forty yards away, and she came to a dead stop.

"Full speed astern!" the Sub yelled; and full speed astern went the engines, her stern shook, and the black mud, churned up from the bottom, swirled for'ard. But not a movement did she make.

"She's right in it, sir," Jarvis, rushing aft, told the Sub; "there's not a foot of water for'ard."

The Sub jumped overboard abreast the wheel.

There was not two feet of water there, and he walked round her bows,

pulling his feet out of the sticky mud. He could walk all round her except at the stern. That last swerve she had made had turned the stern right in to the shore, and the dark back of another mud-bank showed not six yards away, just under the surface of the water. He knew, perfectly well, that she would never get off without assistance.

Bullets kept flicking past—Zip! Zip! Ping! Ping! Some struck the water quite close to the boat; another smacked against those new plates round the stern-sheets. Someone was certain to be hit in a moment or two; and the first was the Hired Assassin, who got a bullet through his left arm, and scrambled aft, behind the plates, bleeding like a pig and whimpering with fright.

The engines were still going astern, but quite uselessly. Everybody had to scramble out; most of them did so on the protected side, the side away from the toll-house. "Some of you come this side," the Sub shouted angrily; and the Orphan, Jarvis, and Plunky Bill followed him round. "Now shove her astern! One! two! three! Altogether—one! two! three! Heave!"

They tried a dozen times, but not an inch did she move. It was terrible. Some bullets now began coming from the side opposite to the toll-house, from beyond that gap of water which separated the island on which they were aground from the mainland. They could see some men creeping among some low, scrubby bushes there, and some puffs of rifle smoke. Plunky Bill was ordered to turn the maxim on to them, so climbed on board, swung the gun round, and let "rip" some fifty rounds. Those kept them quiet for a few minutes.

"If Mr. M'Andrew came in, he could tow us on," the Orphan suggested; but the Sub, although he felt sure that it was helpless to think of getting off without assistance, would not signal to ask for it, not yet. He tried making the engines go full speed ahead and then full speed astern, the men all pushing and shoving at the same time. Then they all climbed on board, crowded as far aft as they could, and tried jumping, up and down, in time, whilst the engines went full speed astern. But you might as well have expected to move a house. The picket-boat showed not the slightest sign of coming off.

All this time some ten or twelve rifles were being constantly fired at them from different points in the direction of the toll-house, only about two hundred and fifty or three hundred yards away. Some of these rifles were evidently mausers—they recognized their sharp crack; but several were old-fashioned ones which gave a duller noise when they fired, and their bullets, coming almost simultaneously with the report, made a bigger splash when they hit the water. Also, every now and then, little white wisps of powder smoke drifted up from behind some of those bushes. Those wisps were practically the only "targets" Plunky Bill had to fire at, but occasionally he caught sight of something creeping about among the bushes.

The shooting of these Turks was, of course, execrable; otherwise everyone in the picket-boat must have been killed.

Soon some of those rifle "cracks" began to sound appreciably nearer.

"The Turks have come down to the bank, near the toll-house," the Orphan gasped out. "I think they're trying to creep along the bank towards us."

The Sub, wading round the bows, climbed on board and told Bostock to signal to the *Kennet*, "Have run aground, send motor-boat"; and whilst Bostock, jumping on the top of the cabin, where he was entirely exposed, wagged his semaphore flags, Plunky Bill searched the opposite bank with his maxim.

"Scramble aboard, all of you!" the Sub shouted to those still over the side. "Get down behind the shields. Four of you, fire your rifles at the bank near that white house, and two at those Turks beyond the island."

They scrambled behind the cover of the plates, picked up their rifles, and tried to find something to aim at.

Bostock now took in the reply to that signal: "Am sending in motor-boat". The Sub, looking out to sea, saw that the destroyer was about twelve hundred yards away, and that the motor-yacht was at that time alongside her.

"Mr. M'Andrew will be here in a few minutes; we'll get off all right then," he said confidently.

There was a yell from Plunky Bill, crouched behind the maxim-gun shield looking for a target. He put his hand to his face, and found it covered with blood. He cursed horribly, swung round the maxim towards the scrub bushes beyond the island, and let off a dozen rounds "into the brown". Splashes kept jumping up out of the water on both sides; the cracks of the rifles and the "ping" "flop" as the bullets struck the side of the boat or the water, or whipped overhead, being almost simultaneous. Within the protecting shields round the stern, people were practically safe. Everyone was there now except Plunky Bill, Fletcher in the stokehold, and the man in the engine-room. Theoretically, these last two were not safe at such short range, though, actually, no bullets did penetrate the sides of the picket-boat—none that were noticed.

"That motor-yacht has not shoved off yet," the Sub cried, looking over the edge of the plates. "I wonder what has happened. Motors have broken down, I expect. Phew! that's rotten; we'll never get off without her."

Jarvis, much excited, shouted: "A lot more men have come along to that white house, sir; they are coming this way, but I can't see them now."

"Ask the *Kennet* to open fire on the white house, and to search the banks near it," the Sub told Bostock, who jumped on top of the cabin again, and, though bullets were "zipping" past every few moments, made the signal quite unconcernedly, then slowly climbed down into safety under cover of the steel plates, grinning as he spread out one of the flags and showed a bullet-hole in it.

A minute later the destroyer's for'ard 12-pounder fired, and a shell burst just in front of the toll-house. Others came in quick succession, searching the banks between it and the picket-boat.

Rifle-fire died down at once; one or two men could be seen crawling away. A seaman down aft fired his rifle, and swore that he had hit one of them; the others fired whenever they saw a chance, and so did Plunky Bill with his maxim.

The motor-boat had not yet cast off from the destroyer.

There was a shout from Plunky Bill, and they saw a ferry-boat crowded with men start across the creek from the toll-house side. Two of the bluejackets fired at this boat, and the maxim was turned on it; but before there was time to steady it the men in the ferry had scrambled out, and were hidden among those thick bushes there.

"They'll be trying to wade across that gap to the island presently," Jarvis growled. "If they do get across, they'll be able to crawl up to within fifty yards of the boat without us being able to touch them. Bad show this, sir!"

"Curse that motor-boat!" the Sub growled. "Why doesn't she come along?"

Then came a warning shout from for'ard; and the Orphan, looking over the edge of the shield in front of the wheel, saw that some twenty or thirty men with rifles were commencing to wade across the gap to the island. At the same moment Plunky Bill fell on his face. Without thinking, the Orphan dashed out of his cover and ran to him; but before he reached him he had risen to his knees, and was endeavouring to swing his maxim round to fire on them.

He was streaming with blood, both from a wound in his cheek and from another through the right shoulder.

"I can't hold it, sir; you take it."

The Orphan's hands trembled, and his head felt as though it were bursting; but he gripped the handles, looked along the sights, and somehow or other got them in line with the cluster of men who had begun to wade across the gap, and pressed the firing-button with all his might. Plunky Bill, with one hand, "fed" the cartridge-belt.

The Orphan did not feel the recoil nor notice the jar on his wrists. He saw the splashes his bullets were making, swung the muzzle of the gun a little to the left, depressed the handles ever so little, until these splashes flew up right among the Turks. His shaking hands made the bullets spread from side to side.

Six or seven of the men disappeared under the water; most of the others began hurrying back to the cover of those "scrubby" bushes, but two, three, five pressed on, and in twenty more paces would have gained the cover of the end of the island. Once there, they would crawl along till they could fire right into the picket-boat at point-blank range.

The Orphan gave a yell; something had hit his left foot, and the pain shot

up his leg; but he held on to those handles, swung the maxim back, and pressed the button.

"A little more to the left, sir," came from Plunky Bill. "Quick, sir!"

And how he did manage to do it he never could explain, but those five men all fell; and it was not till Plunky Bill called out "Cease firing, sir!" that he looked, and saw nothing but a shapeless kind of a hat floating on the water.

"Got the whole bag of tricks, sir."

"They're going to try again; they're gathering behind the bushes." The Orphan looked up, and saw the Sub standing behind him. "Steady, sonny; wait a minute; they'll be in sight directly. That blessed motor-boat hasn't started to shove off yet. Ah! there they come! there they are! Now, let her 'rip'!"

"The Orphan noticed the Sub kneel down behind the maxim shield, on the opposite side to Plunky Bill, who was still tending the belt with his left hand. A bullet, then another, smacked against the little shield, and through the sighting slit he saw a line of men creeping towards the ford where those others had attempted to wade across. His left foot pained—horribly.

"Aim low, sonny! aim low! You will see your bullet-splashes." He pressed the firing-button, and the gun spluttered out a dozen rounds, their splashes jumping out of the water below the bank along which the Turks were creeping.

"Now, up a bit! Good! Now you've got into them! Keep as you are!" The Sub was speaking quite quietly as the midshipman held on to the jerking, shaking maxim. "Now, down a bit! That's the ticket! Splendid! Phew! they won't try that again," the Sub said, and yelled aft for another belt.

Old Fletcher, dragging himself up from the stokehold hatch, ran aft, seized a new box which someone held over the edge of the shield in front of the wheel, brought it for'ard, knelt down and opened it. The Sub ordered Plunky Bill to go aft. He staggered back under the protecting plates round the stern-sheets holding up his right arm with his left hand.

All this time the *Kennet's* shells were bursting along the bank on the toll-house side, and these and the rifle-fire from the seamen in the stern-sheets kept the Turks fairly quiet in that direction. Then Jarvis shouted: "Here comes the *Kennet's* whaler, sir. She's quite close. The *Kennet's* making a signal."

Bostock, waving his flags, took it in. "Abandon steamboat—am sending in whaler for you." He shouted this to the Sub.

"I can't, I can't!" the Sub moaned. "Orphan, I can't do it! You look after those chaps; keep your eye on them. My aunt! your left boot's nearly torn off. Keep them from getting across to the island;" and he dashed aft just as the black whaler ran alongside.

A Royal Naval Reserve lieutenant was in charge of her, and called out: "You've got to abandon her. Take everything you can get into the whaler—and

come back. It's been pretty warm work coming in here; they've been potting at us all the way."

"Why doesn't that motor-yacht come in? She could tow us off. What's the matter with her?" the Sub asked angrily.

"Her crew won't face it; they refused to come, and the engineer won't start the motors. He's disabled them in some way or other, and we can't make them work. Get your gear in here quickly."

The Sub raved and cursed. He couldn't make up his mind to abandon the boat.

There came a low, sobbing "Oh" from the stern-sheets, and the other Greek fell forward—the Bandit. A bullet had come in through a gap between two of the steel plates, and he had been shot through the body.

"It's the Captain's order," the *Kennet's* officer cried impatiently. "You'd best hurry up; we can see any number of men coming along from the village. None of us will get away unless you 'get a move on.'"

Sullenly the Sub gave the order to abandon the picket-boat.

Plunky Bill crawled into the whaler; the two Greeks were lowered into her. Everything that could be taken was taken—the box of ball-cartridge, the compass box, the rifles and cutlasses, signal-book, even the first-aid bag.

The Orphan, still for'ard with Fletcher, who was reeving the new maxim belt through the feed-block, saw more men start to wade towards the island. He opened fire on them; but then the Sub and Jarvis came rushing for'ard, told him to "cease fire", and commenced dismounting the maxim, slinging out the belt, lifting the gun and its shield off its pedestal, and carrying it aft between them. The Orphan tried to pick up the empty belt-box, but couldn't stand, and had to crawl aft without it. Fletcher brought along the almost full box, then ran back and jumped down into the stokehold. Everyone except him was already in the whaler. They shouted for him. He did not come, but a black cloud of smoke belched out of the picket-boat's funnel. Bullets were splashing all round them. Those Turks were half across to the island—in another five minutes they would be able to fire right down into the crowded whaler. Another cloud of smoke came from the funnel.

"He must have gone off his head," the Sub cried, and yelled "Fletcher! Fletcher!"

The old man appeared, dragged himself up, and scrambled down into the boat.

"What the devil were you doing? Shove off! Shove off! Give way!"

"I put on a few shovelfuls of coal, sir, and closed down all the valves—thought she might blow herself up presently."

"Shove off! Get hold of your rifles; half of you blaze away at one side, half of

you on the other—at anything you see!" yelled the Sub as the very heavily laden whaler pulled away from the poor old picket-boat and made for mid-stream.

The *Kennet*, out beyond the mouth of the creek, still kept up a continuous fire to cover the retreat of the crowded whaler as it pushed along out to her, with the picket-boat's crew blazing away at anything they saw which looked like a man's head. She must have seen the people wading across to the island, for she opened fire on them from another gun, and its shells whistled over the whaler and burst above the bank alongside the abandoned boat.

The Orphan, huddled down at the bottom of the boat between two thwarts, felt sick and faint. His left foot was quite numb. He looked at it. The toe and front part of the sole of his boot was all ripped up and torn, and his sock was dripping with blood. He did not know what had happened. The two Greeks lay under the thwarts—very silent. Fletcher, near him, kept on saying: "If only I'd found 'Kaiser Bill' and brought him along with us, it wouldn't have happened."

Although a few bullets followed them, no one was hit, and in ten minutes they were alongside the destroyer, and the Orphan was being hoisted up the side. They wanted to carry him, but he would not let them; he hobbled on his left heel to the ward-room hatch, and got down it somehow; found a chair, and sat on it. He heard the *Kennet's* 12-pounder still firing, and guessed what she was firing at—his beloved picket-boat—the poor old lady. She had shared so many adventures with him, and now was being ripped open by the *Kennet's* shells, even if her own boiler did not burst with the added fuel and the screwed-down valves. It was better than that she should fall "alive" into the hands of the Turks, and the Orphan hoped she understood.

A chief stoker belonging to the *Kennet* came along presently, cut away his boot, and took it off (how it did pain!), and cut away the sock. He knew how to dress wounds, and did his work well.

"A bullet, sir, right along the top of the boot, then through that toe; broken the bone, I think—it's all 'wobbly'. I've a lot of doctoring to do this morning. That there young Greek chap has a bad smash, my word! but I don't rightly know about the other. Stomachs are rather beyond my 'line'. That there seaman—he'll be all right."

By the time the foot had been dressed, the guns had left off firing, and the *Kennet's* engines began to make the whole stern rattle. The Sub came down, looking haggard, but trying to be cheerful. "We did our best, sonny; don't bother. It was all my fault. If we hadn't been steaming so fast, we might have got her off. So you've got a bullet through your foot, have you? I thought I saw the sole of the boot all ripped off. When did that happen?"

"Just after Plunky Bill was hit the second time. Just after I'd started firing the maxim."

"So you kept going, did you?" said the Sub. "Good for you, Orphan! If you hadn't, those chaps might have got across, and we should have been 'in the soup' in next to no time. There wasn't a sign of a patrol-boat there," the Sub went on. "The *Kennet's* skipper, from her bridge, could see every square yard of the creek. You remember how those confounded Greeks kept pointing over to port directly after they began singing out 'Turko', 'Turko'. So long as they kept away from the toll-house, where they had seen them, and gave them a wide berth, they didn't care a 'fish's tail' what happened to the picket-boat—never thought of the channel. That chap you call the Hired Assassin—I expect he came along with that 'cock and bull' yarn just to get us to go in there and smash up the village—a girl had jilted him, or something like that, I expect. Oh, if only that motor-yacht had come in!"

"Have you seen Mr. M'Andrew?" the Orphan asked.

"Yes! He wouldn't speak. He wouldn't look at me. He was fumbling with his watch-chain. He looked as if he'd been blubbing. That Greek engineer found out what was wrong with the motors directly everything was over. Curse the chicken-livered swine!"

"Did they smash her up? The Turks won't be able to use her?" the Orphan asked.

"Yes, old sonny; either her boiler blew up or a shell burst there. She's done for."

The Orphan bit his lip—hard.

There happened to be a spare cabin aboard the *Achates*, and, after Dr. O'Neill had dressed the wounded foot, the Orphan was placed in the bunk there.

"The toe may have to come off, or it mayn't," Dr. O'Neill growled. "It won't be any use to you, whichever happens."

Captain Macfarlane came to see him, looking grave, but smiling at him in his kind, fatherly way. "The Sub tells me you cleared off a lot of Turks with that maxim after you'd been hit."

"I didn't really know I had been, sir."

He tugged at his beard, and then began to talk, as though what he had to say was not pleasant. "I have some news for you. It will be a great disappointment, I fear, to you, but you will understand why I wish you to know this before the others. I may as well tell you that I recommended the Sub and you, in the picket-boat, and the midshipman of the steam pinnace for the Distinguished Service Cross."

"Did you, sir? Really, sir!" The Orphan's heart beat fast. "The old Hun, too, sir?"

"Yes, I did. It was for taking your steamboats in and bringing off the crippled transports' boats, after the Lancashire Fusiliers had landed. The Sub and the Hun, as you call him, have been granted it, but I am very sorry indeed" (the Orphan knew what was coming and caught his breath) "that you have not. The Sub was in charge of your boat at the time, and you were not. You see, that makes a difference, I suppose."

The Orphan, biting his lips, nodded. He could not trust himself to speak.

Captain Macfarlane, putting his hand gently on his shoulder, said: "Now you know how the land lies. I only heard last night, and thought you yourself should give the news to the other two. I hope that will rather soften the blow. Won't it, Mr. Orpen?"

"Right, sir! Thank you very much for telling me first, and for telling me yourself," the Orphan managed to say. "And thank you very much for recommending me. None of us knew anything about it."

"Well, good-bye! Perhaps you'd like to tell the news now; I'll send them along."

So, in a minute or two, the Sub and the Hun arrived.

"Hello! my jumping Orphan! Patched you up, have they, my wounded warrior! The Skipper says you want to see us."

"You both have got the D.S.C. The Captain's just told me. Isn't that grand?"

They didn't believe him for a moment. Then the Sub, roaring like a bull, threw the Hun on the deck and nearly strangled him. "And you? What about you?" he sang out, letting the Hun get up; and seeing by the Orphan's face that he had had no such luck, became quiet.

"Whatever for?" they both asked. "What did they give it to us for?"

"For going in and fetching the boats back from 'W' beach that first time."

"Oh! that!" growled the Sub. "What a rotten shame! You did as much as I, or the Hun, did. That's the rottenest thing I ever heard of. Well, old chap, I'm confoundedly sorry," said the Sub, gripping the Orphan's arm; "confoundedly sorry."

The Orphan, left to himself, felt about as miserable as he could be. Dr. Gordon came in to give him an injection of morphia, just as Barnes came to the cabin carrying a tray with his breakfast.

"Which will you have for breakfast?" Dr. Gordon asked, in his funny way—"a little morphia or some bacon and eggs?"

"I think I'd rather have the bacon and eggs," said the Orphan.

CHAPTER XVIII
Bombarding at Suvla Bay

The Orphan's wound gave a great deal of trouble, and for the next fortnight—a "precious" long fortnight—he remained in his bunk. The Honourable Mess looked after him, and kept up his spirits. Captain Macfarlane occasionally came in and talked to him, sitting with his long thin legs crossed, smoking his inevitable cigarette, and tugging gently at his pointed beard. He told him of the transports pouring reinforcements into Mudros in great numbers; of the old "Edgars" coming East, and of the newly built monitors which had begun to arrive—big ones with 14-inch guns, and practically unsinkable; small ones with a 6-inch or 9.2-inch gun in the bows, and drawing so little water, that a submarine would stand but little chance of torpedoing them. "There is no doubt, Mr. Orpen," he would say in his quiet, humorous manner, "they are only waiting for you to be on your feet again to begin a great advance."

Mr. Meredith, Dr. Gordon, the little Padre, and the cheery Fleet-Paymaster often came to see him; so did Plunky Bill, with his face and shoulder swathed in bandages, extremely proud of himself. "If it wasn't for the Fleet-Surgeon a-saying they'd to be dressed twice a day, and 'im a-poking round and 'urting somethink 'orrid, I wouldn't care a blow—not me!"

Fletcher brought him "Kaiser Bill" to play with. "He brings luck, does that tortoise; if we'd only had him with us last time, things would have been different, sir. Well, well, the picket-boat has gone, poor thing; but I was getting too old for her. My eyes aren't what they were; for the last month I could hardly read the gauge-glass in her stokehold—not even with my spectacles."

He liked to talk to the Orphan about his sons who had been killed in France, and, what was most unusual, could talk about them without worrying him.

However, the Orphan was presently allowed to hobble about on crutches; and one morning shortly afterwards the weekly trawler from Mudros brought down all the gun-room stores which the messman had ordered from Malta.

"We needn't ask the War Baby to our picnics now, need we?" the Pimple and the China Doll burst out excitedly, as they saw the piles of sardines and sausages,

tins of biscuits, jars of bloater paste, and all the luxuries their souls craved.

By the end of July the Orphan returned to duty with a slight limp, which he kept up rather longer, perhaps, than was absolutely necessary.

The air was full of rumours once again, many of them more ridiculous than ever; and at last, on the 7th August, came the news that nearly sixty thousand men had been thrown ashore at Anzac, and at Suvla to the north of it. "The new landing", stated the message, "took the enemy partially by surprise"—and from that the most optimistic conjectures were made.

Also came the news that E11 had sunk the *Barbarossa*, an old German battleship bought by Turkey some years back—sunk her in the Sea of Marmora. You can guess what a noisy, rowdy night that was down in the gun-room.

Four days later the *Achates* received orders to proceed to Suvla herself, and, after her six weeks of "heavenly" rest, everyone felt greatly pleased to be "up and doing" something again. She wound her way out through the tortuous channel between those beautiful green cliffs, past "Picnic" Island, and zigzagged her way towards the Gallipoli Peninsula.

At dawn of Thursday, 12th August, she passed through a line of trawlers patrolling between Imbros and Samothrace islands, and presently heard once more the booming of guns.

No information whatever had been received of the actual progress and state of affairs; everyone expected—at any rate, hoped—to find the army established more than half-way across the Peninsula, and still advancing; so that when Captain Macfarlane saw a big shell bursting on the very shore itself, he groaned: "Did you see that, Navigator? Stalemate again, I fear."

"A pretty big one, that shell, sir. It may have come from a ship anchored in The Narrows," the Navigator suggested; but even as he did so, three puff-balls of cotton-wool, shrapnel-bursts, appeared against the sky, only just behind the line of the shore.

"That makes it certain," the Captain said very gravely; "they can't burst shrapnel at long ranges."

A cloud of cordite smoke shot out from the side of a cruiser at anchor there—the *Talbot*; and both of them watched to see where the shell burst. "There it is, sir, just in front of that village," the Navigator called out, pointing to a village five miles inland, in a dip in the great semicircular sweep of hills which shut in the whole bay. "I thought they had gained those hills," exclaimed the Captain, keenly disappointed. "Well!"—and he sighed; "if they haven't by this time they will never get them. This means 'finish'."

A submarine net had been laid across the mouth of Suvla Bay; and by the time the *Achates* passed through the narrow "gate" between the supporting buoys, most of the Honourable Mess were gathered on the after shelter-deck,

gazing ashore at the bursting shells, and eagerly trying to make out the state of affairs. Even to the most unskilled of these young officers it was evident that the Army could not have advanced very far.

The *Achates* anchored just to the south of Suvla Point, and about twelve hundred yards from the shore. As she swung to the breeze and the tide, the most extraordinary-looking "freak" ship came into view, lying close inshore, with a squat funnel, and an enormous turret with two huge guns sticking out of it. She looked almost as broad as she was long, and the Honourable Mess burst out laughing when they saw her. "That's one of the new big monitors," Bubbles grunted. "Look! What an extraordinary ship!"

[image]

"LOOK! WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARY SHIP!"

This was the *Havelock*, and farther out lay several of the new small monitors with a single 9.2-inch gun in the bows or a 6-inch at each end. Inside the line of black buoys which marked the submarine net were also some twenty transports and store ships, a collier, a water-distilling steamer, and many trawlers. Picket-boats, tugs, and little motor-boats dashed about the harbour; a picket-boat towed a long string of transports' boats out towards a hospital ship lying farther away; but the strangest of all the craft there were the "water-beetles", which they now saw for the first time. These were lighters, painted black, with hinged gang-ways projecting over their bows, circular shields round their steering-wheels, and square box-shaped structures aft, each with a small funnel projecting from its roof, and the official number of the lighter painted, in huge white figures, on the side. One went grunting and thumping past, leaving a track of smoke and a smell of burning oil behind it, carrying perhaps five hundred soldiers inshore. Another lay alongside the nearest store ship, and the bales of hay which they were loading into her made her look like a huge haystack. Another, flying a Red Cross flag, grunted past from shore, filled with wounded. "Water-beetles" made a most appropriate name for them.

The only other men-of-war at anchor inside the "net" were the *Swiftsure*, *Talbot*, and *Cornwall*; but farther down the coast, off Anzac and Gabe Tepe, they could see their "sister" ship, the *Bacchante*, looking very much "out in the cold" as far as protection from submarines went, in spite of numerous trawlers and several destroyers patrolling round her.

Steamboats began to come alongside, and from their midshipmen the Honourable Mess soon learnt the news.

One midshipman told them "that the soldiers held the first two miles of the hill beyond Suvla Point, but could not get on any farther". "Have they joined up with Anzac and away to the right?" they asked. "I don't think so—not properly. We haven't advanced for the last two days." "I don't know how many wounded I have taken off," said one wornout-looking midshipman. "That's my job, and I've been at it almost day and night for the last five days—nearly eight thousand have been taken off altogether, I fancy."

Another snotty told them of the awful shortage of water during the first two fateful days, and how terribly the troops had suffered. "They couldn't stand it," he said. "It was frightfully hot, and by Saturday afternoon (they landed at 11 p.m. on Friday night) men were rushing down to the shore and dashing into the sea, quite delirious."

The Hun in his steam pinnace came back from a trip ashore, with a story of two shells which had fallen close to him. "It's like old times," he said excitedly.

It was—exactly; exactly as it had been at Helles, in front of Krithia and Achi Baba.

All that morning, at every opportunity, everyone went up on the after shelter-deck, or climbed up to the main-top, to try and find the exact position occupied by our troops and how far they had advanced. They gazed through their glasses at a huge amphitheatre extending from Suvla Point right down to Anzac—six and a half miles away—shut in by that semi-circular rampart of hills which barred the way to the other side of the Peninsula and the Dardanelles. Down at Anzac they could trace the maze of trenches along the slopes and spurs at that end of the rampart of hills, and could also trace the Turkish trenches on the crest and upper slopes. At first they thought that these last trenches were British; but they soon knew, by watching the shells from the *Bacchante* bursting among them, that they were not. Sweeping their glasses to the left, they followed the ridge of hills as it bent round in a huge curve some five miles and a half from shore, until they came to a dip, in front of which was Anafarta—-just such another village as Krithia—with its white houses and its row of windmills. At the left end of this village a tall minaret showed up very distinctly. Sweeping still farther to the left, the hills became higher, and then bent towards the sea, until they reached within a mile of Suvla Point itself as a ridge some 650 feet high. From this point—known as the Bench Mark—the ridge dropped in a series of shoulders, until nothing but a gigantic backbone of almost bare rock remained to jut out into the sea and form Suvla Point itself. Our men had at one time reached this Bench Mark, but had been driven back to the top of the next depression, which they still held. In fact, from the ship that morning the little khaki figures of our men were very clearly seen up there on the sky-line, two and a half miles from Suvla Point. This advanced post was known as Jephson's Post, and on the land side of

it the scrub-covered ground sloped down in ridges and gullies to the plain, whilst behind, and away out of sight of the ships, it fell very abruptly to the sea, and ended in lofty, barren cliffs.

The coast-line from Suvla Point swept round in a deep curve to another point known as Nebuchadnezzar Point[#]—a mile and a half farther towards Anzac—and thus made Suvla Bay. Behind Nebuchadnezzar Point lay the little hill "Lala Baba", some 120 feet high, and just round the corner the shore stretched in an almost straight line right down to Anzac.

[#] Its actual name is Niebruniessi Point.

It was the aristocratic Major of Marines, who had been studying the military map, who pointed all these places out to them. He pointed out the guns already in position behind Lala Baba, and he showed them "Chocolate Hill", another elevation some 160 feet high and about three miles inland, where our people could be seen busy digging trenches, and every now and again being sprayed with shrapnel. Between these two little hills lay a broad, flat area, looking like dry mud. "That is the Salt Lake," the Major told them. "It is dry all the summer."

Except for the people who could be seen up at Jephson's Post, more men moving behind a line of trenches running down the slope from that position, and the people digging on Chocolate Hill, the only indication of the general line we held was to be gained by watching where the Turkish shrapnel occasionally burst.

By this time—the 12th August—after having seen so much of operations ashore, every officer in the gun-room and ward-room had become an expert military strategist and tactician—as you can imagine; so it was quite unnecessary for the gallant Major of Marines—who, of course, was the leading expert of all ("because he wore a red stripe down his trousers," Bubbles said)—to explain that "Anafarta village must be captured; that this was the first thing to be done".

"I guessed that—in once," bleated the China Doll in an undertone.

"The whole success of this new operation depended on capturing Anafarta, and the ridge behind it, by a *coup de main*," went on the Major, as though addressing a class at Sandhurst. "The whole situation now demands an entire reconsideration of plans. I must say that I feel doubtful of ultimate success unless very heavy reinforcements arrive." Whereupon he shut his old-fashioned telescope with a snap, and went below, as if, from his point of view, he had washed his hands of the matter.

Uncle Podger, the Sub, Bubbles, the Orphan, and the China Doll remained

to watch the ambulance wagons slowly trailing across the Salt Lake towards the cluster of hospital tents to the left of Lala Baba—the First Casualty Clearing-station—at "Wounded A" beach, and to watch the battalions in reserve enjoying a rest under some low cliffs this side of Lala Baba, many hundreds of men splashing merrily in the sea, undeterred by shrapnel bursting over them at intervals.

The *Havelock* lay at anchor quite close to these men.

"If I were running the show," the China Doll suggested confidently, "I should——" But how success could have been achieved will never be known, for "eight bells" struck, lunch waited down in the gun-room, and the China Doll knew the disadvantage of a late start, so flew away like a "rigger".

Many of the gun-room officers came up again after a hasty meal, and began examining the details of the extraordinary *Havelock*, when, all of a sudden, a spout of water flew up close to her.

"Hello! What's that? There goes another! Someone's having a "go" at her. Look! Look at those two puffs of smoke amidships! She's been hit! Ah! She's getting under way—about time too."

Her cable came in, and she slowly moved out of the way, signalling that three men had been wounded. One or two more spouts of water sprang up, but then they let her alone, and the water spouts began creeping towards the *Cornwall*—past her—over—back again—short. The *Cornwall* hastily got her anchor up, and circled away from that unpleasant spot; and then the little shells began falling quite close to the *Swiftsure*, at anchor only some four hundred yards away from the *Achates*.

"Short! Short again! Hello! that hit—on her starboard quarter! I saw it bounce off—it's close to her ward-room! There's another! That went in! Look! you can see the hole—close to the water-line."

"Look! Look! Look!" cries came from all round—it was getting exciting now—as three shells, one after the other, burst close to her for'ard funnel and the smoke of them drifted away.

"She's getting it hot. She'll be off in a minute. Ah, she's shortening in!"

They heard the *Swiftsure's* buglers sounding "Action".

"It will be our turn next," they laughed—a little nervously, as the *Swiftsure* circled away towards the line of submarine-net buoys; and, sure enough, in a couple of minutes there came a loud, wailing, rushing noise, which seemed to pass between the foremast and next funnel, and a "flomp" as a shell fell into the water on the other side, some sixty yards away.

They ducked and went down below, but not before another drawn-out wail ended in a "flomp" a hundred yards short of the ship. "Action Stations" sounded, and everyone cleared away to their quarters; the China Doll, very pale, and not enjoying himself at all, having to climb up the rigging to the fore-control top.

He heard a shell coming, caught his breath, clung to the ratlines, and knew it would hit him. He heard it "flomp" into the sea behind him; and the irritated Gunnery-Lieutenant, coming up after him, hurried him up the rigging with angry oaths. "Get that range-finder uncovered. What's the range of that village? Quick! Quick! Quick! I've got nothing to fire at. There are no orders yet."

Down on the foc's'le the Commander, the Bos'n, and a few men were getting up the anchor as fast as possible, and in five minutes off went the *Achates*.

Directly these four ships began moving about, the Turks left off firing at them and threw shells at the transports lying farther out; but these lay at the extreme range of their guns, and that afternoon, at any rate, they made no hits. After a while they ceased firing, and the ships came back and anchored. The Hun, who had been away all this time in his steamboat, came down into the gun-room in a great state of excitement, as a shell had fallen within ten feet of his boat. The *Swiftsure* presently signalled that she had five men killed and fourteen wounded. News came from the *Grafton*, out beyond Suvla, round the northern corner, that she too had been shelled, and had lost nine men killed and twenty wounded—all these casualties caused by one small shell which came down a hatchway and burst among a crowd of men gathered there.

"What a change, after six weeks of peace at Ieros!" Bubbles gurgled. "I don't think much of this war. I call it rotten."

"Jolly uncivil of them—and our first day, too!" Uncle Podger said.

"Whatever rhymes with *Achates*?" asked Rawlins, whose poetical genius had once more been roused. "'Not afraid is,' would do, but I can't fit it in; or 'What a day 'tis'—that's jolly difficult to fit in too."

The rest of the afternoon passed quietly, and that evening the reconnoitring aeroplane which flew over from the island of Imbros—from the aerodrome at Kephalo—reported that she had seen the Turks digging emplacements for four big guns on the top of the ridge.

"Well, that's not very cheering," Uncle Podger grimaced as he smoked a pipe in the Sub's cabin after dinner. "If they can make us shift about and keep under way with those small things, as they did this afternoon, they'll drive us out altogether with their big guns—and submarines will be waiting for us there."

"We shall have to knock 'em out," the Sub said; "that's all."

"We couldn't do it at Helles; I don't see how we are going to do it here," Uncle Podger said. "Did anyone see the guns that were firing at us?"

The Sub shook his head. "I don't think so."

They went back into the gun-room just in time to hear the China Doll plaintively saying: "I didn't like going up to the top one bit; a shell came very close to me;" and the others singing out: "What does your carcass matter? Wind up the gramophone and let's have a noise!"

A most perfect night followed, and nearly everyone slept on deck; but hardly had they been turned off the quarter-deck next morning, when shells began whistling across the *Achates*, and off she had to go again to get away from them. These shells came from a 4.1-inch high-velocity gun, and gave about three seconds "notice" before they arrived. That morning, for the first time, the Turks turned a 5.9-inch gun on the shore—the same calibre gun as "Gallipoli Bill"—bursting high explosives with their tremendous roar, abreast the ship, on what was known as "New A" beach, a convenient little split in the rocks where most of the boats ran in, and close to where "Kangaroo Pier" was being built. These shells fell almost vertically and did very little harm, but their noise was extremely disconcerting.

That evening the battleship *Venerable* arrived, and next day the *Achates* became more or less of a depot ship for the Naval transport officers, the Harbourmaster, the surveying officers, and (as Uncle Podger said, when their midshipmen "assistants" and the midshipmen of all the "stray" pickets came to live in her)—a "home for lost dogs". The gun-room was again invaded by tired, weary snotties, in their grimy Condy's-fluid-stained uniforms, who, when they were not eating, lay about on the leather cushions and odd corners, and slept. The Pimple and the China Doll were almost reduced to tears when they thought how the gun-room stores would disappear once more.

It was a depressing day; they could not call the gun-room their own. They heard of the fall of Warsaw; nothing seemed able to stop the German advance through Poland and Galicia; and this new landing gave not any hope of success.

"Oh, bother it all! Stick another needle in, China Doll, and start that rotten gramophone," they said.

At the mention of gramophone the Lamp-post would always slink out of the Mess.

The Turks had left them alone that day—as far as shells were concerned; but Fritz, the submarine, evading the patrolling trawlers, let go a torpedo at the balloon ship—the *Manica*—outside, beyond the nets.

A plaintive signal came from her that a torpedo had passed underneath her, and a submarine had been seen from the balloon—that yellow monstrosity waggling above her. That meant another interval for excitement, and a manning of the small guns in case Fritz took it into his head to pop up his periscope anywhere near. The balloon was hauled down, and off went the *Manica* to seek protection behind the "net" at Kephalo, in Imbros Island.

More shells came along on the Sunday morning, just when the Honourable Mess, clothed only in towels, clamoured for "next turn" at the little baths. Again the ships had to get under way, and the *Swiftsure* reported one hit, without casualties. It was a quaint crowd of undraped young officers who gathered behind

the six inches of armour round Y1 casemate, and waited for the "sh—sh—plonk" of the Turks' shells to cease, and the bugle to sound the "carry on", before they rushed back to complete their toilet. Don't imagine that the ships took their insults "lying down". They blazed away at where the guns were reported to be, or where they thought they were; but as you should know by now, it was practically impossible to spot them; and, in time, everybody learnt that the best thing to do was to plug a few shells into Anafarta village (keeping clear of the Red Crescent flags which decorated it), where one shrewdly expected that the Turkish Head-quarters Staff and its German "pals" had comfortable "diggings". A few shells there, delicately placed, generally had the desired effect. One could almost imagine the German Staff Officer (when shells began knocking down the houses round him) cursing: "Gott im Himmel! it's not good enough being bothered like this. Telephone to that confounded battery to leave 'em alone, till I've finished my breakfast; it's not doing any good, anyway."

That Sunday afternoon our troops tried to advance along the ridge beyond Suvla Point, and did make some headway; but they came up against a wretched redoubt, a thousand yards from Jephson's Post, crammed with machine-guns, and were brought to a standstill.

The *Talbot* and the *Swiftsure* did most of the covering work; but the Turkish trenches up there, and that redoubt, were so protected by the folds and curvatures of the hills that their high-velocity guns were very ineffective.

When this business was finished, "Cuthbert", the hostile aeroplane, came over from Maidos, and made a "bee-line" for the balloon ship once more. As he approached, the *Manica* commenced hauling down the balloon and its observers, and simply screeched at "Cuthbert" with her maxims; but the aeroplane did not take anything seriously, plumped down two bombs within half a mile of her—not nearer—appeared to be perfectly content, and went home again, followed by some very pretty shrapnel from the *Talbot*.

There was very heavy firing on shore on the extreme left that night—all through the night—and by the morning the soldiers had lost the ground they had gained the day before.

In the usual "strafe" that morning, two shells hit the *Achates* without causing any casualties; but by now it had become thoroughly understood that if the ships remained where they were, and did not get up anchor and move about, the Turks would soon leave off shooting at them. So, from now onwards, ships seldom shifted billet during these frequent shellings. This may have spoilt the Turks' amusement—for it must have been most amusing to the Turkish gunners to see them scurrying about the harbour—but the constant shifting became too boring altogether. The poor old distilling ship—the *Bacchus*—and the *Ajax*, a store ship, came in for the worst time. The Turks had a special "down" on them both,

and seldom a day went by without them being hit, first of all with small "stuff", and, later on, by 5.9-inch shells.

Fritz put in another appearance that Monday morning, and had another "go" at the balloon ship—the *Hector* this time—but something had gone wrong, as before, with the "balance chamber" of his torpedo, and it gracefully dived underneath her. However, she hauled down the balloon in a hurry—she thought the "balance chamber" of the next torpedo might be in better working order—and inside the submarine net she came, only to be driven out again by shells which flew chirpily over the *Achates*, and dropped all round her. A lucky shot in the balloon—and "finish" that—so up came her anchor, and she pushed across to Kephalo.

On the Tuesday everyone became heartily sick of the "retire" bugle. The Turks seemed unusually generous that day. They shelled the *Achates* at half-past six; they rested until the Honourable Mess had commenced their breakfast, when "swish—sh—sh—flomp" went a shell just alongside, and the wretched bugle sounded again. At ten o'clock, at half-past twelve, and twice during the afternoon they disturbed everyone; and when they had packed up for the day, "Cuthbert" came along and made a most deliberate attempt to bomb her. She circled overhead twice, and on each occasion dropped bombs which fell with the sounds of express trains and burst, one about a hundred yards and the other about forty yards away.

"It's not very restful, is it?" the little Padre said wistfully, as he joined, for the fifth time that day, the little crowd of "idlers" who were taking cover behind the after turret during the last spell of shelling.

It wasn't. The continued strain became most intensely wearisome, and affected a great many people very noticeably. For more than three weeks the *Achates* had these wretched shells coming round and over her, at intervals, practically every day. It was the noise of them which became so trying—the noise, and the wondering where "that one" would hit.

Perhaps, in the gun-room, the most marked effect was the smartness with which everyone "turned out" in the morning (they slept on the quarter-deck), looked to see if the sun had risen behind Anafarta, and scampered down to get his bath and be dressed before those beastly shells came round. Breakfast became a remarkably punctual meal, for the Turks liked to have their little joke at half-past eight; and no one in the gun-room, except the Sub, Bubbles, and sometimes Uncle Podger, could stay and enjoy their food if that side of the ship swung to the shore, and the "swish—sh—sh—flomp" of those shells came through the scuttles in her thin side.

"Divisions", at half-past nine, had to be held out of sight, in the battery, for the temptation always proved too great for the Turks when they saw men falling

in on the quarter-deck or fo'c'sle.

On one memorable occasion when, "divisions" having been reported correct to Captain Macfarlane, the men were all marched aft on to the quarter-deck for prayers, the ship's company made one almighty "duck" as a shell came over them and burst not ten yards away in the water. If eye-witnesses speak the truth, the only people who did not "duck" on that occasion were Captain Macfarlane—who made the excuse that "he had been rather deaf for the last few days"—and the little Padre, who apologized most profusely that he had been so busy trying to prevent the wind blowing his surplice round his neck, that he hadn't noticed it.

At any rate, after that, "divisions" and prayers were held in the battery out of sight.

The people who had the most unpleasant time were the signalmen on the fore-bridge, the telegraphist in the "wireless" room on the shelter-deck, and the people on watch on the quarter-deck.

"What am I to do?" the Sub growled to Uncle Podger one day. "Here we have half a dozen boats round the gangways, a couple of hundred men working about the upper deck, and along comes a jumping Jimmy of a shell and flops fifty yards short of the ship—then another, a hundred or a couple of hundred over. It may be all a mistake—they may be coaxing them along to the distilling ship—and the next may fall a thousand yards over. How am I to know? What am I to do? If I don't stop work and sound the 'retire', then the next one will probably come 'splosh' into our chaps and lay half a dozen of them out. Then what will the Commander say?—losing his best hands perhaps; and the Skipper will want to know why I didn't clear 'em all off the upper deck. It's worrying; that's what it is!"

"My dear chap," said Uncle Podger, "I'll tell you exactly what I feel. When I go on deck I am certain that those Turkish gunner chaps over there on the hills sing out 'Hello! here comes the most valuable clerk in the whole British Navy; any of you chaps got a spare round to have a 'pot' at him?' I walk up and down the quarter-deck with my ears cocked towards the shore to hear that beastly whining swish—a shell or two will fall in the water—those big chaps, with their infernal thunder-clap, burst on the shore—and I gradually find myself edging away to the hatchway, and going down to the office or the gun-room, where I can't hear the things so plainly. It gets on my nerves, I can tell you that."

Whatever happens, the routine of the ship's work must be carried on: the decks are scrubbed; the hands fall in; they work about the upper deck, splicing wires, scraping paintwork, repairing boats, overhauling gear—all the thousand-and-one jobs which have to be done; boats have to be called away, and go about their business; the meat, potatoes, and bread have to be served out; the office

work has to go on just the same; the sick have to be attended and treated; the signalmen and upper-deck watch keepers have to keep their watches; the men have to have their meals and scrub the mess-decks; the cooks have to cook the ship's company's food; and all these routine duties go on, either without any protection whatever, in the open, or behind a half-inch of steel which won't "look at" a shell of any sort or description. A battleship or cruiser is designed to fight an action which may last for an hour or for five hours, but, at the end of that time, life on board reverts to its ordinary routine—as far as it may. She is not intended or designed to be constantly under shell-fire for weeks at a time.

The Pink Rat, whose nerves had never recovered from his experience at "W" beach, frankly could not stand the spells of shelling; the China Doll grew restless and more baby-like than ever; the Pimple was nearly as bad; the Lamp-post hated the shells perhaps more than anyone, for he had a most vivid imagination, but he controlled his feelings wonderfully, and never showed the least outward sign of "nerves", except that he became more than usually boisterous after sunset—when all was peace. Rawlins and Bubbles treated the whole thing as a joke. "Don't think about 'em," Bubbles gurgled to the Pink Rat, "and then you won't worry." The Hun did not seem to trouble so long as he had something to do in his steam pinnace; he had to remember to live up to his D.S.C., too. The Orphan, who felt he also had a reputation to keep up, worried very little either.

The midshipmen in the boats and their crews had to carry on their usual work at all times. It sounds simple enough when talked about in a comfortable chair at home; but just put yourself in the place of a midshipman in a steamboat, with perhaps a lighter in tow, who is coming off from shore and sees a shell burst in the water fifty yards ahead of him, knows that another will come along in a few seconds, and has to take his boat through the swirl made by the first shell! Or, again, he sees a ship hit, or shells falling all round her, and has to take his boat alongside her, and, worse still, wait alongside her. This is what these midshipmen and their crews had constantly to do; and when they went inshore, shells were constantly dropping close to them, not only the small 4.1-inch, but the big high-explosives.

The strain and the long hours caused many of these midshipmen to break down, but there was no instance that can be brought to mind when any of them showed the slightest sign of treating shells too "respectfully" when on duty.

Don't imagine that the ships themselves remained idle all this time. One or other constantly fired at known gun positions, on enemy working parties, at convoys, at the enemy observation posts and trenches at Anafarta—in fact, at every target they could find or the Army point out to them. The monitors with long-range guns fired across at the Turkish transports and store ships anchored in The Narrows; the big ships constantly bombarded enemy camps and depots

behind the hills, helped by spotting aeroplanes, for, of course, they could not see where their shells fell. Destroyers and the "Edgar" class constantly harassed the Turks along the coast.

CHAPTER XIX
The Army again comes to a Standstill

Nearly every night, for the first week after the arrival of the *Achates* at Suvla, reinforcements poured across from Mudros in "troop-carriers", fleet-sweepers, destroyers, and small cruisers. Among these came the veteran 29th Division—which had been brought up to fair strength by constant drafts from England—and also the 2nd Mounted Division—yeomanry who came to fight as infantry. These yeomen were men of such magnificent physique that the Syrian interpreter on board the *Achates* told the Orphan that, though the pick of the Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Turkish armies had come frequently under his observation, he had never seen such fine troops as these.

One more attempt was to be made to advance and, if possible, gain possession of Anafarta.

But to reach Anafarta, and the gap in the great semicircle of hills behind it, a whole series of smaller slopes and ridges, spurs and shoulders of the main hills, had to be seized first. Even without preparation for defence they formed a tremendous obstacle, and by this time the Turks had been digging and burrowing and wiring them, day and night, for a whole fortnight.

From the main-top of the *Achates*, on the 20th August, these small ridges and slopes looked as though a huge colony of moles had been at work on them, and when the sun sank low over Imbros the barbed wire in front of these "mole runs" made glittering streaks along them.

A terrible task it was, as everyone knew.

However, one little hill, somewhat detached from the main line of defence, projected into the plain towards Chocolate Hill. This was Hill 70, perhaps better known as "Scimitar Hill" from a broad, sweeping, burnt patch running up the near slope. If this hill could be stormed and held, it would assist further attacks on the main position.

The 29th Division were told off to capture it.

On Saturday, the 21st August, all dispositions were completed, and a little before two o'clock in the afternoon the four ships, the *Venerable*, *Swiftsure*, *Talbot*, and *Achates*, which had previously anchored in single line ahead, as close to the shore as possible, bombarded Scimitar Hill, "W" ridge beyond it, and every known or probable enemy gun position. The Army heavy guns assisted.

In a very short time the Turks had to abandon many of their trenches; and if only it had been possible to continue bombarding until the attacking infantry had almost reached those trenches, the 29th Division might have stormed them without much loss.

But this was not possible. For one thing, the range was too great—over four miles—to make certain of not hitting our own troops. The ships had to cease fire, and thus gave time for the Turks to rush back to their trenches and bring their machine-guns along with them.

As the 29th Division advanced, some thirty or forty enemy guns opened on them with shrapnel and high explosives; and though a brigade stormed Scimitar Hill, its losses were so great that the remnant who gained the crest could not hold it against the tremendous whirlwind of fire from the higher ridges beyond and a fierce counter-attack.

Farther along, to the right, the remainder of the 29th Division and the 11th Division, attacking the southerly spurs of "W" ridge, gained a footing on them, but could not reach the crest.

The flat ground over which they had just advanced with such heavy loss was thickly covered with scrub and trees, and the high-explosive shells bursting among them quickly set this scrub alight in several places. These fires much hampered the rapid bringing up of supports.

At the commencement of the action, that division of dismounted yeomanry whose physique and bearing had so roused the admiration of all, was held in reserve behind Lala Baba, and rested there, in full view from the ships. At about half-past two or three o'clock these yeomen fell in, circled round the flank of Lala Baba, extended as they gained the open mud-flats of the Salt Lake, and commenced to advance across it towards Chocolate Hill. The Turkish gunners saw them almost immediately, and burst hundreds of shrapnel over their heads. No "gunners" could ask for a better target than these poor fellows made, and for twenty minutes they suffered terribly, without any hesitation or faltering in their ranks. To those who watched them from the main-top of the *Achates*, it was a wonderful relief when they gained the cover of the trees and thick scrub near Chocolate Hill and the shrapnel began to leave them alone.

Abreast the *Achates*, and some half-mile from the beach, was a little green mound, dignified with the name of "Hill 10" on the military map. On the rear slope of this, a field-gun battery had been very active all the afternoon, and

presently the Turks thought it about time to put a stop to this. They turned one or two 5.9-inch guns on to Hill 10, and simply plastered it with high-explosive shells, bursting them with their horrid, rending thunder-claps every few seconds among the field-guns and the limbers in rear. For half an hour those field-guns pluckily went on firing, but they did not know where the big shells were coming from—nobody did—so none of the ships could help them, and at length they were compelled to cease fire and the gunners to take shelter.

"What are they? New Army or Territorials?" asked Uncle Podger. None knew; but, whoever they were, they put up a most plucky fight.

By five o'clock the smoke from the bush fires obscured the whole field of battle between Chocolate and Scimitar Hills, and, though the rattle of musketry and machine-guns went on continuously, no more of the fight could be seen from the *Achates*—only the ambulance wagons coming across the Salt Lake, and the stretcher-parties clearing away the wounded yeomanry.

By dusk the flames of these bush fires showed up plainly, and as darkness fell on that fateful day they lighted up the whole plain, Chocolate Hill and Lala Baba standing out black against them. They burnt fiercely, the flames eating their way along the plain, running this way, then that; and on board ship one could only grimly conjecture what was happening to the helpless wounded cut off by them—and keep the horrors of one's thoughts to oneself, if one could.

Fighting went on all that night; and by dawn the attacking divisions had fallen back to their original positions in front of Chocolate Hill, except on the right, where the 11th Division maintained a point some six hundred yards in advance.

From that day no serious attempt was made to advance, and the idea of forcing a way across to the Dardanelles was for all practical purposes abandoned. From now onwards, trench warfare commenced, and continued until the definite abandonment of The Great Adventure.

All that Saturday afternoon and all that Saturday night a continual stream of wounded were brought to "Wounded A" beach, attended to, and as fast as possible sent off to hospital ships. The Hun with his steam pinnace, and a couple of boats in tow, helped cope with the enormous amount of work. At dawn next morning the Orphan relieved him, and by Sunday night very nearly six thousand wounded had been evacuated. They all went to hospital ships, but only the serious cases and the severe leg injuries stayed there. The others, who could walk, crossed over the hospital ships from one side to the other, and went down into trawlers waiting alongside. These, when full, steamed across to Kephalo, on Imbros Island, and landed them there.

It now became generally understood that the Germans and Austrians intended to break through Serbia, march across Bulgaria, and join hands with the

Turks. The Bulgarians were much more likely to assist than resist them; and it did not require any great strain on the mental powers of the military experts in the gun-room to enable them to realize that, once the Turks obtained heavy guns and an ample supply of ammunition, they could drive us and the French off the Peninsula.

It was anything but a pleasant prospect, especially with the autumn fast approaching, and the fierce winter gales which would make the landing of stores impossible.

A peaceful three days followed this battle of the 21st August. The Turks had probably expended all their ammunition and were busy replenishing their magazines. At any rate, three days later they shelled the harbour and the ships very lavishly. The *Venerable* had a man killed and some wounded, and the *Swiftsure* had a man wounded by a fragment of a shell which burst on the *Venerable's* fo'c'sle. From this date they always managed to spare the ships a few rounds—at the usual hours—every day. They killed an unfortunate stoker in the *Achates* soon after this. The crew were at "Action Stations", and he had gone on to the mess-deck to make certain that his fire-hose had been screwed on properly, when a shell coming in through the side (it actually burst on the edge of a scuttle) took off his head.

They then attempted a night attack on our left flank. Firing burst out suddenly one night just after eight o'clock, and though the Honourable Mess had not yet reached the "pudding" stage of their dinner they rushed up on deck to see what was happening—all of them. That fact alone proves that the noise of rifles, machine-guns, and shells must have been considerable.

A most brilliant spectacle this firing made. Many young officers in the trenches, on both sides, kindly contributed hundreds of pretty star shells; the Turks burst a very large number of shrapnel most picturesquely; the destroyer *Grampus*, out beyond the bay, lighted up the ridge near the Bench Mark with her search-light; the army field-guns did what they could to aid the display, and the *Swiftsure* obliged with four rounds of 7.5-inch shrapnel to give *éclat* to the occasion.

From a pyrotechnic point of view the scene from the quarter-deck of the *Achates* could not have been improved, nor could the orchestra of rifles, field-guns, maxims, and trench bombs.

But the attack evidently lacked backbone. Rifle-firing raged up and down the lines, but it never reached the pitch of inarticulate firing and determination which marked those night attacks at Helles. As a matter of fact, the Turks never left their trenches; and even before the laconic signal came from shore: "Situation well in hand", that well-known military expert, the China Doll, not seeing in the dark that Captain Macfarlane happened to be standing next to him,

lisped out: "That's nothing; it's nothing like those other shows at "W" beach; they don't mean anything; I'm going down to finish dinner." Captain Macfarlane thanked him very gravely: "I am much obliged to you, Mr. Stokes" (which perhaps you remember was the China Doll's name), "you have relieved my anxieties immensely." The wretched China Doll disappeared down the hatchway like a shot rabbit.

Now there was a cocksure young subaltern of the New Army at Suvla to whom the whole art of warfare had become an open book. He claimed relationship with the Lamp-post, and, on the strength of that, came off at times to get a decent meal and a bath. There was also a certain 5.9-inch gun hidden away somewhere near Anafarta which enjoyed throwing high-explosive shells into the "so-called" "Rest Camp", and this young officer had suffered frequent annoyance from them. He became a little peevish, and made sarcastic remarks about naval gunnery not much to the liking of the Honourable Mess, especially one day when the *Swiftsure* had nearly broken her Gunnery-Lieutenant's susceptible heart by not knocking out this particular gun after some fifteen rounds. They explained gently to him that the gun could not be seen from the ships, and that, at five and a half miles, firing at "where-it-was-thought-to-be" did not give much chance of hitting it.

One afternoon, when he happened to be aboard, a French aeroplane, with engine troubles, planed down to the beach beyond Lala Baba, and could not get away. She had not been there for ten minutes when the Turks commenced dropping shell round her.

"Now you'll see how easy it is," the Lamp-post said ironically. "Remember, the Turks can see that aeroplane—they can see it with the naked eye. We can't see 'Anafarta Annie' through a telescope." Well, they counted more than a hundred and fifty shell—shrapnel and common—fired within the next thirty-five minutes, and the aeroplane appeared not to have been touched.

At least they thought the "Young Friend" might apologize, but he only laughed: "Well, at any rate, you Navy chaps aren't the rottenest shots in the world."

"I do hope 'Annie' drops one in his 'dug-out'," the Hun said angrily, when he went ashore. "Don't you ever ask him off again, Lamp-post, or we'll work the gramophone at meals."

"I never do ask him; he comes," the Lamp-post smiled.

"Annie", so the Observation Post nearest to Anafarta reported, lived in a tunnel or deep gully, and when her crew wanted to do a "hate" they ran her out on rails, fired her, and ran her back again. It was also said that if shells fell anywhere near her, the crew used to run across to a little white house about a hundred and fifty yards away, and take cover there. So one morning the Gunnery-Lieutenant

of the *Swiftsure*, always ready to woo a fair lady, "went" for her; and when he thought her crew had probably run her back into her tunnel and gone across to their cosy little white house, he peppered that with 14-pounder shells. No one can go on with this game—at five and a half miles—for ever; and when the *Swiftsure* ceased firing, "Annie's" crew, appreciating the humour of it all, ran back to her, fetched her out (presumably), and dropped half a dozen high-explosive shells among the mules and stacks of bully-beef boxes above "A" beach.

They were full of noisy humour, these Turks; but what did jar on their nerves was the sight of a battleship or cruiser coaling. They objected most strongly, and always burst shrapnel over, and dropped shell at the "coaling" ship directly the collier had come alongside and she had commenced that dirty job.

They also had a rooted objection to the *Arno*, a trim little destroyer attached to the General Headquarters Staff; and whenever she anchored inside the "net" they did their best to make her feel uncomfortable. She might have always had the General Head-quarters Staff on board, to judge by the persistent way they plugged at her.

And as for Jephson's Post, up there on the top of the ridge, on the left, they took a positive dislike to it and to the Naval Observation Station, just below it. This Observation Station was manned by some naval ratings and two naval officers—a gaunt, hawk-like Commander and a Lieutenant-Commander belonging to other ships. These two took duty in turns—three days "on" and three days "off". The three days "off" they spent on board the *Achates*, sleeping most of the time.

This post was constantly under fire from heavy and light guns. It also received all the "overs" and the stray bullets fired from the Turks, farther along the ridge, at Jephson's Post and the trenches in front of it, so it was not at all a "health" resort.

"The view in the early morning is charming," said one of the Observation officers; "and but for the fact that I'm certain there's a dead mule or a dead 'something' among the bushes somewhere near—has been there for the last fortnight—and that we get something like thirty to forty shell over it every day—often more—it wouldn't be half bad."

Another Naval Observation Station had been established on Chocolate Hill, and to visit either of these positions made exciting afternoon walks and climbs, whenever any of the Honourable Mess ventured ashore. On one occasion the Lamp-post and the Orphan landed at "A West" beach one afternoon, and walked up to the Observation Post near Jephson's Post. Pretty hard going it was, under the hot sun and along the sandy mule-track which wound up the lower slopes among the concealed field-guns. Then they had to climb along a steep path, with a parapet on the enemy side, till they came to the second line of trenches, and

heard the intermittent sniping close to them. In the morning the Post had been severely shelled, and they found the Commander lying flat on the ridge, some forty yards away from it, behind a natural parapet of rocks, reinforced by some sand-bags, his telephone box close to him.

"You must have had a warm time of it this morning, sir," they said admiringly.

"That was all right. I was here all the time. There wouldn't have been much left of me if I had stayed there. Come along and see." He took them back below the ridge, climbed up to the rear of the Post—a little three-sided affair, partly made out of large stones and sand-bags piled on each other, partly of natural rocks, with a timber and sand-bag roof over it all.

"Pretty untidy, isn't it, here? You can have the base of that shell—one of this morning's little lot; if you hunt round, you'll find another somewhere, I expect. They keep their eye on this place; I shouldn't wonder if they are watching us now. Let's put back some of these rock things."

The front parapet had been partially knocked down that morning, so that the "observing" loophole was now four or five feet wide. If they could see him when there was only a small loophole, thought the Lamp-post, they'll be able to see us, all right, now. They had just finished piling up the last of the stones and sand-bags in their old places—-more or less—when the accustomed ears of the Commander caught the sound of a Turkish gun.

"That's my gun!" he cried, throwing himself down. "Lie down. That will be short," he said coolly, as they heard the "swish—h—h" of an approaching shell. "Short, not very; keep down, some of the bits may come in."

"Whump" burst the shell about thirty yards below them, and something rattled against the parapet they had just built up. The stinging smell of smoke came in through the crevices.

"Scoot out of it!" the Commander said, scrambling to his feet, and taking them down to where they had found him at first—soldiers dashing for cover all along the ridge. "Keep close in behind those rocks," he said, as they lay down, and he peered out between his sand-bags.

"I thought so. The same two old guns, on the far side of the 'Rectory Field'. They've shifted 'em since the morning. They've fired again. They keep those two especially for my benefit."

"Whump" burst a shell, then another, up along the ridge, somewhere close to the Observation Post, whilst the hawk-like Commander rapidly took "angles" with his sextant, and examined the squares and dots on his military map.

Then he rang up the Naval Observation Post, and giving them the new position of the guns told them to ask *Swiftsure* to try a few rounds.

"Keep down!" he sang out to the two boys. "Snuggle up to those rocks.

Those chaps sometimes try lower down the slope."

During the next quarter of an hour some fifteen or sixteen shells burst close to the old Observation Post, and the Orphan wriggled to a place where he could look down, across the harbour, to where the *Swiftsure*, *Venerable*, and *Achates* lay. They did look small.

"Hello! there goes one from the *Swiftsure*," he cried, and wriggled farther round to see if its shell went anywhere near those guns that had been firing.

"Twenty yards short—good shot!" the Commander sang out. "They'll fire another, if either of the guns are loaded—— Yes—there they go—keep down! Then they'll pack up."

"B-r-r—whomp" burst a shell, just as the *Swiftsure* fired again, and they watched for her shell to burst. "I believe that's a hit; if it wasn't, it was jolly close. Go up and see what damage they have done; it's perfectly safe now."

The two midshipmen scrambled to their feet and made their way up to the old Observation Post, whilst the Commander busied himself with the telephone.

"My aunt! Look, Lampy!" sang out the Orphan, who reached it first. "Jolly lucky that we didn't stay!"

They had a difficulty in crawling in, because two of the balks of timber had been blown down at one end. All those stones and sand-bags they had replaced twenty minutes ago lay scattered on the ground—some outside among the bushes, others inside. In one torn and half-emptied sand-bag they found the fuse of the shell which had apparently done the damage. It was still warm.

"Oh, look! there's your stick! You must have left it. Look! That will be a bit of a curio, won't it?"

"It isn't mine; it's the Pink Rat's," the Lamp-post grinned, as he picked up the two pieces. "I wish it had been mine."

They took the broken pieces and went back to the Commander. "They've knocked it about no end, sir. It's lucky we didn't stay there. You'll have to give it up, won't you, sir?"

"Oh no! rather not. I shall use it again to-morrow; but I shan't touch it—leave it just as it is. Probably I'll put some sand-bags here, where they can see them, and let them pot at this place instead. Come along, we'll give you a drop of tea, down in my 'dug-out'. The *Swiftsure* has finished firing."

"Did she hit either of them?" they asked.

"Went jolly close," he said. "I rather fancy she did hit one, but it's very difficult to say for certain."

The Commander's "dug-out" was some fifty yards below the crest of the ridge, and out of sight of Suvla Bay and the plain of Anafarta. From it the Lamp-post looked over the Gulf of Zeros, the Bulgarian and Turkish coast-lines, and, on the left, the lofty island of Samothrace, rearing its crest above the clouds.

Down in the sea at his feet—some five hundred feet below him—the *Grampus*, destroyer, steamed slowly along to protect the extreme left flank of the army, which extended from behind Jephson's Post to the actual beach. Beyond her, either the *Grafton* or the *Theseus* came slowly along towards Suvla Point, pushing through the glittering water. Trawlers and drifters, with their reddish-brown mizzen-sails giving a peaceful and home-like appearance to the beautiful view, patrolled very, very slowly the stretches of the Gulf between Samothrace and the Peninsula.

From this "dug-out" the ground sloped very abruptly to the sea, its surface composed of scattered rocks interspersed with coarse bushes. The bivouacs of the brigade in reserve were here, and hundreds of men lay about smoking, talking, and mending their clothes, or fast asleep. Bathing parties went down to the sea, chattering noisily, or scrambled back, half naked, to dry themselves in the sun.

As the two snotties drank their tea, two men on stretchers were carried past, on their way to a Dressing Station, a little way below and to the left. One man smoked a cigarette and looked quite cheery; the head of the other lay back oddly on the stretcher, with that horrid grey colour on his face—he was dead.

"Have another cup of tea? I'm sorry there's no cake," the Commander said. "Those infernal snipers get some fifteen or twenty of our chaps up here every day. They paint themselves green—their hands and faces—dress up in green clothes, or fix themselves up in twigs and leaves. They're plucky chaps, I must say. We found one chap, down in the plain, the other day, over there"—and he jerked his thumb up the ridge towards Anafarta—"we found him half a mile inside our lines, up a tree, lashed to a branch. One of our chaps happened to be walking back from the trenches, and walked right under the tree; thought he heard a noise, looked up and saw him. Luckily he had his rifle, so he shot him, but had to climb the tree and cut him clear before the body fell to the ground. On one side of that Turk hung a basket with a few figs in it, and on the other side a basket full of cartridge cases. Most of them were empty, so that he must have had a pretty good 'run' for his money."

A messenger came to say that the Turks were commencing their usual evening "hate" on the beaches and ships. "Well, you'd better get along back," he said. "Now, don't play the fool. For the first few hundred yards past the Observation Post you will be in full view of their firing-trench along the ridge; so don't loiter. I must be off to see whether any of those guns have shifted since yesterday. Good-bye!"

So back they went, with the base of one shell, the fuse of another, and that broken stick belonging to the Pink Rat. As they neared the beach, big shells kept dropping on it, so they waited a little while before going down to "A West". A friendly A.S.C. sergeant invited them into his roomy "dug-out"; and luckily they

did go in, for shrapnel began bursting very close, and an empty case buried itself in some ground between two lines of mules, not twenty yards away.

Flies had been bad up in the Commander's "dug-out". Here they were ten times worse—worse even than they had been before they left "W" beach at Cape Helles.

Having added to their trophies that empty shrapnel case (the A.S.C. sergeant had sent across a couple of Indians belonging to his transport column to dig it up), and the firing having ceased, they presently found themselves in the Hun's steam pinnace, on their way off to the ship.

You can imagine that these two young officers had a good deal to talk about when they did get on board. Neither of them had much chance of going ashore, because, after the first few days, so many of the original midshipmen of the "stray" boats broke down and had to be sent back to their ships, that they were almost constantly employed in steam-boats.

There were the "night patrols", when they steamed, up and down, along the line of submarine-net buoys, from sunset to sunrise—fearfully tedious and monotonous work, only enlivened by the very occasional submarine "scares". Some trawler or drifter—out beyond—would think she had seen one, and fire two Very's lights; and then there would be a hustle and a bustle, and the patrolling picket-boats with their maxims would dash up and down, in case Fritz came along, and they could get a shot at his periscope. For some days the Orphan had to take charge of the Harbour-master's picket-boat, and used to spend most of his nights outside the nets, often in a lumpy, unpleasant sea, meeting troop-carriers coming across with reinforcements, or store ships—all according to programme—and imploring their Captains to go *between* the two lights on the buoys at the submarine-net "gate"; not that the troop-carriers ever made mistakes—they had had too much practice—but some of these store ships seemed incapable of coming in without fouling the net, picking up some of it with their screws, and giving twenty-four hours' work hacking it clear and then repairing it. Most of the daylight hours during that time the Orphan spent in sleep, but not all by a long chalk, for things were always going wrong with a line of lighters supporting some borrowed torpedo-nets, and the Harbour-master was always wanting to go along and see what could be done. As these lighters were constantly being shelled, this was a most unpleasant job.

One evening, after snatching a couple of hours' sleep, he found that a 3-pounder gun had been mounted in the bows of his boat, and the usual maxim taken away.

"Hello!" he said to the coxswain. "What's this for?"

"I fancy we're going to hunt for Fritz to-night, sir."

"Why, has he been round to-day?"

"He fired a torpedo at the *Jonquil* this afternoon, sir; somewhere round the left flank, sir."

When the Orphan climbed on board to find out more news, he ran across the Sub on the quarterdeck.

"Hello, my jumping Jimmy! I was looking for you. We've got to go away to-night and see if Fritz goes to sleep in Ejelmar Bay—about seven miles along the coast, round Suvla Point. He's been making a nuisance of himself again. What kind of a coxswain have you?"

"Not particularly good," the Orphan said. "He's not very fond of shells."

"Hum! I suppose we can't change him," the Sub said, scratching his head. "I've got Bowditch, the gunner's mate, coming along to run the 3-pounder, so that will be all right." Then, bursting with excitement, he thumped the Orphan's chest. "My perishing Orphan! Just fancy if we bag a submarine!"

"Promotion for you, too," grinned the Orphan.

"I hadn't thought of that," beamed the Sub. "Wouldn't that be grand?"

They were interrupted by a signalman running aft. "Hostile aeroplane, sir!" he called out. The "guard call" sounded, and the marines began tumbling up the hatchways with their rifles.

It was "Cuthbert", the aeroplane, coming along for his evening visit; but this time he was not bothering his head about the ships at Suvla, but flew past at a great height, evidently off to Kephalo, in Imbros Island, twelve miles across the water, to try and drop a bomb on the aerodromes there, or on the General Headquarters Camp.

"We aren't going away until nearly midnight," the Sub said, as they watched "Cuthbert" growing smaller and smaller. Suddenly there was a shout of "Hello! One of ours is after him! Look! He's heading him off!"

Sure enough, they saw another dot against the blue sky rapidly closing "Cuthbert", who had evidently seen him and swerved to the right.

As far as they could see, the English aeroplane was the higher of the two, though a long distance separated them.

"Hello! Look there! He's coming back! Look! He's dropped his bombs" (two spouts of water flew up on the sea). "He'll get away now!"

With the weight of the bombs "off" him, "Cuthbert" came back very fast, and presently the English machine gave up the long, stern chase and turned back to Kephalo.

"Well, they stopped him dropping bombs there," the Orphan grinned.

Just before midnight—pitch-dark it was—the Sub, the Orphan, and Bowditch, the gunner's mate, climbed down into the picket-boat and pushed off. They steamed outside, turned to the right, and, half an hour later, met the *Grampus* destroyer—the left-flank-guard destroyer—who piloted them along the

coast-line for some seven miles. Then she stopped. Her skipper shouted across, through a megaphone: "We're right opposite it now. Off you go. I'll wait for you."

In they went—very slowly, to prevent making a noise, and so as not to bump anything in the dark—eventually finding themselves in a bay, with high cliffs all round it. Here the darkness was more intense than ever, and all was absolutely silent. They "felt" round the cliffs at one side, going dead slow, but not a trace of Fritz could they find. Then they pushed across to the opposite cliff, where there was a lighter patch—probably a break in the cliffs—and just as they had searched this other side, a most startling crackling of musketry burst out from the direction of that lighter patch, and bullets fairly hummed round their ears. The coxswain put his helm hard over as the Sub roared for the engines to go full speed ahead, and the picket-boat naturally began turning a circle, and would have headed for the foot of the cliffs in a moment or two, had not the Orphan swung the helm back again. The Sub, coming back from the bows, where he and Bowditch had been "standing by" the 3-pounder and looking for Fritz, took the wheel from him, and steered out into the open.

"My! but that was warm," the Sub said, drawing a deep breath. "That was the hottest bit of fire I've had yet; it beats Ajano. I've never heard so many bullets at the same time. Phew! One lucky shot, and the boat might have been disabled."

"We don't have much luck, do we?" the Orphan said, when he had recovered his normal state of mind.

"No, we don't. Still, there wasn't a submarine there—of that I'm certain. We were sent to find that out—so never mind. Phew! That was hotter than I liked it—it was. I can't think how they missed us."

The *Grampus* escorted the picket-boat back to Suvla Point, and just after the sun had risen and the hands had been turned out, she ran under the stern of the *Achates*, and the Sub and the Orphan climbed up the "jumping-ladder".

The Lamp-post, with a relief crew, stood waiting to take over the picket-boat.

"No luck, Lampy; nothing doing," the Orphan said. But his pal was too interested watching the colour effect of the sunrise on the mountain top of Samothrace—to the right of Imbros—and made the tired Orphan look at it too. "Bother old Samothrace, Lampy! I want something to eat. I hope they won't start shelling *us*" (a big shell had just burst on the beach, opposite the ship) "till I've had a bath and my breakfast. Where are you going?"

"They ran a lighter ashore at 'C' beach last night, and I've to go and clear her, and try to get her off."

"C" beach was round Nebuchadnezzar Point, out of sight behind Lala Baba, and the Turks shelled most things that went there—at any odd hour of the day.

"Poor old Lampy! They'll start shelling you directly you go there—they did me yesterday. Bath—breakfast—sleep—that's what I'm going to do. Nighty! Nighty!"

"Swish-sh-sh—flom-p" went a shell, half-way between the distilling ship and the *Achates*.

"R-r-r-omp" burst a high explosive on the beach. Another shell, falling into the water close to the *Achates*, burst, and the smoke drifted along the surface to her bows.

"Bugler! Bugler! Sound the 'Retire'!" sang out Mr. Meredith, on watch. "Get away in that boat of yours," he told the Lamp-post, as the old crew came up the jumping-ladder, and the relief crew waited to take their place. "Coal and water her when this 'show's' finished."

"Good luck to 'C' beach and the lighter, old Lampy! Don't duck when they come along. Nighty! Nighty!" the Orphan called out to him, and went below, as another wailing swish sighed through the air over the ship.

Outside X2 casemate the China Doll leant against the thin armour, with his sponge and soap in his hand and a towel round him. "Where are those horrid shell dropping? Anywhere near us?" he asked, blinking his eyes.

The Pink Rat, inside the casemate, looked very miserable. "Any luck, Orphan?" he asked nervously.

"I'm going to 'bag' your baths. I'm so sleepy I can't wait till these silly old Turks have finished," the Orphan said, and sang out for Barnes to get him a cup of tea.

It was now four weeks since the night of the Suvla landing, and, as you have heard, flies were more of a plague on shore than they had been when the *Achates'* midshipmen left "W" beach. They swarmed on board the ships. Bubbles declared that you could see them sitting along the gunwales of every boat that came off from the beach, and that directly it got alongside they flew on board and made themselves at home. The Honourable Mess presented the China Doll with a "swatter", and made him spend most of his waking hours killing flies in the gun-room, but the more he killed the more flew in through the scuttles or from the mess-deck. Both in the ward-room and the gun-room the noise of the fly "swatters" went on continuously all through the daylight hours.

Dysentery commenced to rage throughout the Army; and whether the flies brought it off from shore or whether they did not, dysentery commenced to break out among the ships' companies, especially among those men who worked in boats, or those living ashore—signalmen and beach-party men—all who were frequently in contact with the soldiers. The Pink Rat, grown visibly thinner, and the

Hun both went on the sick-list. They lay in cots on the half-deck, but had often to turn out and get behind the armour, on one or other of the casemates, when the Turks' shells began whistling over the skylight above them. They lived chiefly on condensed milk—"poor brutes", as the China Doll said sympathetically.

So many of those "stray" snotties who had lodged in the *Achates* had by now been sent back to their own ships, ill, that the Honourable Mess had the gun-room almost to themselves again. Nor had those precious stores been seriously raided this time, so they had no real grievance.

At last the *Achates* herself received orders to return to Mudros to coal and "rest"; and on the 6th September she slipped out through the submarine "gate" after dark, left the twinkling camp-fires of Suvla behind her, and steamed through the double row of submarine nets at Mudros early next morning.

CHAPTER XX
Hard Work at Mudros

The *Achates* had not been at Mudros for nearly three months and a half, and during this period the appearance of the shores on either side of the harbour had changed very greatly indeed. Where, previously, fifty tents or marquees had stood, there were now thousands—multitudes of them—the French on the east, the British on the west side. The French, anticipating a winter campaign, had already built rows of wooden barrack-huts; the British had begun to do so.

Stone and brick buildings for offices, workshops, and store-houses, a narrow-gauge railway with petrol-driven engines, electric generating stations, half a dozen substantial piers, and miles and miles of roads—all had been built since the end of April. In the harbour itself lay more transports, store ships, colliers, oil ships, and water-tank ships than before the first landing. A line of French battleships faced a line of British. Monitors big and monitors little, cruisers, scouts, and sloops off duty, coaled, provisioned, and rested prior to returning to their bombarding or submarine-hunting jobs. Up in a corner, near Mudros West, and opposite Turkish Pier, lay the *Blenheim*, the mother ship of destroyers, surrounded by those of her children off duty. At another part of the harbour the submarines, resting after having come down from the Sea of Marmora through the nets across the Dardanelles, or preparing calmly to go up there again, nestled

alongside the *Adamant*. Two or three white hospital ships were at anchor inside the harbour; eight or nine out beyond the nets at the entrance. Among all these puffed and snorted a great number of motor-lighters, the "water-beetles"—doing all the work of moving troops and stores, and doing it marvellously well. In fact, it is difficult to imagine how the work would have gone on without them.

The first day of her "rest" the *Achates* coaled, and on the second took in provisions from the little *Dago*. This little steamer ran between Malta and Mudros with frozen meat and vegetables for the fleet. She also at times brought the private stores ordered by the gun-room messman, so that the Honourable Mess had a warm spot in their hearts for her.

That week's rest extended for nearly two months and a half. During this time, so many of the officers and men were employed away from the ship that the *Achates* became immobilized, and did not take her turn for "guard" duties or as "emergency" ship. Every morning sometimes as many as two hundred and fifty of her men were called for by the "water-beetles", and taken away to coal leviathan transports, or to dig up rubble and load it into some steamers which were being prepared to be sunk as breakwaters off the various beaches on the Peninsula. The big steamer *Oruba* presently arrived, and the *Achates* had the job of dismantling her and preparing her to be sunk at Kephalo.

Those coaling jobs did not appeal to the snotties, though even they had their compensations, as the Orphan proved when he came back from coaling the *Mauretania* for three whole days, dirty and tired, but with tales of pleasant meals on board her, and hugely proud because he had managed to buy two boxes of kippers and one of haddock.

For a whole week, each of the Honourable Mess had a kipper or a haddock for breakfast, and Bubbles considered that "it wasn't such a rotten war after all".

The Pink Rat about this time finally broke down, and had to be sent to the naval hospital ship *Soudan* with a recurrence of his old "W beach" dysentery. He never rejoined the *Achates*, and on the broad shoulders of Bubbles devolved his light duties as "senior snotty".

Flies were troublesome, but not so bad as at Suvla, and the weather remained gloriously fine until the end of October.

Every evening after "seven-bell" tea, whenever it was possible to obtain a boat—a whaler or a gig—as many of the Honourable Mess as could get away would pull or sail down to the harbour entrance, land, cross over a narrow neck of land near the wireless station, and bathe in a delightful little cove; afterwards they would kick a football about on some level ground there, and sail or pull back with grand appetites for dinner. Why the China Doll was never drowned on those expeditions it is difficult to explain.

Two football grounds had been made, quite close to this "wireless" station,

and the use of them was given to each ship in turn—two matches a day on each. So, often the ward-room and gun-room combined to play the officers of other ships; often, too, the men arranged matches between different parts of the ship—Bubbles and his fo'c'sle men—the Orphan and the Sub with their foretop men—the War Baby and his marines—the Lamp-post and Rawlins with their quarter-deck men.

Many good games they had, and if only there had been any cheering news, this period would have been a very pleasant one. But nothing went well anywhere. The great "push" in Flanders and France had come to a full stop; the Russians only just managed to keep the Germans from advancing—in fact, but for the approach of winter, people wondered whether they could keep them out of Petrograd (no one could get used to that name), and whilst the Germans and Austrians swept across the Danube into Serbia, the Bulgarians poured across the eastern frontier. Troops in thousands, French and British, had been rushed across to Salonica, but Greece still "sat on the fence"; she would not help, and the French and British arrived too late to prevent Serbia being overwhelmed. No attempt had been made on the Peninsula to advance; and dysentery raged in the army—thousands of cases being taken away every week. The number of German submarines in the Mediterranean had become more numerous, and the area to patrol with trawlers, destroyers, scouts, and sloops was so vast that the difficulties of suppressing them grew enormously. One thing alone was satisfactory: enough stores had been landed on the various beaches to maintain the army there, at a "pinch", for six weeks—long enough to tide over any probable period of bad weather, when landing might be impossible. There was also a certain satisfaction in seeing the constant stream of ships which came in through the harbour entrance every morning, and to know that they had safely run the gauntlet of the submarines; but everyone realized that "The Great Adventure" had failed, and that to maintain the army in its present precarious footing on the Peninsula was causing an immense drain on the resources of British shipping, without any apparent disadvantage to the enemy.

One bright spot cheered everyone—the deeds of our own submarines in the Sea of Marmora. But for them, the prestige of the Allies in the East would have fallen to a very low ebb at that time.

By the middle of October "all white" uniform changed to "all blue", and this marked the commencement of cooler weather.

Lord Kitchener arrived early in November, inspected all the army "positions", and went away again.

Till his coming, there had been some speculations as to the possibility of evacuating the Peninsula; but the extraordinary difficulties of this operation had been so evident, that those two military experts, the China Doll and the Pimple,

had long since decided that it could not be accomplished without tremendous loss of life, a huge number of men left behind as prisoners, and most of the guns abandoned.

Now, again, everyone wondered what Lord Kitchener thought, and what would happen.

After his departure the weather broke up temporarily, and a south-westerly gale—only a mild one—left Suvla and Anzac and Cape Helles beaches strewn with wrecked or stranded picket-boats, lighters, and "water-beetles".

In the third week of November the *Achates* received the welcome order to proceed to Kephalo. The full moon shone brilliantly as she slipped out through the nets, and off she went. Two hours after leaving Mudros the track of one torpedo shot across her bows, and half a minute later another passed some eighty yards astern of her—Fritz, or one of his brothers, had fired two torpedoes—so she increased speed and "zig-zagged".

The danger had vanished by the time it had been realized; and all that the Honourable Mess and the gramophone knew about it, was the sudden rushing down of men to close those water-tight doors and hatchways which remained open, and a lurid description from the Pimple afterwards. It did not interrupt the delightful concert with worn-out records and blunted needles.

By three o'clock she entered the submarine-net "gate" at Kephalo; and when the sun rose next morning it shot up from behind Achi Baba, and once again they heard the distant booming of guns.

Kephalo, at the corner of Imbros Island nearest to the Peninsula, is a narrow harbour with high hills on one side and a narrow spit of land on the other. It is entirely open to the north-east—the quarter from which the worst of the winter gales blow—so three ships, including the big *Oruba*, had been sunk across it, higher up, to give protection to the little piers built there, and to the picket-boats, motor-lighters, and ordinary lighters which worked round them.

Kephalo had become the advanced base of Anzac and Suvla, ten and twelve miles away respectively, and it was absolutely necessary that troops and stores should be able to be landed or embarked at all times. Here, too, were the aerodromes which "Cuthbert" and his brothers so delighted to bomb. One of these was stationed on the low spit of ground; and the Orphan, who had the knack of making friends with everyone, and the knack of generally being in the right place at the right moment, managed one afternoon to be taken "up" in a reconnoitring aeroplane. He and Bubbles had strolled along to the aerodrome, wandered round until someone invited them to tea in the "mess"; and whilst in the middle of it, the "Flying Officer" on duty received an urgent signal: "Hostile submarine reported off Gaba Tepe, steering S.W.; please send aeroplane reconnaissance to search".

"Confounded nuisance!" exclaimed the Flying Officer. "I wanted to write

some letters; the mail goes to-morrow morning. Well, you chaps can tell a submarine from a shark, I suppose; which of you would like to come along and spot old Fritz?"

They both grinned with delight; but Bubbles carried too much weight—at least a stone and a half more than the Orphan—so the Orphan was chosen.

The emergency aeroplane—a biplane—rested on its wheels outside the sheds. They walked across to it.

"Climb in!" said the Flying Officer. "No, you won't want a coat; stick on this cap and goggles—pull the flap down over your ears—and get in as you are; we shan't be away more than an hour. Sit down behind; I've altered the control gear—can work it from the front seat."

The Orphan had never been in an aeroplane before, and tingled with excitement. He sat down and winked at the disappointed Bubbles whilst his new friend climbed up in front of him and began to play about with levers and switches. "If you do see Fritz, signal with your hand—bang me on the back—it's no good shouting: I shan't be able to hear you."

The blades began whizzing round as the engine buzzed; men gave the machine a shove and a push; the blades went so fast that they only made a mist in front of the Orphan's eyes; the ground dropped away, and he shouted to Bubbles to wait for him—though it wasn't much use shouting, because of the noise of the engines.

Up they went, passing over the *Swiftsure*, the *Achates*, and the other ships in the harbour, and out beyond the line of submarine-net buoys.

They headed right over the sea, first of all towards Helles; passed it, swept round, and the Orphan clutched at the sides of the "body" as the aeroplane altered course, for he thought she was slipping sideways. Not a sign of Fritz did he see, but below him lay the end of the Peninsula, its white tents, "W" beach, the hull of the poor old *Majestic* showing clearly under the sea, Achi Baba and the streaks which represented the Turkish trenches. In another ten minutes he looked down on Gaba Tepe, at one of the "Edgar" class firing shells which he could see bursting among the streaks on top of the hills there. Up the coast the aeroplane sped, passed Suvla with its black submarine-net buoys—he counted one hundred and fifty-two of them; the two battleships inside them looked tiny, so did the tents on shore. Then, with another wide sweep over the sea, and bending to the right, he was carried along the left-flank coast till he could see the little gap of Ejelmar Bay, where he and the Sub had tried, that night three months ago, to find Fritz; and beyond it, with some humpy hills between, the sun glittered on a broad sheet of water and a silver streak which came in sight, in and out beyond the hills—the Sea of Marmora and The Narrows.

Round swept the aeroplane; he clutched the sides; she steadied and flew

back towards Helles again, but not a sign of a submarine could he see; and in fifty-five minutes from the time he had started, he was landed with a gentle bump outside the aerodrome, and found Bubbles waiting for him.

"You *are* a lucky chap," he bubbled. "Did you see Fritz?"

The Orphan shook his head. "But I saw The Narrows and old Marmora; wasn't that splendid?"

"Anybody fire at you?" Bubbles asked.

"Oh no!" explained the Flying Officer; "there was a bit of a haze over the sea, so I could not go very high—shouldn't have seen Fritz if I had—so it was dangerous to go too near land. We never climbed above 2500 feet."

They only just had time to catch the evening boat off to the *Achates*, so they had to wish their new friend good-bye and hurry back along the beach, the Orphan talking thirteen to the dozen.

Pride filled the bosom of this young officer, for he was the only one in the ship who had seen either The Narrows or the Sea of Marmora. "It looks so near to The Narrows!" he said to the Sub that night. "It doesn't look more than an hour's walk. Things have turned out rottenly, haven't they?"

"It *is* rather tragic—really," the Sub said.

The first job the *Achates* had, after arriving at Kephalo, was to send working parties across to Anzac to help salve some lighters, a tug, and two picket-boats, driven ashore by the first of those gales from the south-west. The first of the fierce gales from the north-east followed, after two days of calm, and drove such heavy seas into Kephalo harbour that the ship had to put to sea, and anchor round the corner of the island, behind another row of submarine nets, in Aliki Bay. She came back as soon as that gale had blown itself out; but on the 27th of November another north-easterly gale commenced, and next day she again had to shift round to Aliki Bay. Here she and all the other ships that had come round for shelter rode out that three days of blizzard which caused such horrible suffering to the troops at Suvla—to British and Turk alike. The temperature on board ship never fell below 30 degrees, but at Suvla it fell to something like 15 or 18, even lower. First of all, before the gale it rained in torrents, and as the water collected and flowed down from the hills behind Anafarta into the valley, it washed over the Turkish trenches, levelling them, and carrying drowned Turks, drowned mules, barbed wire and their posts right over a long section of the British lines, drowning a large number of the British, flooding their trenches, and carrying everything before it till the Salt Lake was reached. When the rain ceased the bitter north-east gale flung itself down from the hills, bringing at first heavy snow; then the terrible cold froze the water in the trenches, and hundreds of our men, up to their middles in it, died of exposure, and very many hundreds suffered from frost-bite.

During those three days the troops at Suvla experienced the climax of hardship and exposure. The Turks suffered even more than our own people; and when daylight broke after the worst night, they were left exposed in the open with their trenches swept away, and our men—those whose hands were not too numbed to fire a rifle—shot them down like rabbits. Afterwards, a gentle breeze sprang up from the south-west, and, almost as if in pity, a warm sun shone down on those much-tried armies.

On the Tuesday the ships trailed back to Kephalo again, getting a glimpse of Samothrace with its snow-clad peak glittering in the sun—a most gorgeous, exquisite spectacle.

They found that the centre one of those three breakwater ships had disappeared entirely, and the head of the harbour behind them, close to the piers, was absolutely littered with wreckage. This centre ship had broken in half on the Sunday night, and the seas sweeping through the gap had hurled all the picket-boats and lighters sheltering behind her on to the shore, in one jumbled, tumbled mass.

They presented a most extraordinary sight piled on top of each other, and half buried in a huge mass of seaweed swept in with them. A big distilling steamer, with her rudder gone and her rudder-post smashed, had been driven ashore farther along the bay; beyond her lay a "water-beetle" high and dry, and, still farther along the shore, one of those small provisioning "coaster" steamers which ran between Kephalo and the Peninsula.

Salvage work commenced immediately. The Lamp-post and Rawlins took fifty men ashore, and worked, day after day, digging away the seaweed which blocked the little piers, and trying to refloat the least damaged of the steamboats; the Sub, with a number of men, had to rig shears to lift out the engines and boilers of those which were hopelessly smashed—all very unpleasant work, because that seaweed decomposed quickly under a hot sun and gave out the most unpleasant odour.

A more pleasing job had Bubbles and the Orphan. With a large working party they commenced to dig a channel through the sand—good, honest, clean sand—in order to refloat a stranded "water-beetle". They paddled about all day and had a huge lark.

On the second morning, as they prepared to go ashore, Uncle Podger, on his way to his bath, sang out: "Take your little buckets and spades and go down to the beach, dears, but promise Mummy not to get wet."

"We'll promise Uncle a jolly 'thick ear' when we do come back," they laughed. "Come along by the seven-bell boat, bring a basket and some tea 'grub', and we'll have a picnic there."

"Cuthbert" came over from Maidos once or twice, just to make "kind en-

quiries", find out how the salvage operations progressed, and see whether three or four bombs would be of any assistance. They were not; none of them dropped near enough to help, and all much too far away to do any damage.

The weather became simply perfect, and after a week's hard work the *Swiftsure* had hauled off the distilling ship and one of the "water-beetles", the *Achates* had towed off that small steam "coaster", and Bubbles and the Orphan had dug a channel sufficiently deep for a tug to come along and tow off their stranded motor-lighter.

That especial job being finished, these two midshipmen again had time to look round and see what life would bring. It brought news of woodcock and partridge—woodcock in the deep sheltered valleys, and partridge on the slopes of the hills. The little Padre lent them his shot-gun, and away they tramped one day, taking the China Doll to "beat" for them and to carry home all the birds. They swore a solemn oath that each should fire alternate shots, an arrangement which made a "right and left" difficult to get when frightened coveys were put up. Bubbles fired the deadly shot which eventually killed a partridge, and, of course, by the time the Orphan had seized the gun the rest of that covey had swooped out of range.

They sent the China Doll to retrieve the bird, and sat down to smoke their pipes and shout good advice at him; for the hill-side was covered with boulders and thick scrub, and the China Doll had a big job in front of him. "Keep it up, China Doll; never despair!" they shouted encouragingly as he came back with his hands and knees scratched and bleeding. "'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.' We've got another hour to wait for you. Off you go!"

At last the bird was picked up; and in the gun-room that night they held an inquest on it, and found that "it had been well and truly killed by one or more missiles discharged from an explosive weapon, and that no trace of foul play, such as bludgeoning or being strangled, could be discovered".

Then came the question as to how it should be "hung", and for how long. The China Doll said that "the proper thing to do was to hang it by the head, and when the corpse dropped off, then it would be just right." They thought of trying the experiment on him, but desisted on the urgent representation of Uncle Podger that, if the China Doll's body dropped off his head, the work of the Ship's Office would be seriously delayed whilst he, Uncle Podger, attended the funeral as chief mourner—and, besides, he had no *crêpe* band to go round his arm.

Eventually Bubbles and the Orphan ate that bird on the second day—after innumerable visits to the gun-room galley to see how it progressed—and it was as tough as tough could be. They gave the China Doll the gizzard.

A week later the little Padre mildly suggested that next time they borrowed his gun they might clean it before they put it back in the case. "It doesn't get quite

so rusty," he said apologetically.

For many months the southern portion of Anzac—Brighton Beach and Watson's Pier there—had practically been abandoned, because "Beachy Bill", a high-velocity 4.1-inch gun, somewhere up in the Olive Grove, above Gaba Tepe, had the range of the pier so exactly that he would hit the end of it, or lighters lying alongside, with his very first shot of the day, and his fire at night was almost as accurate. Several attempts had been made to destroy him (probably he had several brothers), but these had not been successful.

One day—the 10th December—the *Bacchante*, an "Edgar" cruiser, and two monitors went across from Kephalo, and fired a great number of rounds into the Olive Grove. Whether "Beachy Bill" or his brothers were hit or not, no one could actually say; but only one gun fired after that day, and it made such inaccurate shooting as not to interfere with work either on the pier or the beach. It did not fire at all at night.

At the time no one, except perhaps Captain Macfarlane, knew the meaning of this great expenditure of ammunition; but two days later, "all hands and the cook" were told off for various jobs, either at Suvla or Anzac, in motor-lighters or picket-boats, or actually on the beaches themselves; and it dawned on the enthusiastic Honourable Mess that, after all, an attempt was to be made to evacuate those places, and that the last prodigal bombardment of the Olive Grove had been for the purpose of finally destroying the guns there, and making it possible to use Brighton Beach and Watson's Pier for the embarkation.

So secretly had everything been carried out, that no one in the gun-room knew that most of the stores and the greater part of the guns, horses, and mules had already been withdrawn.

They had seen fleet-sweepers and the troop-carriers—the *Osmanieh*, the *Ermine*, *Reindeer*, *Redbreast*, *Abassiah*, and several others—crowded with troops on their way to Suvla or Anzac; but they had not seen them returning still more densely packed with men, nor the transports with horses, guns, and stores. This had all been done by night.

Rumours flew round that though Suvla and Anzac were to be abandoned, the end of the Peninsula, in front of Achi Baba, was to be reinforced by all that remained of the 29th Division, and maintained at all costs.

The Lamp-post and Rawlins, ordered to take charge of two "water-beetles", donned their dirty old khaki delightedly, and took over their "commands". The Lamp-post had K26, a single-screw lighter driven by one big motor. K67 belonged to Rawlins, and possessed two little motors driving twin screws. For the first day they were employed in Kephalo harbour, and had a great argument that night as

to which would prove the faster. The Lamp-post bet Rawlins a dinner at the club at Malta, or at the first civilized place the *Achates* went to, that his one big engine would beat the two small ones.

Next day they had the opportunity of deciding, for they were ordered to Suvla. The Lamp-post led the way through the "gate" in the submarine net, and waited outside for Rawlins to come abreast and make a fair start.

"The first one through Suvla 'gate' to win!" he shouted. "Off we go!" and they raced each other across the twelve miles of sea, the Lamp-post winning his dinner very easily.

Now, though the chief stokers—old pensioners—in these two lighters pretended to be just as excited about the race as the midshipmen themselves, actually they were much too wise to press their motors hard, knowing full well that two hours driving at top speed would probably disable them for days. However, the Lamp-post and Rawlins did not know this—they thought they were having a "ding-dong" race—so it did not matter.

They arrived there at dusk, just as the usual high-explosive shells dropped on "'A' West" beach, and some little ones fell into the harbour near the *Cornwallis*, others near the poor old distilling ship.

Off "'A' West" pier there was now quite a comfortable little harbour, made by two steamers which had been sunk at right angles to each other, with a gap between them just sufficiently wide for two "water-beetles" to pass through side by side.

They had helped to fill these two steamers with stones and rubble at Mudros two months ago, so recognized them—the *Fieramosca* and the *Pina*.

On this same day, Bubbles and the Orphan rigged themselves in khaki, joyfully packed away a few things in their battered, old tin cases, and took charge of two picket-boats—the Orphan of one belonging to the *Swiftsure* (this ship had no midshipmen), and Bubbles of one which had belonged to the ill-fated *Majestic*. The unfortunate Hun looked very miserable as he waved "good-bye" to them. He had not regained strength after his attack of dysentery, and Dr. O'Neill would not let him take any job on shore.

"You've got your D.S.C., old Hun; so don't worry," the Orphan consoled him. "I only wish that I could get it!"

CHAPTER XXI
The Evacuation of Suvla Bay

In a little wooden hut, perched on a mound just above the landing-places at Kephalo, lived two naval Captains—the Fierce One and the Not So Fierce One.

Bubbles, the Orphan, and eight other snotties, with their picket-boats, found themselves handed over to the anything but tender mercies of the Fierce One; and the morning after Rawlins and the Lamp-post had raced their "water-beetles" (or thought they had raced them) across to Suvla, these ten gathered, expectantly, outside this wooden hut, and waited whilst the Captains finished their breakfast and smoked their pipes.

All these ten midshipmen were dressed in some sort of khaki except the two *Lord Nelsons*, who wore ordinary blue uniform, and grinned and nudged each other as though they shared some secret joke which they couldn't possibly divulge.

Presently the Fierce One came out, and they all stiffened to attention. He gave a preliminary roar—just to clear his throat and make way for what was coming—rapidly casting his eye over them. "Who's the senior snotty here? Why the—the—the—don't you report to me?"

The ten had never thought of that. They muttered, and looked at each other, and at last the very microscopic *Lord Nelson's* midshipman (known generally as the Cheese-mite) nervously reported: "All midshipmen present, sir."

"What's your name?" he growled.

"The Cheese-m—— Morrison, I mean, sir."

"Morrison be hanged! I don't care a tuppenny biscuit what you were christened. What's your boat?"

"*Lord Nelson's* first picket-boat, sir."

"Um! *Lord Nelson* No. 1. That's your name. What in the name of goodness d'you mean by it? This isn't a fancy-dress ball; what are all these individuals doing, coming along here like a lot of dysenteric soldiers?" and he shook his fist at the eight disconcerted midshipmen in khaki. "If I see 'em dressed again except in uniform, I'll—I'll—wring their necks!"

Then he went from one to the other, to learn the names of their steamboats, glaring at each, and "sizing" them up as he did so.

Bubbles became *Majestic*, the Orphan *Swiftsure*. This having been concluded, he went through them again to make certain that he knew their boats, and from that moment never made a mistake.

"*Lord Nelson* No. 1 and No. 2, *Swiftsure*, and *Majestic* fall in on the right—make a gap between you and the others. You four will work at Suvla—the other six at Anzac. You'll all get more orders presently, but remember this. Your job is to take off stragglers on Saturday and Sunday nights—those are the two nights of the evacuation. You'll have some pulling boats in tow, and you are not to leave behind a single man who gets down to the shore. Remember that. Saturday night

ought not to be difficult; but on Sunday night, when the last few men rush down with the Turks after 'em, you'll have your work cut out. You'll have to 'wash out' any idea of bullets and nonsense like that, and if any one of you doesn't do his job, I'll—I'll—wring his neck! Oh!" he roared, "you'll wish you'd never met me."

A good many of the young officers had begun to wish that already.

He went on: "The boats you'll have to tow will come round in a day or two—those that aren't here now; and here's a list of things to be done, one for each of you. Away you go!"

He handed them each a paper, and stalked back to the wooden hut, but turned and growled fiercely: "Remember this: every man Jack who is on the Peninsula now is useless to England; every man who gets away is one to the good. Remember that, and do your job, or by the—the—the—I'll wring your necks! Off you go, and don't let me see any more of you in those dirty ragamuffin clothes of yours."

They made their way down to the little piers and the wrecked boats which still littered the shore.

"You *are* a rotter, Cheese-mite. You might have told us. You knew it all the time," they said. "We thought we must come in khaki."

"I couldn't tell that you were coming like that, and it was a jolly sight too late for you to go back and shift," the Cheese-mite explained.

"My aunt!" the Orphan said to Bubbles as he read his paper; "wooden boards to be fitted inside the glass windows of cabins. Whatever's that for?"

"Splinters, I expect. When we're chock-full of Tommies, some will have to crowd below, and a bullet coming in and smashing the glass would fling the bits all round."

"They don't expect us to have a warm time—do they?"

"Not half!" Bubbles grinned.

[image]

"SCREENED LANTERNS!"

They soon stowed away their khaki and shifted into blue uniform, and for the next two days fitted out their boats with maxims, two boxes of belts, towing-spans[#] over the sterns (as on the occasion of the first landing), fitting shields round the steering-wheels of those boats which had none, making screens for hand-lanterns, testing their steam-pumps, and seeing that the thirty or forty items down on their "lists" were on board.

[#] Towing-span, a rope or wire passing all round a boat under her gunwales, with a hook secured to the bight at the stern. The painter or tow-rope of a boat to be towed is secured to this hook.

On the Thursday morning the Fierce One came out in his fussy little "Z" motor-boat, and all the ten picket-boats followed him, making a circle round him whilst he inspected them.

The maxims—he could see them; anchors—he could see them too; but when he shouted through his megaphone "Screened lanterns!" every snotty had to hold up his lantern with one hand and the canvas screen in the other. The same with the semaphore flags, boats' signal-books, axes, compass-boxes, and ammunition-boxes.

"Work your pumps!" he roared; and after a furious interval all ten picket-boats began squirting jets of water.

Then he bellowed "Megaphones!" and all held up their megaphones except the Cheese-mite.

He dashed alongside *Lord Nelson* No. 1, and seized the Cheese-mite by his coat collar.

"Where's your megaphone? you—you—you——"

"Please, sir, I had it this morning; but when that destroyer went past just now the picket-boat rolled, and it went overboard."

"I'll roll you overboard," he growled, holding up the Cheese-mite as though he were a kitten. "You'll get another before night, or I'll—I'll——"

"Knives!" he shouted.

Now nearly all the snotties had taken for granted that every man aboard would have one. But only a few had them, and the Fierce One flew in a towering rage.

Eventually he took all the picket-boats outside the submarine net to make certain that those maxims would fire; and it can be easily imagined what happened when ten strange maxims were worked by ten not very experienced "hands", in ten bobbing picket-boats, under the supervision of ten much less experienced snotties.

A bullet hit the gunwale not two feet from where the Orphan stood, and goodness only knows why there were no casualties. Little, though, cared the Fierce One, so long as he made certain that every machine-gun was in working order.

That day they practised towing their pulling-boats—four to each of the Suvla boats, three to each of the Anzac ones.

A very busy day they had, for in the evening a transport came into harbour loaded with mules from Suvla, and tried the simple plan of slinging them

overboard and letting them swim to the shore.

The Orphan and Bubbles were sent away in pulling-cutters to shepherd them in the right direction, and had the time of their lives chasing silly, obstinate mules who wanted to swim out to sea. Eventually they headed them off, and they made a "bee-line" for a battleship, lying with her torpedo-nets "out". It was the funniest sight in the world to see half a dozen mules with their heads looking over the edge of the torpedo-nets, "digging out for daylight", and really quite happy. After a lot of shouting and laughing they were all induced to swim shorewards, and soon scrambled on the beach, shaking themselves like big dogs, rolling in the sand, and looking for the nearest eating-place.

During these few days the ten midshipmen heard hundreds of yarns about the preparations for evacuation—how the front trenches had been mined, and many of the reserve and communicating trenches as well; that the only guns to be left behind, if all went well, were a few condemned 18-pounders and 6-inch howitzers. To deceive the Turks on the Sunday night, many rifles were being fixed up in the front trenches with tins lashed to their triggers, and, above these empty tins, others with a hole in the bottom of each. When the last of the troops left the firing-trenches, they would load the rifles, fill the top tins full of water; the water would drip slowly or fast—according to the size of the holes—into the other tins fixed to the triggers, and when these became full, off would go the rifles—at different times. The few motor-lorries and ambulances still remaining kept dashing about in full view of the Turks, to make them think that they were just as numerous as ever; and the few troops in reserve, instead of hiding behind Lala Baba or Chocolate Hill, made themselves more conspicuous in the open.

You can understand, as the week went by and that fateful Saturday approached, how tense the excitement grew, and how eagerly everyone watched the barometer and the sky for any change from the gorgeous calm days which succeeded each other. Such a spell of fine weather could not possibly last much longer, and the fate of perhaps fifty thousand men depended much upon it lasting until early Monday morning.

The Turks had not yet given any sign that they realized what had been happening or what was about to happen. They still shelled the ships, the beaches, the old empty gun positions just as they used to do, and generally at the same old times; but no one, knowing the ease with which they had previously seemed able to obtain information of our doings, thought it possible that they could actually still be in ignorance.

In the middle watch, on Friday night, a huge fire broke out at Anzac. Actually some of the most inflammatory stores prepared for burning on the Sunday night had been set alight accidentally, and made a tremendous blaze.

On board the *Achates* Mr. Meredith, whose watch it was, stood, with the

Quartermaster, watching the glare—ten miles away across the sea—and knew that something had gone wrong.

"That will give the show away," the Quartermaster muttered sadly.

"I'm afraid it will," Mr. Meredith answered, desperately anxious.

That fire burnt all night, but in the morning the Turks never showed the least sign of activity beyond the usual normal sniping and shelling.

Saturday dawned absolutely calm—a few flaky, almost stationary clouds showed against the blue sky.

"Can it hold until Monday morning?"—that was what everyone thought and hoped and prayed.

Again the ten midshipmen "fell in" outside the little wooden hut—this time all in their proper blue uniform—and received their orders in writing, each order beginning with the well-known formula: "Being in all respects ready for sea, you will proceed forthwith..." Then followed long detailed orders for every eventuality.

Drawing two days' provisions for his own crew and the twenty-four men in his four pulling-boats occupied the rest of the Orphan's morning.

At half-past four he shoved off from the *Achates*—the Hun, looking wistfully after him, waved "good luck"—and he towed his four boats to the trawler told off to tow him to Suvla. Bubbles, coming along with his boats, made fast to another. Before dusk all the trawlers left Kephalo, each with its picket-boat and string of pulling-boats behind it; four headed for Suvla, and the other six towards Anzac.

The sea was calm, and the sky gave not the slightest indication of any change in the weather, so that the Orphan and his coxswain—a wiry, active petty officer named Marchant, belonging to the *Swiftsure*—were in the highest spirits.

"If it only keeps like this, sir!" the coxswain kept on saying.

Before it grew too dark to see properly, they both inspected all the boat's gear to make certain that nothing was out of its place. Down in the cabin the Orphan found some green leaves—cabbage leaves.

"Heave them overboard," he said. "Whatever are they doing down here?"

"I thought they were for you, sir. An old stoker brought 'em down; told me to hand 'em over to you, very carefully, and he brought this box too." He picked up a small wooden box about a foot square, with a lot of holes bored in the top and the sides; and the Orphan burst out laughing, for he knew he would find "Kaiser Bill" inside it.

"That's 'Kaiser Bill'," he said, as he raised the lid and saw the tortoise lying there. "He brings good luck. He came in our boat when the Lancashire Fusiliers landed, so I suppose old Fletcher thinks he ought to take a hand in this job as well—the funny old man!"

"He's a rum-looking beast for a mascot, isn't he!" Marchant grinned, holding up "Kaiser Bill" with his legs sprawling beneath his shell, and his head peeping slyly out as though he knew all about everything.

The Orphan put him and his box down below the water-line, where no bullets could reach him.

A nearly full moon rose and gave sufficient light to avoid any other craft on their way across, and in a little over an hour and a half they had almost reached the nets outside Suvla.

The Orphan slipped his tow-rope, and so did Bubbles, and both of them steamed round to a little pier which had been constructed on the north side of Suvla Point—a pier called Saunders Pier.

They reported themselves to the naval Pier-master; and the Orphan, leaving his two big boats—a launch and pinnace—alongside this pier, towed the other two—two cutters—along the left-flank coast, and anchored them close inshore. Their crews knew the countersign and password, and if any men hailed them properly from shore, they were ordered to pull in and take them off.

For the next three hours the Orphan was employed taking off officers and their baggage from "'A' West", going in through the gap between the sunken *Fieramosca* and *Pina*, and steaming out again, dodging empty motor-lighters being warped in through the gap, and full motor-lighters being warped out. He took them to the *Redbreast*, lying out near the nets, and then returned to Saunders Pier and found his two big boats loaded with rifles and baggage of all sorts.

These he towed off to two trawlers anchored close by, waited for them to be emptied, and brought them back again to Saunders Pier. After that he lay off the pier for nearly an hour, and had some food and a smoke. The men boiled some water and made cocoa over a bogey, and he had a jolly, happy, exciting time yarning with Marchant, and listening to occasional rifle-shots which came from farther away towards the left flank—Jephson's Post way. Bubbles came back from patrolling the coast, and lay alongside him. "It's all quiet there along the coast, just a rifle-shot every now and then; no one along the beach. Isn't it a perfect night?"

It was actually the most perfect night imaginable; hardly a breath of wind, hardly a ripple on the water, and the moon lighted up the cliffs and Suvla Point as distinctly as in day-time. Hardly a sound reached them, and the rocks of Suvla Point prevented them seeing anything going on inside the bay. It was all as peaceful as a picnic.

But about half-past one those two trawlers, to which the Orphan had taken his boats with the baggage, went aground; and the Orphan was sent round to "'A' West", inside the bay, to bring out the Senior Beach-master. For nearly four hours he worked, laying out anchors and taking wires across to a big tug.

Some time after six o'clock, just before the moon actually disappeared, and before the two trawlers floated off, he had to go along the coast, pick up his two cutters—they had seen or heard nothing—then pick up the big launch and pinnace, and tow them back to Kephalo. It was only when he went back to Saunders Pier for those two big boats that the Orphan heard that everything had "gone off" without a single hitch, and without the Turks having shown the least sign that their suspicions had been aroused.

Hearing this, you can imagine how joyfully he and Marchant, the coxswain, started on their twelve-mile journey back to Kephalo. Those tows of boats must be away, out of sight, before daylight; so they put their "best leg foremost", and steamed in through the harbour just after seven o'clock, finding a large captured German steamer anchored there, and simply packed with troops from Suvla.

Most of the other ten picket-boats had arrived back previously, because the night's job at Anzac had been successfully completed by half-past one in the morning, and the six boats on duty there had started back not very long afterwards.

The excitement and the enthusiasm of everyone, due to the successful accomplishment of the first night's work, kept the midshipmen awake. Most of the picket-boats gathered close together under the lee of the sunken *Oruba*. The crews cooked their breakfasts, ate them—jolly good rations of army bacon, any amount of bread and jam—yarned, and laughed, and smoked. They fetched "Kaiser Bill" out of his box and tempted him with a cabbage leaf, but he turned up his nose at it. Then Bubbles and the Orphan went alongside the *Achates* to coal and water; rushed inboard to get a wash and a bit more breakfast, to tell everyone down in the gun-room—the Hun, the China Doll, Uncle Podger, and the Pimple—everything that had happened, and go back to their boats again.

"You didn't mind me sending you 'Kaiser Bill'?" Fletcher, waiting outside the gun-room, asked the Orphan.

"Rather not; it was jolly good of you to lend him to us. He brought us good luck the first night, at any rate."

"I'm sure he'll bring you luck to-night as well, sir."

Precious little "stand easy" did the Orphan and his crew get that day. The *Swiftsure's* picket-boat was about the best-steaming boat of the ten, and the Fierce One used her all day, going about the harbour and supervising everything that went on. He and his crew managed to get a meal in the middle of the day, and then were employed disembarking and clearing the transport of all the troops she had brought across the previous night.

At half-past four on that Sunday afternoon, the 19th December, all ten picket-boats, towed by as many trawlers, and their pulling-boats behind them, started off again for Anzac and Suvla.

The weather showed not a sign of changing, and before they reached Suvla the darkness disappeared under a moon almost more perfect than the night before. It really was more perfect, because a few thin clouds floated slowly across it; and though they hardly lessened the light it gave, they prevented shadows.

When they neared Suvla the picket-boat slipped, and did just as she had done the night before: anchored her two cutters along the cliffs beyond Suvla Point, and left the two big boats alongside Saunders Pier. The Orphan then patrolled very slowly along the coast, but everything was quiet except for a very few solitary rifle-shots; and these, he thought, were probably the rifles with the tin cans tied to their triggers going "off" when their tins filled. No stragglers showed on top of the cliffs nor down on the beach, and it was almost impossible to realize that up above him the trenches were being silently evacuated, and that the soldiers had already commenced, sections at a time, to file down that sandy, steep path which he and the Lamp-post had followed, on their way back from the Naval Observation Post, that ripping afternoon in September.

At about ten o'clock Bubbles, almost incoherent with excitement, came along in the old *Majestic's* picket-boat and relieved him.

"You have to go back to Saunders Pier," he stuttered and burbled, "and take back your cutters. I've to do a bit of patrolling."

The Orphan, picking up his anchored cutters and their crews, towed them to this pier, found his two big boats already crowded with troops, and took them off to two trawlers lying outside (those two which had run aground the previous night had been refloated shortly after daylight). For the next three hours he went backwards and forwards between trawlers and pier, and then, leaving his boats for Bubbles to carry on the good work, was ordered round to "'A' West", inside the Bay. On the way, he and the coxswain and the crew had some food—bread and meat sandwiches, water to wash them down. No food could be cooked and no cocoa made this night, because strict orders had been given that not a light had to be shown—not even the cooking bogey could be lighted.

Here, at "'A' West", he was in the thick of everything, jostling and nosing his way in and out among the picket-boats and motor-lighters struggling to get in or out by that gap between the *Fieramosca* and the *Pina*.

On the pier they told him that everything was "going all right", and that the Turks showed no signs of leaving their trenches. The excitement as boatloads of men, horses, and stores went off to the ships, and as he helped with officers and their baggage, kept him oblivious of time or fatigue.

By four o'clock that morning the evacuation had been successfully accomplished. He happened to have gone to the Beach-master's office at about that time with a message. As he entered, the Beach-master put down his telephone and smiled grimly to a military officer there. "They've just telephoned from 'C'

beach to say they are finished, and the naval beach-party is now embarking. Not a soldier left behind."

"I expected to be on my way to Constantinople by this time—a prisoner," the weary officer replied.

"It's about time we packed up too. There's only a little more big baggage, and perhaps a hundred and fifty men of the beach parties, military landing-officers, and your people to go off from here, and that finishes the bag of tricks. Haven't we pulled their legs? Listen! they're sniping just as usual, up there. I'm just going round to get those stores properly started burning, and then pack up. I'm really sorry to leave, for some reasons," he said, glancing round his tiny little office "dug-out", with the bare rock on one side and the sand-bag walls.

He sent the Orphan, with one of the Pier-masters, to make a last search of the left flank. Off they went, rounded Suvla Point, and worked slowly along under the foot of the cliffs again, the Pier-master hailing the shore occasionally through a megaphone. Not a sound came back, except the echo from the face of the cliffs. They went some two miles along the coast, turned, and steamed back quickly, because they saw the glare of the burning fires, and thought that now, at any rate, the Turks would realize what had happened, and would come tearing down. Suvla Point and Saunders Pier were lighted up by the crackling, leaping flames, and in his four boats, still lying alongside the pier, the last of the people to leave Suvla had crowded. Four or five army officers came across to the less crowded picket-boat, and then, with an extraordinary feeling of exhilaration, he towed them off to the waiting trawlers, and stood off whilst those last people crowded into them.

This accomplished, he received orders to anchor his boats, and, with that same Pier-master, to make another last search along the cliffs on the left flank.

Away he went, and perhaps not more than half a mile—certainly not a mile—from the end of Suvla Point they saw a small group of dark figures on top of the cliffs. The Pier-master, a lusty naval lieutenant, hailed them through his megaphone; and a voice shouted back: "We're English! We're English!"

"That's funny," said the Pier-master. "Edge in a little closer; get your maxim ready."

The coxswain steered in towards the shore, and again the Pier-master hailed, and again a single voice called back: "We're English! We're English!"

"Well, if they *were* English, they would *all* shout," he said. "Keep her out! They are Turks, those chaps; probably a patrol which has pushed along the edge of the cliffs and does not know what to make of things. They would make a 'hullabaloo', right enough, if they were our chaps left behind."

The picket-boat steamed along under the cliffs, hailing every now and then, until they had passed the place where the left-flank trenches, coming down from

Jephson's Post, touched the shore. Not a man could be seen, nor did any answer come back in response to the hails through the megaphone.

"That's finish!" the Pier-master told the Orphan. "Turn her round." Over went the wheel, round twisted the picket-boat, back she steamed to where the four boats lay, out beyond Suvla Point; and although the moon had disappeared by this time, there was not the slightest difficulty in finding them, for the whole water reflected the flames of the burning stores, and the boats and the men's faces showed up plainly.

The picket-boat took them in tow, and commenced to steam across to Kephalo. Behind her the flames leapt fiercely along the sweep of the bay, and every now and again explosions took place, hurling masses of flame and sparks high in the air. Silhouetted black against these fires was the *Cornwallis* battleship, left behind to keep the fires burning with her shells—if necessary—and to destroy in the morning the few wooden lighters which had been left behind.

Down along the coast at Anzac the sea was ruddy with the huge fires burning there.

"Well, if they've only been as successful down there, it's been a mighty good show," the Pier-master said as they watched them. "We've only left four condemned guns—blown them up, too—and not a single man, horse, or mule; and we've even taken off the goats belonging to the Indian Transport Column. My hat! it's simply wonderful; I'm going to coil up and do a little 'shut eye' down in the cabin. I have not slept for nearly four days."

"'Kaiser Bill' is down there. I do believe he has brought luck," the Orphan burst out; and then had to explain who "Kaiser Bill" was.

The coxswain, sweeping his hand astern towards Anafarta, called down: "Look, sir, there comes the dawn. We wondered if the weather would hold till Monday, and, thank God! it has."

The Orphan looked, and, hardly noticeable behind the bright glare of the fires, saw the pale light of dawn behind the Anafarta hills.

There was no longer any need for precautions. The "bogey" on the engine-room casings soon burnt brightly, and soon he and Marchant were sharing a big bowl of cocoa, and ravenously eating some more clumsy sandwiches which the men cut for them. Neither of them as yet felt sleepy, because the excitement of success kept them wide awake, though neither had slept for two whole days and nights.

By seven-thirty it became light enough for them to see, ahead of them, on their way from Suvla or Anzac, ten or twelve "water-beetles", a dozen or more trawlers, with long strings of transports' boats, pontoons, and lighters towing behind them; some twenty steamboats, also with their "tows", and several small tugs. The Suvla distilling steamer—the *Bacchus*—which for four months had been

constantly shelled, was steaming on her way to Mudros; and patrolling destroyers, trawlers, and drifters swept the sea just as they always had done, and just as though nothing had happened.

Boom! Boom! came the rumble and thud of the firing of two big guns.

"The *Cornwallis*, sir, at Suvla," the coxswain said, turning to look, and making the Orphan turn to watch Turkish shells bursting down by the water's edge—just as usual. They had commenced their early morning "hate"—on empty beaches.

"By all that is wonderful, sir!" said the coxswain.

At half-past eight the picket-boat entered Kephalo harbour; and the Orphan knew, by the cheering which greeted him from the troops packed together aboard two large transports anchored inside, that the evacuation of Anzac had been completed as successfully as that at Suvla.

He turned over his four boats to a battleship, and threaded his way through the throng of steamboats, trawlers, and motor-lighters which jostled each other in the harbour, eventually reached the shore, and landed to report himself.

He found the Fierce One, who had only just returned from Suvla, and the Not So Fierce One at breakfast in their little wooden hut.

"Hum! You've come back, have you?" growled the Fierce One. "A very good two nights' work; very good, indeed!"

The Not So Fierce One, looking at the Orphan, said: "You look pretty well fagged out; have a cup of tea, or something."

CHAPTER XXII
A Terrible Night

The Orphan had returned to Kephalo at nine o'clock in the morning—that Monday morning after the evacuation of Suvla. He had had no sleep for forty-eight hours, and was allowed none now. In the afternoon the largest tug received orders to tow four picket-boats and a steam pinnace to Mudros—the two picket-boats belonging to the *Lord Nelson*, the boat belonging to the *Swiftsure*, another, and the steam pinnace.

The Orphan thought this would be rather a "spree", and did not notice that the north-easterly breeze which had held all that past week had backed to the

south-west.

At half-past four in the afternoon, he and the other boats followed the tug out of harbour under their own steam. Beyond the "nets" the tug waited for them to come along and make fast, one behind the other.

"This is just the time when it's best to be last," Marchant, his coxswain, suggested. "I don't feel quite certain of the weather, and if we are the last boat we can slip whenever we want to."

The Orphan agreed, and wasted a good deal of time—on purpose—going out of harbour, and found the other boats all secured to each other, in one long line, by the time he joined them. The captain of the tug was not very polite to him, but he did not worry about that, and made fast his tow-rope to the last boat—the *Lord Nelson's* No. 1 picket-boat.

The Cheese-mite shouted across: "I say, Orphan, you've cut me out of the stern billet—I wanted that."

"So did I," the Orphan laughed.

Away they all went, one after another, the tug steaming very slowly; and outside Suvla Point they found quite a fresh breeze, blowing straight in their faces, and the sea which had been so calm had already begun to cover itself with little "white horses".

Four "water-beetles" joined company, puffing along with them as fast as they could.

Fires were allowed to die out gradually in all the steamboats, and there was nothing to do but steer them.

The crew now lighted the bogey, made tea, and fried some bacon. Everyone had a good meal; and after it the Orphan felt much too comfortable and sleepy to chaff the Cheese-mite ahead of him through his megaphone. "I'm going to have a bit of sleep," he told Marchant, and snuggled down below in the little cabin, with a rolled-up overcoat as pillow.

It was bright moonlight when he woke up, and he felt the picket-boat bumping into waves every other second. He rubbed his eyes, and jumped on deck to the wheel.

"Hullo, what's that?" he said, noticing smoke coming up out of the funnel.

"I didn't wake you, sir; there's nothing to worry about—not yet; but I don't like the look of the weather, so I'm raising steam in case anything happens. You'd better get an oilskin on, sir," he added, as the bows bumped into a wave and the spray came over them.

But the Orphan had not one, so he took the wheel whilst Marchant went for his.

The breeze had indeed risen, and the sea too. The picket-boats ahead of him were going up and down like the boats at a circus roundabout; and behind him

those motor-lighters, looking more like "water-beetles" than ever, in the moonlight, were slowly falling astern, yawing from side to side and covered with spray.

He saw Kephalo South Point light and the fires over at Anzac, which still burnt furiously, and knew that the boats had only just got past Aliki Bay. He could not have been asleep for long.

The wind and sea increased every minute, and made the steering of the picket-boat quite a hard job. Marchant came back and took the wheel from him. "I've known this boat for nearly three years, sir," he said; and the Orphan, knowing how he hated letting anyone steer his own old picket-boat, knew what he meant.

"What extraordinary luck, sir!" Marchant said presently. "Fancy if it had blown like this last night! Right on shore it would have been, and not a boat could have gone near it. We could not possibly have taken the soldiers off, to say nothing about their guns."

In half an hour the motor-lighters were evidently in difficulties. In order to keep their screws in the water they had to be much ballasted down by the stern. This made their bluff bows come right out of the water; and every sea hitting them, besides almost stopping their way, tended to throw them off their course. They could not steer properly, yawing this way, yawing that; and it was impossible for them to keep up with the five and a half knots of the tug, which was then about the speed she was towing the picket-boats.

She stopped and, as the motor-lighters struggled towards her, hailed them, and made two come alongside, abreast each other, on each side of her. She made them fast, and with them working their motors and doing their best to steer, she went on again. But you can imagine what a terribly clumsy "tow" they made, bumping into each other, bumping into the tug, simply covered with spray minute after minute.

"Look here, sir," said Marchant presently, as the weather rapidly grew worse; "if those lighters break adrift, they'll come down on us and finish us."

"What d'you want to do?"

"I'd like to slip, and try and get along by ourselves. We can do it, sir; she's a very good steamer."

The Orphan didn't know quite what to do. He realized the danger, but he didn't relish the idea of steaming nearly fifty miles to wind'ard, in the teeth of the rapidly rising wind.

However, he realized that Marchant probably knew, better than he did, what the boat could or could not do; so he agreed.

He seized the megaphone and yelled to the Cheese-mite to slip his towrope. The Cheese-mite, who also had raised steam, wanted to know where he was going.

"Make for Mudros!" yelled the Orphan.

"D'you know the way?"

"The coxswain does."

"I'll follow you," the Cheese-mite shouted, as the tow-rope fell into the water.

The two of them swerved outside the clumsy motor-lighters and gradually forged ahead, lost sight of them, and went plunging into the head seas, steering by compass and by the glow of the fires of Anzac. In a very short time they had to batten down everything—the forepeak hatch, the engine-room, and the stokehold hatches. The Orphan and Marchant (who had taken off his boots and oilskin) were wet through, waves washed a foot deep over the picket-boat, and she made very little progress.

For two hours they struggled on; but by that time a regular gale was blowing, driving a short steep sea in front of it so fiercely that the picket-boat not only made scarcely any way, but could hardly keep her bows to it.

"We can't do it, sir," Marchant at last said, when, at one extra lurch, two of the spare water-barricoes (full they were) tore themselves from their lashings round the engine-room casings and went overboard. "We haven't enough water now—to say nothing of coal."

"We'll have to go back, sir!" he shouted.

"Right-o!" yelled the Orphan, clinging to the rail round the cabin, and not at all liking the idea of turning the boat round in such a sea.

Very gently Marchant edged her round; a wave buried her bows and threw her over; she righted herself, and the next wave, catching her almost broadside on, simply flung her on her beam-ends. For a moment the Orphan thought she would never right herself; then she did with a jerk, a wave came green almost over the wheel, the picket-boat lurched more heavily than before. The Orphan, swept off his feet, clung to the rail, and by the time he had gained his feet again she was round, and going ahead with the waves roaring after her, lifting her stern, foaming over the counter and trying to fling it round. He groped his way aft, clinging to the cabin rail, and found that already there were two feet of water in the stern-sheets.

He suddenly remembered "Kaiser Bill", jumped down into the water, went into the cabin, and found his box floating about. He took it out into the moonlight, and was much relieved when the tortoise peeped out of his shell to see what all the "bobbery" was about. He jammed the box in a rack inside the cabin, near the top of it, and went back to the wheel.

"Much, sir?" Marchant asked anxiously.

"Two feet!" the Orphan shouted, and told him about rescuing "Kaiser Bill".

"I'd forgotten all about him, sir. We're all right now, he'll bring us through.

We must get that water out of her."

The Orphan knew that the ejector was choked, so he made his way for'ard, clinging to the wire round the engine-room casings, the funnel-stays, and the gun-mounting, to call two of the men, huddled down under the forepeak, to come aft and bale the water out with buckets.

They came and worked hard, but the waves constantly lopped in, and the amount of water diminished very slowly. He knew that if her stern swung round and she "broached to", the seas would fill the big stern-sheets completely, and as he could not trust to the engine-room bulkhead being watertight, she would probably sink. He understood then why Marchant had taken off his boots and oilskin.

He went back to the steering-wheel.

Just then the stokehold hatch opened, the stoker drew himself out, and scrambled cautiously aft. He began unlashing one of the two remaining barricoes of water, when a sudden lurch of the boat threw him off his feet, and he slid overboard.

Like lightning Marchant, shouting "Take the wheel, sir!" jumped in front of the protecting shield, flung himself down, gripping the wire round the engine-room casing with one hand, leant over the gunwale, and seized the stoker almost before he had fallen completely over the side. There was the crash of something being overturned, the sizzle of red-hot cinders falling in the water, and Marchant, with a jerk, wrenched the man against the boat's side. He gripped the life-line; Marchant gave a heave, and he climbed on board again. It all happened in the twinkling of an eye.

Marchant came back and took the wheel.

"Pretty quick work, that!" the Orphan said. "He'd have been drowned; we couldn't have turned round to pick him up."

"No; it wouldn't have been safe," Marchant shouted back, meeting a vicious swerve of the stern with a touch of helm.

"Look at my hands and face, sir," he said, when the picket-boat had quieted herself. "I knocked over that bogey; it hadn't gone out, and the cinders burnt me or scalded me when they fell into the water."

By the moonlight the Orphan saw that his face and hands were very red.

"I can't see that *Lord Nelson's* boat, sir," Marchant shouted in a minute or two. "She ought to have seen us turn and followed. I can't see her now."

The Orphan looked astern and could see nothing. In ordinary circumstances he would have gone back to look for her; but with that raging, roaring, steep sea racing after them, both he and Marchant knew this was now out of the question.

The only thing they could do they did; Marchant going aft, lighting a

lantern, and lashing it to show astern.

He left the wheel to the Orphan.

By the time Marchant came back the tug hove in sight, tossing and tumbling in the white foaming seas, evidently standing by two motor-lighters which had broken adrift and were almost hidden in spray, broadside-on to the waves. They saw nothing of the other two.

They passed them, and caught up with one of the other picket-boats. Marchant roared through his megaphone for her to keep Kephalo Light well clear to port because of the "submarine detector" nets. He knew where they were, and this steamboat seemed to be steering for them.

"There's one caught in them, over there, sir!" Marchant shouted, pointing far away to port. "She'll probably drift on to the rocks."

"Can't we go and help?" the Orphan shouted, knowing full well that this was impossible, for once the propeller fouled those nets his picket-boat would be helpless, and drift on the rocks herself when the waves tore her out of the nets.

Marchant shook his head.

In half an hour they had Kephalo Light a couple of miles on their port beam; half an hour later they had edged the picket-boat into comparatively smooth water, and by eleven o'clock that night they went in through the gate in the submarine net at Kephalo, and ran alongside the *Achates*.

By this time Marchant's face and hands had begun to swell and blister from that scald or burn, and were very painful.

The Orphan sent him inboard to Dr. Gordon, and took his steamboat round the sunken breakwater ships alongside the landing-place. Then he stumbled, wet through and fearfully tired, up to the wooden hut, woke the Fierce One, and reported himself.

He became horribly unpopular, and was ordered to report in the morning. So back he went to the picket-boat, tied her up alongside the sunken Oruba; and he and his crew went to sleep, and would have slept for ever, if the crew of another picket-boat, tied up close to them, had not given them a "shake" next morning.

In the forenoon the Orphan was sent outside the harbour to search for the other picket-boats which had not arrived. He saw the Cheese-mite's boat hard and fast on shore, and another breaking up not far from her. He expected that the crews had swum or scrambled ashore (they had done so); but the seas ran much too high for him to go in and give assistance, so back he came into harbour and reported this.

"Hum!" growled the Fierce One. "You don't belong to me any more; go back to your ship."

The tired midshipman, thinking that he had disgraced himself, went back.

Bubbles met him at the top of the gangway—his face redder, and his chuck-

ling, snorting noises louder than ever. "Orphan! Orphan!" he blurted out; "you and I are off to 'W' beach. The Sub went there yesterday, and we're going to-night. Really—honour bright!" as he saw that the Orphan thought that his leg was being "pulled".

"Phew! That's grand! My word, what luck!" the Orphan burst out, his tired eyes lighting up as he realized that Bubbles meant it.

Marchant, with his left hand bandaged up and his face all oily and red, was waiting to go down into the boat.

"Good-bye!" the Orphan said. "We've had a splendid time together, haven't we? Good luck to you!" and darted away to see the Commander and get his orders; but then, remembering "Kaiser Bill", ran back again.

"He's all right; they're bringing him up along with your gear," Bubbles told him. "I'll look after everything. You do look a prize burglar!"

He found the Commander. "Yes, you are to go across in a trawler—about five o'clock. The Captain wishes to see you."

So aft he went, and found Captain Macfarlane in his cabin smoking a cigarette, as usual.

"Hum!" he said, smiling when he saw how unkempt the Orphan looked, his face dirty, and his clothes hardly dry from last night's soaking. "Hum, Mr. Orpen! We don't seem to be able to carry on this war without you, do we? You have to go across to 'W' beach to-night, and you'll probably be there for some time."

"Are they going to evacuate Helles, sir?" the Orphan asked.

"I expect you will be able to tell me that, when you've been there a few days. You were out in that gale last night, I hear, and the only one of those five boats to get back. Hum! You seem lucky."

"We had 'Kaiser Bill' on board. Old Fletcher, the stoker, made me take him."

"Oh! was that it?" smiled the Captain, tugging his beard. "Well, off you go, and good luck to you! You'll have plenty of shells to dodge—over there. You'd better take 'Kaiser Bill' with you."

"I will, sir, if Fletcher lets me." And the Orphan, hugely happy and delighted, went away to the gun-room to tell all his adventures.

At four o'clock that afternoon Bubbles and the Orphan stood at the top of the accommodation ladder, with all the clothes and gear they wanted in two ordinary sailor's kit-bags, and their bedding made up in two bundles. On top of the bundles rested "Kaiser Bill's" wooden box, with the tortoise inside. Old Fletcher had come aft, and was "fussing" round him.

"We'll look after him all right. Thank you for lending him!" they called out as they went down into the Hun's steam pinnace. "Kaiser Bill" and their gear were carried down after them, and the Hun took them across to the waiting

trawler.

By five o'clock the *Achates* was once more out of sight, and the trawler was steaming towards Cape Helles with the remnants of last night's gale on her starboard beam. The two midshipmen both wore once again the khaki which the Fierce One had forbidden, the same clothes they had worn when they left "W" beach at the end of May, six months and a half ago; and they felt supremely happy, crouching in the lee of the trawler's galley, and watching the island of Kephalo gradually fading out of sight till darkness hid it altogether.

At half-past six the trawler ran alongside a sunken steamer—the outer hulk of Pier No. 1; a steamboat came for them, and landed them and their gear at No. 3 Pier—the pier they had watched being commenced by the Sappers the very day of the landing. By the light of a single lantern they found the Pier-master—a Sub-lieutenant, R.N.R.—and were ordered to report themselves to the Naval Transport Officer.

"You'd better go up to the Mess," the R.N.R. Sub told them. "You'll probably find him up there."

He gave them two men to carry their gear, and with "Kaiser Bill" under the Orphan's arm they stumbled along the pier in the dark till their feet scrunched into the sand on "W" beach.

"What a time since we were here!" Bubbles blurted out; and: "Isn't it grand to get back again?" the Orphan chuckled.

There were no flares now, the shore was absolutely dark.

They started off along the beach towards where the main gully road used to be; but everything had so changed, and it was so dark, that they soon had to let the two seamen with their bundles lead the way—off that beach, up a broad, firm road, turning to the left along a narrow path, then down some wooden steps, and so to a dark "cutting" in the side of the slope, at the end of which a glow of light showed through half-opened folding-doors.

"Here's the Officers' Mess, sir. Glad to see you on shore, sir," said one of the seamen; and the Orphan recognized Plunky Bill's voice.

"Hello! You here? How are things going?"

"Pretty quiet, sir; nothing much doing."

"Are they going to evacuate the place?"

"I ain't 'eard nothing. We've been landing a good many of the soldiers round from Suvla—a good show—down there, sir. I ain't 'eard nothing about nobody going off."

Bubbles, looking in through the doors and seeing no one inside, asked him where the Sub was.

"Don't see much of him, sir. I works down at No. 1 Pier—mostly. Well, we'll stick your gear 'ere. Some of the officers will be a-coming up soon."

"'Kaiser Bill' has come along—for luck," the Orphan said; and Plunky Bill stepped into the lamp-light from the half-open door to have a look at him in his box.

"'E will bring luck all right, sir. I wish we'd 'ad 'im at that there Ajano place."

Then they were left alone, went inside through the door—evidently the folding-doors from the saloon of one of the sunken steamers—into a pantry sort of place, through it into a long room some 9 feet high, 20 feet long, and 12 feet broad, with a wooden floor and a wooden ceiling, from which an oil-lamp hung—the lamp which had glowed through the doorway—over a long wooden table littered with newspapers, and with a wooden bench on either side of it. At the far end was a fire-place—alight and burning cosily—some deck chairs round it, a packing-case full of coal in the corner, and a very dilapidated card-table.

"Look how they make cupboards!" said Bubbles excitedly, and pointed to two shell-boxes let into the clay walls. "Isn't that 'cute'?"

Then from outside came a loud voice. "My jumping Jimmy! D'you think I'm going to land a hundred tons of hay a night like this? Not if I know it. It would all get soaked. Tell him to wait till the morning; the sea will have gone down by then."

The Sub came in, calling out: "Outside! Outside! Pantry! Pantry! Bring me a bottle of beer!" And seeing the two midshipmen, burst out with: "Yoicks, my merry kippers! My bubbling Bubbles! My perishing Orphan! Pantry! Pantry! Bring three bottles!"

"They've sent you two here, have they? Good egg! Well, you'll have lots to do, and a lot of shell-dodging. They've got a better brand in stock now—burst every time. Hello! There goes one!" he said, as the roaring thud of a bursting shell came from somewhere up the ridge, and some bits of dried clay broke away from the walls and rattled down on the wooden floor. "That fell in the Ordnance Stores. They've had a lot there lately."

"Where's it from? Achi Baba?" asked the Orphan.

"Old 'Asiatic Annie'—a 6-inch. She's a confounded nuisance. What d'you think of my 'dug-out'? Come and see where I 'pig' it;" and the Sub took them past the fire-place into a little room beyond, and, flashing his electric torch, showed them two beds, a small table, cupboard places in the mud walls, a stove, and two little wash-stands—evidently taken out of a ship. "We've got lots of stuff from these sunken hulks. Snug little place, isn't it?—especially when we light the stove in the corner."

"Are we going to live here?" the midshipmen asked.

"Good heavens, no, my wriggling worms! You won't live with the aristocracy. Come along, and I'll show you your 'pigsty'—another 'dug-out', which we

call the dormitory."

A fine-looking old Leading Seaman, an old Naval Reserve man named Richards—he may have been fifty, he may have been sixty—came in with the three glasses of beer, just as another tremendous roar shook the wooden beams overhead and made the tin lamp-shade rattle—it sounded not twenty yards away.

"In the Sappers' place, that one, sir; they're starting early to-night," the old chap said, putting the tray on the table.

"Send these officers' gear round to the dormitory; you'll find it outside," the Sub told him.

"They've gone already, sir," Richards said.

"What's on top of those beams?" the Orphan asked, a little anxiously, as another roaring explosion thudded the air, not quite so near as the last.

"A new tarpaulin, my Orphan! I stole it yesterday. It's waterproof, too!"

"Can those things come in here?"

"There's nothing to prevent 'em," grinned the Sub. "Come along, and we'll peg out a claim for you two in the dormitory. Hello! what the devil have you got there?" he said, seeing "Kaiser Bill's" box on the table, and opening it, roared with laughter. "Old Fletcher made you bring him?"

"He made me take him for Suvla evacuation—for luck—and the Captain told me I'd better bring him here, as he'd brought luck there."

"Are they going to evacuate this place?" they both asked at the same time.

The Sub shook his head. "I don't think so. So you were at Suvla? Of course you were; you'll have to tell me all about it. What a splendid show that was! Our chaps here made a pretence of advancing that same day—lost a lot of people."

By now he had taken them through the cutting. "That's the kitchen," he said, as he took them out of the mess and they passed a place with a light in it; "old Richards looks after it, and us, like a mother." He led them through another deep cutting, and through an opening closed by a door—evidently a door taken from the cabin of one of the sunken hulks. "More loot," the Sub said, switching on his torch and leading the way into a long place with a few planks laid over the clayey earth, with earth walls and a timber roof. Six beds were already there, with bags between them, and their own bundles lay, lonely, in the middle.

He showed them a corner where they could spread out their beds. "I'll get some planks put there in the morning," he told them. "You'd better come along and see the Captain now; he'll be up in his 'dug-out' by this time, I expect."

As they went out on to the open slope, climbed up to a road which ran immediately at the back of the dormitory, another high-explosive shell burst high up the ridge, lighting up a few white tents.

The Orphan winced and Bubbles chuckled.

Then it was all dark again. "Mind those steps; keep close to me; here we

are," and the Sub took them along another cutting to the Naval Transport Officer's "dug-out".

They found this naval Captain there, washing the sand off his face.

"Two of our midshipmen, sir; the two we expected."

He turned round—a short, thick-set man with a bullet-shaped, closely cropped head—and he wiped the soap-suds off his mahogany-coloured face.

"All right; the Sub will show you where to go; glad to have you," and he waved them away.

They went back towards the Mess.

"You'll have to take charge of a picket-boat," the Sub told Bubbles; "and you, Orphan, will have to do odd jobs under me—all sorts of things: cleaning up the camp, fetching coal, any old thing. Ah! look out! here comes another!"

They heard the whistling swish of a shell, and then another glare, and another tremendous explosion burst, just the other side of the Naval Mess.

Instinctively they had thrown themselves down on the ground; something hurtled past and buried itself in the sand close by; and as they scrambled to their feet the Sub said angrily: "Confound them! Come along back to the Mess; you can have a wash in my basin, and then it will be time for dinner."

Two soldiers—a Major and a subaltern, the Military Landing Officers—a R.N.R. lieutenant, and two R.N.R. sub-lieutenants came in at odd times for dinner. The Sub hurried through his meal, put on a thick coat, and warmed himself in front of the fire before going down to the beach.

"Is there much to do to-night?" asked one of the soldier officers—the subaltern.

"Absolutely nothing, old chap, except to get off a tug, two steamboats, something like half a dozen lighters driven ashore last night; try and repair about twenty feet of No. 1 Pier washed away by the other gale, and see what can be done with the 'Inner Hulk'—she broke her back when the pier 'went', and we'll have to try and get a gangway across the gap; otherwise I can't think of anything."

Two of the R.N.R. officers went with him, but he sent the two midshipmen to turn in. Neither of them had had any proper sleep for three days, and they both had been nodding and yawning, and looking stupidly tired all through that meal.

So they turned in, put "Kaiser Bill" between them for luck, and slept like

"tops".

CHAPTER XXIII
"In 'Dug-outs' at Cape Helles"

Richards, that splendid old Leading Seaman who "ran" the Mess, brought them both a cup of tea in the morning. "Four bells just struck, sirs; breeze gone round to the north-east, pretty nippy outside it is, but fine. Hands 'fall in' at half-past six." He lighted an oil-lamp and left them.

Bubbles snuggled down under the blankets and would have gone to sleep again, had not the Orphan pulled them off him and made him turn out.

They dressed hurriedly, saw that "Kaiser Bill" was safe in his corner; and by seven o'clock, just before the dawn commenced, Bubbles had taken charge of a very much battered, old picket-boat lying alongside No. 3 Pier; and the Orphan, with a party of five stokers, was sent up behind the Mess to deepen a shallow gutter-way between it and the road, to prevent rain washing off the road on to the top of the dormitory and that new tarpaulin which the Sub had stolen.

He met the Sub coming back from his night's work on the beach, wet through and very fagged. "I got some of those lighters off, but there's another week's work down there at that job," he said.

When daylight came, the Orphan found that "W" beach had altered very much since he had been there, six months and a half ago. The cliffs beyond were crowned by a vast number of hospital tents and marquees; where, previously, the horse and mule "lines" had been, tents and marquees, and huge masses of stores, protected by tarpaulins, now occupied these spaces, and the irregular sandy track up the gully to the ridge had become a wide well-made road with well-metalled roads branching away to left and right. Everywhere there were "dug-outs", not open ones as in those early days, but covered with wooden or galvanized-iron roofs, over which at least one protecting layer of sand-bags had been laid. Motor-lorries dashed along the roads continuously, and seemed to have taken the place of horses and mules almost entirely.

Along the face of the steep cliff, on the far side of the gully from where those one-inch Nordenfeldts and maxims had played such havoc among the Lancashire Fusiliers on the day of the landing, a steep road had been cut in the face of it, and

the Orphan saw hundreds of "dug-outs" up there.

Fifty yards below him was the beach itself, with its four little piers—No. 1 Pier to his right, with a gap in it made by the first of the south-west gales; beyond it the "Inner Hulk", a sunken steamer with her back broken; and beyond her, at right angles, another sunken steamer, the "Outer Hulk". At his feet was No. 2 Pier, the first pier the Sappers had begun on the 25th April; and beyond this the longer No. 3 Pier, with its end curving towards the "Outer Hulk", so that a small harbour[#] had been formed in which now lay two little "coaster" steamers, several lighters, and a trawler.

[#] This harbour was called Port Talbot after the Captain of the poor old *Majestic*.

Beyond and to the left, under the high cliff, was No. 4 Pier, more of a mole or jetty than a pier, protected a little from the east by a reef of rocks. It was on this pier that the Orphan, later on, had so much work to do. Farther along still, several lighters had stranded, and one or two were already broken up.

Out towards Tenedos and over against the Asiatic shore the usual trawlers and drifters and a couple of destroyers patrolled for submarines.

But what struck the Orphan most vividly was the emptiness of the Straits between him and the Asiatic shore. In May they had been almost crowded with battleships, transports, hospital ships, ships of all sorts and sizes; now a solitary hospital ship lay off Helles, and only two or three small craft and tugs were anchored inshore.

The Turks fired no shells that morning until the breakfast hour, when two fell among the Sappers' stores and tents, without, however, doing any damage.

After breakfast the Orphan and his stokers had more digging to do, extending the beach party's "dug-outs" at the foot of the low cliff, below the Mess "dug-out", and commencing others. Shells came over every now and then all the morning, but none burst near the Orphan's party. When they knocked off work and started dinner, the Turks over on the Asiatic shore fired many big 6-inch high explosives, which did very little material damage, though they racked his nerves exceedingly.

The Orphan never even pretended that he did not hate those shells; and when, that afternoon, he received orders to take twenty men, embark in a tug, and go down to Rabbit Island to draw coal, he felt extremely pleased to get away from them. Rabbit Island is a tiny little island at the mouth of the Straits, and when he arrived there he found two small monitors with long-range guns busily bombarding the Asiatic guns. The Turks were firing back, and when he went

alongside the collier to get his filled coal-bags, one of their wretched shells fell so close to the tug as to splash the bows. The Orphan loaded his coal-bags and started back to "W" beach, realizing that the only thing to do, if he meant to enjoy himself, was simply not to think of shells at all. Of course, in twenty-four hours he had made friends with Richards, that Leading Seaman; and the old man could not help noticing that he flinched whenever a big shell moaned through the air, and burst with its horrid, rending roar. "Look here, sir," he said; "it's just like this: don't you worry about them—it's no use worrying. If you're meant to be killed, killed you will be, wherever you go or whatever you do; so just pay no attention to them."

It is difficult for a youngster to take comfort from such a fatalistic conviction; but by the end of the week the Orphan was able to tell Bubbles that he had not "ducked" once during the last twenty-four hours. "That shows I'm not such a duffer, doesn't it, old chap?" he said proudly.

During those first few days a good deal of mysterious landing and embarking of troops went on, which nobody seemed able to explain—though, as far as anyone in the Naval Mess knew, many more were coming than going. Also, it became known that the new-comers were taking over—gradually—the French section of the line, and that French troops and guns embarked every night. The Turks naturally knew that our men were occupying the French trenches immediately opposite them, so that there was no need for secrecy, and many of the French guns were towed away from "V" beach in broad daylight. A tug would take away a heavily loaded lighter at the end of a very long tow-rope, and "Asiatic Annie" and her sisters often made "towing-target" practice at this lighter and its guns—though without ever hitting them.

The Orphan himself never went to "V" beach, but Bubbles often did so, and found quite a good harbour there, made by a big Messageries Maritimes steamer sunk this side of the *River Clyde* (apparently none the worse for her seven months of being shelled), and an obsolete old French battleship hulk—the *Massena*—sunk almost to close the gap between them. Whenever the French happened to have a slack night, most of the British nightly reinforcements (from the 9th Corps, which had been at Suvla) landed there.

Christmas Day arrived, and the Turks greeted it with a more than usually heavy shelling of both beaches, the Sappers' and Ordnance Store Depots suffering considerably. This, and an extra good dinner that night—when Richards produced two turkeys, obtained from one of the Greek islands, and several officers contributed Christmas puddings and mince-pies, sent from home by the Christmas mail—marked the day. Otherwise all work went on as usual.

Every now and again the French battleship *Suffren* came along up the Straits, with her protecting destroyers and trawlers and her "spotting" aeroplane,

and bombarded the Asiatic guns for a couple of hours or so. At other times a British battleship repeated the performance with even greater zest; but though those annoying guns remained quiet whilst they were being bombarded, they always opened a very vigorous fire on the beaches directly the battleships had left.

On the other side of the Peninsula, round the "left flank" coast, assisting destroyers very frequently harassed the Turkish trenches on the Achi Baba right flank, and a big monitor almost daily bombarded Achi Baba or Chanak Fort with her big 14-inch guns.

Everything went on as usual, and as though we intended to hold the end of the Peninsula for ever.

Everyone in the Naval Mess was far too busy embarking and disembarking troops and stores by night, preparing for the winter, strengthening their "dug-outs", repairing piers, and patching damaged boats by day, to know exactly what was happening up in the front-line trenches. Intermittent artillery duels, at all hours of every day, went on in the usual manner, and without any apparent especial military object. At night, when working on the piers, they often heard furious bursts of rifle and machine-gun firing, sometimes the bursting of trench bombs; at times field-guns also used to "chip in" at night; but everyone had become so accustomed to all this that no one paid any attention to it or remarked about it.

Shells fell on the beaches and above them just as usual; 6-inch high explosives came from the Asiatic side—two or three an hour—from daylight until two o'clock next morning, at which time the Turkish gunners "packed up". During the men's "stand easy", in the middle of the day, perhaps twenty would come along; and again, at nine o'clock at night, they would start fairly brisk firing for three-quarters of an hour.

The Naval Camp, lying as it did just below the R.E. "Park", and not far from the Ordnance Stores—both favourite targets of "Asiatic Annie "—received a good many of her misses, and most of the "shorts" fell on the beach itself. By this time the men working within this shell area had become so accustomed and hardened to these intermittent noises of shells shrieking towards them and bursting, that work was seldom interrupted. At night, sentries along the beach would watch for the glare made by the flash of the Asiatic howitzers, and would call out "Take cover!" Eighteen seconds afterwards the shell, if fired at "V" beach, would burst there; but if fired at "W" beach twenty seconds elapsed, after the warning shout, before the shell could be heard rushing through the night air with a rapidly increasing "swishing" noise. In twenty-five seconds it arrived, burst with a very vivid flash and that nerve-shaking, rending roar, and did whatever damage it had found to do.

Sometimes, in the silence which followed, would be heard the melancholy call, "Stretcher! Stretcher!" but most frequently a hole in the ground, or a few scattered boxes of stores or bundles of fodder, alone marked where it had fallen and burst.

From Achi Baba came the little 4.1-inch shells at all hours of the day.

People told the Orphan that some ten days after the Belgrade-Nish-Constantinople railway had been reopened through conquered Serbia, it became evident that the Turks were much more lavish with their ammunition.

They must have received ample additional supplies, and, what was still more noticeable, the new shells nearly always burst.

The Orphan gradually grew accustomed to these shells, but he was always "mighty" glad when the two big "hates" of the day were finished.

Everyone had marvellous escapes; in fact, marvellous escapes were so common that the recounting of them soon failed to interest others.

One morning the Orphan was sleeping soundly in the dormitory, and at about ten o'clock Bubbles, who had somehow or other fallen overboard from his picket-boat, ran up to shift his wet clothes, and could not resist the temptation of waking up the Orphan. He had just commenced to get some sense into him and make him take an interest in his accident, when in through the roof smashed a shell, passed between the Orphan sitting on his bed and Bubbles standing over him, buried itself in the ground, and burst. Bubbles was thrown to the other side of the dormitory, the Orphan found himself on top of an awakened and angry R.N.R. Lieutenant, and all three, covered with dust, dashed through the smoke out into the open air.

"Kaiser Bill!" the Orphan cried, darted back again, and brought out the tortoise.

"He was under my bed, he wasn't quite buried; he doesn't seem to have been hit."

They tried anxiously to make him put out his head, but he wouldn't. Bubbles, seizing him, looked inside the shell. "He's all right," he said, much relieved; "I saw his mouth move."

"I bet that he got the fright of his life,", Bubbles gurgled; and then noticed that the Orphan's wrist, the right one, was bleeding, and that blood was coming through his own soaked trousers. They found a small cut on the Orphan's right wrist, and that Bubbles had a little gash behind the left knee—quite trivial things, only requiring a bandage round each. Actually, that was all the damage done to those two midshipmen, although the shell had burst immediately behind and between them.

"Fancy what might have happened if 'Kaiser Bill' had not been there," the superstitious Orphan, a little "shaken", kept saying.

The R.N.R. Lieutenant, having fixed them up with bandages, took them inside the dormitory to dig their things out again and get the place tidied up. They shook the sand and clay from their bedding; dug out the clothes which had been lying on the floor; found some of the fragments of the shell, probably a 4.1-inch from Achi Baba; looked at the jagged hole in the wooden roof; and when Bubbles, having changed his wet clothes, went away, limping a little, to take charge of his picket-boat again, the other two turned in and slept until midday. Directly the Orphan woke he hunted round for the tortoise, and felt greatly relieved when he saw "Kaiser Bill's" cunning old head peeping out.

On the next night it blew hard from the north-east—away from the end of the Peninsula. Unfortunately for Bubbles, he had the job, that night, of towing a big Malta lighter, full of mules, out to a transport, and when away from the shelter of the land something went wrong with the tow-rope, and it fouled the screw of his picket-boat. Both lighter and picket-boat drifted helplessly out to sea, and eventually became separated. It was a bitterly cold night—so dark that you could not see fifty yards in front of you, and two miles from the end of the Peninsula a very unpleasant sea was running. The lighter full of mules drifted away, but by some lucky chance stranded on Rabbit Island, and Bubbles in his helpless, waterlogged picket-boat had the luck to be found and picked up by a patrolling trawler, which towed him into safety.

He did not get back to "W" beach until long after daylight, and was then sent up to get his breakfast and some sleep. For some reason or other, his bed had been moved into the small "sleeping 'dug-out'" at the side of the Mess opposite to the dormitory, and almost at the same hour as the day before, a big shell from "Asiatic Annie" came in and completely wrecked it. No one else slept there that morning, and he had a most marvellous escape. The three empty beds, the wash-stands, and little stove were destroyed, and a macintosh which he had pulled over his blankets had several gashes torn in it, but he himself had not a scratch. Old Richards, running in through the Mess, and unable to see owing to the dust and smoke, switched on an electric torch and called out "Are you all right, sir?" never thinking that he could possibly be alive.

"I woke up," said Bubbles afterwards, bubbling over with excitement, "and found the whole place blooming dark; everything seemed to be tumbling down on top of me, and my hair was full of sand and stuff. I couldn't think what was the matter, and the smell of the place was simply beastly. It wasn't till old Richards came in, flashed his torch, wanted to know whether I was alive or not, and told me a shell had come in, that I knew what had happened. It spoilt that new macintosh I paid one pound ten for yesterday up at the Ordnance, confound it!"

The rest of the morning Bubbles and Richards spent digging out his "gear". They found his watch some two feet under the sand, still going, but the glass

cracked. The "dug-out" was completely wrecked and quite uninhabitable.

He shifted back again into the dormitory, but had no more time for sleep. "I'll stick nearer to old 'Kaiser Bill' another time," he told the Orphan, poking fun at him and his superstitions.

The very next day, when on his way to the Mess for a hasty lunch, he stopped to speak to Richards, the Leading Seaman, who had just come out of the kitchen. At that moment a shell came past them, fell through the open kitchen door, and burst inside. Richards calmly put down the tureen of pea soup which he was carrying, and together they went in through the smoke to see if anyone had been injured. One man lay dead, and another had been badly cut about the shoulder by a splinter. He was carried away immediately to the Casualty Clearing-station beyond the gully, and the dead man covered up and removed. "Poor chap!" Richards muttered, "he only landed two hours ago for the first time. It's a strange thing how some get picked off, sir, isn't it?"

"Well, that's the third close shave for me—in three days too. I'll tell the Orphan that. He'll think it tremendously lucky," Bubbles said.

"I shouldn't like to say that it isn't, sir," Richards replied thoughtfully.

These three "experiences" seemed to have absolutely no effect on this midshipman's nerves, and the Orphan marvelled at him, and despised himself for hating and dreading shells so much.

By now they had made themselves quite cosy in their corner of the dormitory; a sand-bag was placed over the shell hole in the roof; their beds were raised from the ground on some planks; they looted a washstand and a looking-glass from one of the hulks, and had much fun digging "cupboards" for themselves in the clay walls.

"Kaiser Bill", too, seemed quite at home, and enjoyed his occasional exercises on the slope below the Mess, waking up, sprinting gaily for three or four yards, and then sulking because nothing green grew there. However, they managed to get him green stuff occasionally, and in the evenings, whenever they were off duty, they took him into the Mess after dinner, and he became quite frisky in the warmth of the fire. Those evenings were very jolly after a hard day's work and a good dinner, sitting in "deck" chairs in front of the cheerful fire, yarning, and not worrying much about the shells which, every now and then, burst along the ridge and made the dry "clayey" walls shake bits down on the wooden floor—not worrying about them, in spite of the fact that if one fell on top of the Mess the Sub's tarpaulin and the timber roof would not keep it out, nor would the long skylight hatchway, taken bodily out of one of the hulks and now fitted into the roof of the Mess.

It was one of their amusements to see "Kaiser Bill" "duck" when he heard a shell burst. He might be scampering over the floor—or the table—at the rate of two feet a minute, with his head and neck stretched out, or be nibbling enthusiastically at a piece of fresh cabbage leaf or onion stalk; but directly he heard the thud and roar of a shell bursting, however far away, in would go his head and legs, and nothing would entice him to put them out again for at least half an hour.

Bubbles and the Orphan always placed him down between their bunks when they turned in—for luck.

Food was good and plentiful—the army cheese simply grand; water was fairly plentiful from wells and springs; as for the Ordnance stores, they could supply everything from an electric torch to a stove, from a wheelbarrow to a motor bicycle, from a pair of trench gloves to a pair of india-rubber trench boots coming half-way up your thigh.

In fact, everything went on comfortably, and a week after the two midshipmen had landed they had entirely forgotten about "evacuation", and only thought it a joke when a Turkish aeroplane dropped the message: "Good-bye, British soldiers; we know you are going, and are sorry to lose you".

Flies had of course disappeared with the cold weather—disappeared long ago, and the only bothering live things were rats—great, fat, sleek fellows, who ran hurdle races round the dormitory at night to keep themselves in good condition, jumping over the sleeping midshipmen and the other officers there.

One night the Orphan met Bubbles, and saw by his face that something unusual had occurred.

"What is it? Any news?"

"They're sending every one of those Greek labourers[#] away to-night. They've given them two hours to pack up, and you and I have to embark them. What does that mean, I wonder?"

[#] Some two hundred Greek labourers had been employed ever since the landing, and had, for the most part, worked well; constantly under fire.

"Perhaps they've caught them spying; making signals or getting information across to the Turks,' the Orphan suggested.

"I don't know; it's jolly rummy."

"There's a lot of ammunition to be landed to-night, some time after ten

o'clock," the Sub said, joining them. "You'll have to go out in the lighter, Orphan, so you'll have a busy time."

Well, just before ten o'clock, when the Orphan had started to warp the empty lighter away from No. 4 Pier, a messenger came down from the N.T.O. to tell him that this ammunition was not to be landed, and he heard afterwards that it went back to Mudros immediately.

This roused their curiosity; and when, next night, three lieutenants and many more bluejackets arrived, and half a dozen of those motor-lighters (the "water-beetles") and many more picket-boats came across from Kephalo, everyone guessed that the final evacuation had been determined upon.

And, on the last day of the year, Captain Macfarlane came to take charge of the elaborate organization required to embark all the troops, guns, horses, and stores without the knowledge of the Turks. He became Senior Naval Transport Officer, and lived in his big "dug-out" along a path cut in the cliff beyond the Naval Mess, and known as "Park Lane" because all the senior officers had their "dug-outs" there.

The Sub, Bubbles, and the Orphan were immensely pleased that he had come—he had such a kind, good-humoured way of giving orders, and nothing ever flustered him.

From now onward, there were no more troops or stores to disembark; but the work of sending away the enormous accumulation of stores, and of gradually withdrawing troops, guns, horses, and mules, went on at high pressure. This took place at night. After dark, transports and store ships would come across from Kephalo or Mudros, anchor off "W" beach or "V" beach (which now had been handed over by the French to the British), and all through the dark hours large "soldier" working parties and the Naval beach parties would toil, carrying down the most valuable of the Ordnance and Sappers' and Commissariat stores, and loading them in lighters (wooden lighters, which had to be towed, or motor-lighters). When full, these would be sent off to the store ships, unloaded, and sent back again. Every night a troop-carrier would come slowly alongside the "Outer Hulk", make fast, and battalions of infantry, with their baggage and their maxims, would be taken across to her in motor-lighters from No. 3 Pier. Every night, too, many horses and many mules went off to the big transports anchored farther out, and were hoisted on board.

An hour and a half before dawn, every steamship, transport, and troop-carrier had to be away and out of sight; and if, as the time for departure arrived, any still had half-emptied lighters alongside, tugs would dash out and bring them back. Nothing whatever was allowed to delay these big ships, because upon their arrival and departure being absolutely hidden from the Turks the whole success of the operation depended.

At one time, before the first of those south-west gales had broken a gap in No. 1 Pier, it had been possible to walk along it, then up a gangway on board the "Inner Hulk", and from her to the "Outer Hulk", and so on board anything lying alongside her. This had made the embarking and disembarking of troops a very simple and rapid process; and as simplicity and rapidity would be so necessary on the last night of the evacuation, attempts were made to bridge the gap. The Orphan took part in this, working in the day-time under the orders of the Pier-master, a Naval lieutenant named Armstrong, a great solid man who always spoke extremely deliberately, weighing every syllable, and never appearing to get even mildly excited.

First of all a big pontoon was wedged in the gap, but did not quite fill it; the vacant intervals were then closed by means of barrels lashed stoutly together and held in place by wires and hawsers. If anything did go wrong, Mr. Armstrong would fill his pipe and say: "I say—my—blooming—oath—you—blokes—will—have—to—reeve—another—pretty—big—wire—there"; or, "I—say—Orpen—we—shall—have—to— lay—out—another—anchor—go—round—and—find— a—thundering—big—chap".

When at last these were all fixed to his liking, a broad wooden gangway platform was laid over all, between the broken-away ends of the gap.

This business occupied two whole days, during which time the Orphan had generally more wet clothes than dry. "If—you—don't—take—care—you'll—get—your—feet—wet," Mr. Armstrong told him one day, after he had been wading up to his waist in the shallow water, on and off for an hour.

Troops now could march straight on board the "Inner Hulk", then across to the "Outer Hulk", and so to whatever troop-carrier happened to be alongside her. This naturally relieved the congestion at No. 2 and No. 3 Piers, from which horses and stores were embarked.

But the job which the Orphan liked best was down at No. 4 Pier, working with the Sub and a very energetic warrant officer, getting off guns, motor-lorries, motor field-workshops, "caterpillar" traction engines, and motor ambulances.

Before dark they would get a couple of lighters alongside this pier, make them fast to the wall, then dash up to the Mess for a rapid dinner, and down again about an hour after dark, when the guns would commence to come rumbling down the ridge to the beach—field-guns, stumpy howitzers, and long 60-pounders.

Horse teams or "caterpillar" tractors dragged them through the sand to just above No. 4 Pier, unhitched, and left them there with their "crews". Then the beach party on the pier would make "fast" hook-ropes, and hauling on them, whilst the artillerymen man-handled the spokes of gun and limber wheels, along would come the gun and its limber, jolting aboard the lighter.

One after the other the guns would be coaxed aboard until the lighter could hold no more. Then the artillerymen, picking up their rifles and kits, would scramble on board, squat down between the gun wheels, cling on to the spokes, stow themselves away anywhere so long as they did not get in the way of the lighter's crew, who now hauled on a warp-rope, made "fast" to the end of No. 3 Pier, and warped the heavily laden lighter away from the wall of No. 4 Pier.

A picket-boat, waiting there, would get hold of her, and tow her out to the plucky and beautifully handled little tug T1. Then away she would be towed by that tug to search for the transport which had anchored off Cape Helles after dark. Presently the big ship would loom up, the lighter would be towed alongside, made "fast" under a derrick, and left there to unload. If any very heavy guns, or heavy, cumbrous things such as motor-lorries or "caterpillar" tractors, went off, the Sub or the Gunner always took charge of the lighter; but if the load consisted of field-guns, or such things as "general service" wagons, he sent the Orphan.

This was just the job the Orphan enjoyed—the taking charge of the soldier officers and their artillerymen, the warping off from No. 4 Pier, the tow-out in the darkness of those very dark nights, the job of getting his lighter safely secured to the big ship, and the delicate business of safely slinging each gun and limber or wagon to the ship's derrick "purchase". The purchase would be lowered with its great hook, the slings of one gun slipped over it, the Orphan would shout "Hoist away!" and whilst that gun dangled overhead in the dark, would busily secure the slings to the next, so that time should not be wasted when the purchase-hook came down again. It sometimes took a couple of hours to unload a lighter, but this depended entirely upon the officers and crew of the transport ship. One ship—the *Queen Louise*—would do the work in half the time which some others occupied.

The Orphan always felt so happy when the last wagon or the last gun of any particular load had been hoisted out of the lighter. It was so grand to know that "that little lot" would not fall into the hands of the Turks. Best of all, it was such fun to be hoodwinking "the old Turk" all this while.

Generally, from the time a loaded lighter shoved off from No. 4 Pier until she returned alongside, empty, at least two hours had elapsed, and as it often took an hour—sometimes a good deal more—to load up again, each lighter seldom made more than two trips a night.

Practically all this work went on in complete darkness. There was no moonlight, and the only lights allowed to be shown were small oil-lamps, one on each pier, and one on the far end of the "Outer Hulk". Fortunately, what breeze blew during the first nine nights came from the north-east, and did not interfere with the work; on most of these nights the air was absolutely still and the sea absolutely calm.

Before leaving off work in the morning, they would see that any guns remaining on the beach or in the lighters were carefully covered up with tarpaulins, so that the Turks could not see them from their inquisitive aeroplanes, which constantly came circling over, trying to find out what the British really intended to do.

Then, perhaps at half-past seven in the morning, thoroughly worn out, probably nearly wet through, back they would drag themselves up to the Mess, find Richards always ready for them with cocoa or coffee, bacon, sometimes eggs, and have their breakfast. Afterwards they would "turn in".

"My perishing Orphan!" the Sub would say, as he threw himself on his bed. "That's not a bad night's work—twelve guns, and any number of wagons and things. But I'm pretty well fagged out, and you look 'done to a turn'."

They would sleep till the middle of the day, get up, wash, have lunch, and probably go to sleep again till four or half-past. Then a good "high tea" Richards would provide for them; and, after that, all those who were on night duty—nearly all in fact—gathered in the Mess, smoked and yarned, and told how things were "going"—how many troops, how many guns, how many horses and mules, and how much stores had been safely sent away the night before.

Everyone knew and felt that every man, every gun, horse or mule, every motor-lorry, every ton of stores and ammunition sent off was so much to the good; and everyone—especially as the day for the final evacuation drew nearer—grew anxious lest the Turks should find out what was happening, and lest the gentle north-east breeze should give place to a south-westerly wind, which would drive seas against the different beaches, and delay—perhaps fatally delay—the final embarkation.

There was always the chance of this, and of the two or three thousand last troops to come marching back from the empty trenches being hotly pressed by the Turks, and of them and the whole of the beach parties finding it impossible to get off. To the Orphan, and to many more; it also seemed so absolutely unbelievable that the Turks could be deceived again; and they thought that they must really know about what was going on, and were only waiting until the trenches were so weakly held that they could make a successful assault, drive all that remained down to the sea, and capture them.

CHAPTER XXIV
The Evacuation of Cape Helles

Friday morning, the 7th January, came, and the Turks had given no sign whatever that they guessed what was going on. Shells burst as usual, and "Cuthbert", the aeroplane, circled overhead, saw what he could, dropped a few bombs on the ridge above "W" beach and near the old *River Clyde*, and went home again before our own pursuing aeroplanes could catch him.

At two o'clock that afternoon the Turks commenced a fierce bombardment of the whole front-line trenches. The Asiatic guns tried to enfilade them, too, and for nearly three hours every gun they possessed blazed away for all it was worth.

The few guns we had remaining did their utmost to conceal the smallness of their numbers by the rapidity of their fire, though, naturally, everyone imagined that the Turks must realize how few they were.

At five o'clock the Turks evidently intended to storm the front which they had battered so severely, but, except on our extreme left, their men could not be induced to leave their trenches.

But here some five or six hundred did advance, and, unfortunately for them, came in full view of a battleship which had but lately come out from England, fearfully keen to fire her guns, and now happened to be zigzagging along the coast, attracted by the continual roar of the Turkish artillery. Eagerly looking for something to fire at, she saw, all at once, these poor devils of Turks streaming out of their trenches across open ground, and let go salvo after salvo into the middle of them. Not two hundred came anywhere near our thinly held trenches; some twenty reached them, and were promptly bayoneted; perhaps a dozen got back to their own. After this no further attack was made, and all firing died down at dusk.

The "last night but one" commenced.

All night long the work went on; more troops (after their nerve-shaking experience of that afternoon's three hours' bombardment) marched down with their baggage and their maxims, filed along No. 1 Pier across the "hulks" into the *Ermine* and other troop-carriers, and were taken away. Many of the still remaining guns came back and were sent off from No. 4 Pier; very many horses were embarked from No. 3 Pier; and soldiers, like ants, streamed backwards and forwards between the beach and those store depots, bringing down stores and hurrying back for more.

All night long the Orphan listened with tingling ears for the sound of anything more than the customary sniping and passing bursts of nervous rifle-firing. But the Turks had had a sufficiently severe handling in the afternoon; they made no attempt to attack, and the night passed absolutely quietly, daylight on Saturday morning coming with everything going on just as usual. The troop-carriers, horse-transports, and store ships were long since hidden in Kephalo, or below

the horizon on their way to Mudros; and though the aeroplane came over to reconnoitre and be driven home again, there was nothing unusual for it to report.

Exactly how many troops remained or how many guns, neither Bubbles nor the Orphan knew; but they did know that the very scantiest number of troops held the first-line trenches, and that the guns could almost be counted on fingers and toes. All these troops had to be got off that night, and almost all the guns.

"Would the weather hold for the last night?" That was what everyone asked himself. The sun rose behind Achi Baba not quite so clearly as it had done throughout the past week, but the breeze still blew gently from the north-east, and hardly a cloud flecked the blue sky.

Captain Macfarlane, tugging at his pointed beard, looked satisfied, and went up to his "dug-out" for breakfast and to turn in, after his all-night's work, and sleep for a few hours.

Bubbles, who had spent the night at "V" beach in his picket-boat, pulled the sleepy Orphan along the path to the Mess. "What d'you think I had last night? A bath—a hot bath—aboard the *River Clyde*! It was the last drop of hot water she had aboard her, for a shell came in half an hour before and cut a steam-pipe or something. Wasn't I lucky?"

They had this their last breakfast in Gallipoli, and then lay down on their beds and slept.

At midday they were called, turned out—horribly sleepy—and began to roll up their bedding and pack up the rest of their "gear", ready to be taken down to the beach. Most of the officers spent the morning doing the same.

The barometer had now begun to fall—ever so slightly—-and some clouds to gather in the west, low down in the horizon, behind the island of Tenedos.

Everyone felt a little anxious.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the breeze definitely shifted round to the south-west—the dangerous quarter—and all knew that if it increased much it would drive seas right on to the beaches, and add tremendously to the difficulties of this last night's work.

At five o'clock that afternoon many of the officers gathered in the Mess, which they were leaving for ever, and drank to the success of the evacuation. "Kaiser Bill" was taken out of his box, placed on the table, and drank a little milk out of a saucer for "good luck"; then Bubbles took him away to his picket-boat to make certain that he would not be left behind, *whatever happened*; and everybody went down to the beach and their different jobs, looking doubtfully and anxiously at the sun setting behind a gloomy bank of clouds, and the little "white horses" which already ruffled the surface of the sea.

"It will be all right," the Orphan told the Sub confidently as they walked down to No. 4 Pier. "If "Kaiser Bill" hadn't drunk his milk we might have been

rather miserable."

"You *are* a silly ass," the Sub laughed.

Night fell. The breeze freshened steadily, and the two lighters alongside No. 4 Pier already banged up against the stone wall in a very uncomfortable manner.

Presently some of those remaining guns began rumbling over the ridge to the beach, and their teams went round to No. 3 Pier, or cantered back over the ridge, with a jangle of harness and thudding of hoofs, to fetch more.

When the first lighter had been loaded—with field-guns mostly—her crew hauled her off by the warps, the south-west breeze blowing freshly in their faces, and the little waves already splashing against her bows. A picket-boat took hold of her and handed her over to tug T1, which towed her away to sea.

The Orphan went with this first load, and found it a very different matter to-night. Though the breeze had not yet attained any great strength, a slight, lumpy sea and swell ran, outside, and when he at last reached the transport's huge side he had much difficulty in bringing the clumsy, heavily loaded lighter alongside and making her "fast". As it was, she bumped and rose and fell so much that it took nearly two hours to hoist out all those guns, and their "crews", laden with their heavy kits, and most of them sea-sick, could hardly climb the awkward Jacob's ladders dangling down the ship's dark side.

At last the lighter was cleared, and the tug, lurching out of the darkness, brought off the Gunner with another heavily laden lighter, left him alongside, and towed the Orphan back.

It was now nearly eleven o'clock; the breeze had become a strong wind, and meeting the current flowing out of the Dardanelles, raised an angry, steep sea. This immensely increased the difficulties of handling the motor-lighters, steamboats, and small tugs which simply swarmed off "W" beach and its piers. The clumsy motor-lighters were a danger to themselves and a terror to others, for they often refused to answer their helms when they left the lee of the sunken hulks and their bows first met the seas. It required much skilful seamanship for the steamboats to get hold of them in the pitchy darkness and turn them in the right way.

The Orphan found more guns waiting to be taken off, and he was about to commence to haul them on board his lighter when an order came that they were to be destroyed where they stood. Some Sappers arrived, and began fixing gun-cotton charges in them.

"They are the last of the guns to be sent off," said the officer in charge of them. "It does seem rough luck, doesn't it?"

"What was it like when you left?" asked the Orphan.

"Perfectly quiet; that was an hour ago," he told him.

The Orphan had nothing to do now but wait for further orders.

There was so much wind blowing inshore, towards the trenches, that though he strained his ears he could not hear the sound of the usual sniping, rifle-firing—in fact he could hear nothing from the direction of the trenches. Every now and then a momentary flash showed out behind the ridge on the Asiatic shore, and one of "Asiatic Annie's" shells came along; to-night they nearly all burst on the ridge close to Cape Helles lighthouse, and absolutely harmlessly. Occasionally a big monitor, half-way across the Straits, fired a 12-inch gun, and then everything round "W" beach, and the white tents above it, were lighted up momentarily—like the click of a camera shutter—and the Orphan would catch a sudden glimpse of motor-lighters and picket-boats, horses and men, on No. 3 Pier, perhaps long lines of troops coming down the road from the ridge, or a motor-lorry or motor-ambulance coming down to the beach. Then the blackness shut down again, except for the tiny flicker of the oil-lamp tied to a post at one corner of the pier.

The Orphan passed this time of waiting talking to the disappointed Gunner officer, who told him yarns of yesterday's fierce bombardment, and said how annoyed they had been when that battleship had wiped out their beautiful "target" of advancing Turks. "You'll hear, all right, if the Turks do get into our trenches to-night, after our chaps have left them," he said. "They are all mined, and most of the communication trenches too. There will be the most infernal noise."

Then out of the darkness came Captain Macfarlane and the Sub. The Orphan heard the Captain say: "All right, you can try and take those guns off. If you can't manage it, blow them up in the lighter."

Then he was sent round to No. 1 Pier to find out why two motor-lighters could not get off. He scrambled along the beach, past the end of No. 3 Pier, where a large number of gun- and limber-teams were waiting to embark in lighters—the horses waiting much more patiently and quietly than "humans" would have done—and then past a regiment which had just marched in from the trenches, most of the men lying down to relieve the weight of their heavy packs. The Orphan guessed correctly that most of these packs had a Turkish shell—or two—in them as "curios".

By the time he reached No. 1 Pier and found Mr. Armstrong, things were in a bad way. Two crowded motor-lighters lay there, lashed side by side, bumping uneasily, and the new platform over the pontoon and those barrels which filled the gap in it was swaying and creaking in a most unpleasant manner, waves thudding against it every moment.

"Curse—the—lighters—curse—everything!" swore the Lieutenant, pronouncing each syllable very deliberately, and without the faintest trace of excitement. "The—whole—show—will—go—in—a—minute— barrels—pontoon—

and—lighters—as—well. One— of—the—con-founded—lighters—can't—start—her— engines—and—the—other—one—has—smashed—hers."

"The Captain is sending a tug in to help," the Orphan shouted loudly—one had to shout because of the creaking and grinding of the pontoon and barrels, the noise of the wind and waves, and the bumping of the motor-lighters.

Then a tug did back gingerly in, passed a tow-rope aboard the lighters, and started to tow them out; but the rope "parted" as it took the strain, and the two crowded motor-lighters, catching an eddy of the strong wind and current, began drifting helplessly back again on to the damaged pier. In another half-minute they would have been hopelessly crushed against it; but, in the nick of time, the engine of one of them took it into its head to start, and just managed to move the two of them sufficiently to give the tug a chance of getting hold of them and towing them out to sea and safety.

"My—blooming—oath!" said Mr. Armstrong; "that—was—a—near—thing," and he sucked hard at his pipe.

A man, coming from the "Inner Hulk" over the straining pontoon, shouted to him: "A destroyer has just made 'fast' inside the 'Outer Hulk', sir."

"All—right; I'll—send—the—troops—along. Go—along—and—fetch—'em," he
told the Orphan; "those—blokes—sitting—along—the—thundering—beach. Tell—'em—to—thundering—well—get—a —move—on—if—they—don't—want—to—be—left—behind. Con-found—this—pipe!" As the Orphan darted away he heard the rending sound of timber cracking and ropes "parting". He found some officers; they passed the "word" along; gave orders, and No. 1 Company of that battalion rose to their feet, picked up their rifles, and commenced to straggle down to the pier. As the Orphan and the first of them reached it, there came a loud crashing of smashing woodwork, loud shouts of "She's carried away, sir!" people came running back from where the pontoon had been; and Mr. Armstrong, walking slowly up to him, said: "The—thundering—thing's—carried —away—al-to-gether. It's—the—very—devil. Go—and—tell—the—N.-T.-O. See—if—you—can—find— me—a—bit—of—wire—my—pipe's—choked."

Back went the Orphan to No. 4 Pier, but Captain Macfarlane was not there, nor at No. 3 Pier. Someone took him to the new office "dug-out" at the top of the beach; and there he found him, sitting at a table with an oil-lamp hanging above it, smoking a cigarette, tugging at his beard, and looking quaintly amused at a number of officers who were all asking him questions at the same time.

The Orphan wriggled his way through them, and burst out with: "The 'barrel pier' has gone, sir—washed away!"

"How very annoying, Mr. Orpen; very annoying indeed!" he said, smiling grimly. "We shall have to send the soldiers off from No. 3 Pier. Go down and tell

the pier-master to embark them on the two 'stand-by' motor-lighters, and tell Mr. Armstrong to go down and help him."

The Orphan, noticing that the lamp was hanging by a piece of wire, thought that there might be some more somewhere about, looked round, and saw a piece lying under the table—just what Mr. Armstrong would like. He picked it up, and was just wriggling his way out again when the Captain wanted to know what he was doing.

"Mr. Armstrong's pipe is choked, sir, and I saw this bit of wire."

"Dear me! dear me!" smiled the Captain. "Misfortunes never come singly; do they, Mr. Open?"

"No, sir," said the Orphan, not knowing what else to say, and dashed off; found the Pier-master—another Naval Lieutenant—and gave his message. Then he went off with his piece of wire to clear Mr. Armstrong's pipe, and tell him to go down to No. 3 Pier.

"All—right—hold—this—thundering—megaphone— whilst—I—clean—my—pipe."

At No. 3 Pier these latest arrived troops were already marching down into the "stand-by" motor-lighters, with a scuffling of tired feet, a clatter of rifle-butts, and the continual, monotonous, weary sound of "Form two deep! Form two deep!" as more infantry neared the shore end of the pier.

They were tired and dirty and trench-stained, and they cursed as they stumbled against each other in the dark, but they were very cheerful. As soon as one lighter had taken as many as she could hold, she shoved off, and grunted and snorted across to the "Outer Hulk".

"Nip over there; jump into that steamboat," the Pier-master called out. "Find out how many more men that destroyer can take."

The Orphan jumped down into a picket-boat lying alongside, and found Bubbles there.

As he took him across to the destroyer, the Orphan asked him what he had been doing all night.

"Generals, and their Staffs," Bubbles shouted happily. "You've no idea what a lot of trouble I've had with them. Some of them have actually started giving me orders. I've 'told 'em off' properly. They get quite tame then. I've taken some off from 'V' beach as well; everything's going on well down there. This sea running in is pretty beastly, isn't it?"

The Orphan climbed up the destroyer's side, and found her deck crammed with soldiers. He pushed his way up to the fore bridge, and heard her Captain yelling down to the men on the "Outer Hulk": "Get some more fenders along. Slack off that hawser." He was told that "If you don't 'get out of it' in a 'brace of shakes' you'll get a sea-passage, for nothing. I'm just going to shove off out of it.

I can't take another soldier, and I'll stove my side in if I stay here much longer."

The Orphan went back to the steamboat, across to the pier, and reported that the destroyer was just shoving off.

"I can see that for myself," grumbled the Pier-master, as a flash from the monitor's gun suddenly showed the destroyer backing out.

This same flash also showed a heavily-laden lighter being warped off from No. 4 Pier, so the Orphan knew that the Sub had managed to start his journey with those last guns.

Then two teams of horses came jangling down to the pier unexpectedly, and the irritated Pier-master sent Bubbles to try and find a horse-boat or lighter alongside the "Inner Hulk". He came back with one; was nearly run down by another destroyer; got it alongside. Those twelve horses walked down into it as if they knew all about the business, and the very last horse to be taken off from "W" beach was towed away into the darkness.

Captain Macfarlane came down and told them that he had received a telephone message from Headquarters Office that the trenches had been finally evacuated, and the covering brigades withdrawn. "Everything IS absolutely quiet up there," he said.

The Orphan and Bubbles were greatly excited at that news. They tried to picture these last troops stealthily creeping out of their long line of trenches—extending from Ghurka Bluff and the Nullah, across the plain in front of Krithia, along the lower slopes of Achi Baba, and across and along the ravines past Sedd-el-Bahr—coming down the communication trenches, treading softly, and not making a sound, expecting all the time that Turkish patrols would give the alarm, and that the Turks would only be waiting for that moment to light the plain with star shells and rush down on them.

"We should hear the mines blow up, anyway," the Orphan said, as both snotties stood and listened, hearing nothing but the howling of the wind and the lapping of the waves, and the bumping of the picket-boat against the pier.

"It must be exciting for them," Bubbles said, bubbling with excitement.

After having secured several empty motor-lighters alongside, in readiness to embark the last troops, there was nothing to do.

"Have—a—sand-wich?" said Mr. Armstrong, producing a bulky package which Richards had prepared for him. They ate them sitting on the top of the picket-boat's cabin, as she bobbed and bumped against the side of the pier. Mr. Armstrong told them that one of the Generals coming down was a cousin of his named Bailey, and that if he did come down to this pier he wasn't to go off without seeing him. General Bailey had a brother who had been a Sub in charge of a gun-room when Mr. Armstrong was a midshipman in it. "A—thundering—good—chap," Mr. Armstrong said. "He—used—to—beat—me—

thundering—hard—have—an-other—sandwich."

Before the sandwiches were finished, the Orphan had to go up to the Captain's beach office. The Senior Military Landing Officer, rather upset about something, was talking nervously.

"Oh, Mr. Orpen, there are some men who can't be taken off from Gully Beach, round by the left flank, on account of the heavy sea," the Captain said calmly. "They are starting to march this way. Go down and tell the Pier-master and Mr. Armstrong to collect as many empty motor-lighters as possible. Come back here when you have given this message."

When he returned, the Captain gave him a signal to take up to the temporary "wireless" station, a little way along the top of the cliff.

"You had better hurry," he said, good-humouredly, looking at his watch, "if you really don't mind, or they'll be packed up before you get there."

The Orphan dashed off up the main road, and then along the branch path to where he knew the "wireless" station had been "put up".

"You're just in time," the Naval Lieutenant in charge of it said; "I was just going to give the order to 'pack up'."

"Here!" he shouted to the operator. "Call up those two destroyers; they'll be wanted to come alongside the 'Outer Hulk'."

"The N.T.O. says you can pack up when you get those signals through, sir," the Orphan said.

"All right; those destroyers will have the deuce of a time getting alongside if the wind goes on increasing as it's been doing for the last half-hour," the Lieutenant said. "What d'they want 'em for? anything gone wrong?"

The Orphan told him, and as he turned back he ran into some soldiers carrying heavy square tins.

"What are you doing?" he asked one of them.

"Going off to soak the stores with petrol," he said, and hurried on up to the Ordnance Depot.

Down the main road were now coming the first of the "covering parties"—some of the men who had actually stayed in the trenches till the last moment, many of them limping heavily, most of them talking cheerily. Some had maxim guns on their shoulders, others carried the tripod-stands, others maxim belt-boxes.

"Which way for the Margate steamer?" a Cockney voice called out.

"Turn to your right when you get on the beach," the Orphan shouted as he passed them; and the same voice called back: "Hi, Guv'nor! I've lost me return ticket. I ain't got no money, and I don't want to be left behind—I ain't 'ankering after a trip to Constantinople."

The tired men began to laugh.

The midshipman found Captain Macfarlane in his office, and told him that these men were coming down. He went out and stood at the top of the beach as they went past, their feet scrunching on the stones and shuffling through the sand as they marched down to No. 3 Pier, straight aboard the motor-lighters waiting for them.

A little officer came past, walking with a very tall one.

"Is that General Bailey?" called Captain Macfarlane.

"Hullo, Macfarlane! I knew your voice," he replied, stopping.

"Everything all right?" asked the Captain; and the Orphan remembered that this was Mr. Armstrong's cousin, and listened eagerly for what the General, who had just gone through this terribly anxious time, had to say.

"A pipeful of ship's tobacco, and I should be a happy man," was what he actually did say.

"I know where I can get some, sir," the Orphan interrupted. "Mr. Armstrong has plenty down at No. 3 Pier."

"There's a picket-boat waiting for you there, General. Mr. Orpen will show you the way. Everything all quiet when you left?"

"Everything. The Turks haven't stirred from their trenches; have hardly fired a shot all night. We've brought everyone back."

The Orphan piloted the General and his Staff Officer through the crowd of men round No. 3 Pier, and found Mr. Armstrong.

"General Bailey, sir; he wants a pipeful of ship's tobacco," he said, and left them there; hearing Mr. Armstrong's funny drawl: "You're—a—sort—of —cousin—of—mine—sir—your—brother—in—the— Navy—used—to—beat—me—thundering—hard—a— thundering—good—chap—take—the—whole—blessed—pouchful."

"Bubbles!" the Orphan called, as he found the picket-boat, "I've brought you another General."

"Put him down below in the cabin with 'Kaiser Bill'," Bubbles sang out laughingly. "What 'Kaiser Bill' doesn't know about looking after Generals isn't worth knowing."

The wind by now had increased to almost the force of a gale, and a most unpleasant sea was swirling in through the gap in No. 1 Pier—where the pontoon had been—and round and between the ends of the sunken "hulks". In spite of this, those "covering parties" were safely taken off; the clumsy motor-lighters pushed and shoved out past the "Outer Hulk" by tugs and picket-boats, and then there was nothing much to do until those men marching back from the left flank and Gully Beach arrived. The Orphan was sent with some of the beach party to bring down the "gear" from the "wireless" station, and when he came back he found a white-painted hospital motor-lighter alongside No. 3 Pier. The Army doctor in

charge had asked to be given an opportunity of trying to save the most valuable of the surgical stores still left in the Casualty Clearing-stations, and now was up there with nearly a hundred R.A.M.C. orderlies, bringing down cases of surgical instruments and expensive apparatus as fast as they could. They had already filled two big ambulance wagons, and man-handled them down on to the beach, and everyone was helping to unload them.

As a matter of fact, the last night of the evacuation had gone off so smoothly, in spite of the unfortunate change of weather, that people hardly realized that the original scheme had been drafted under the impression that the "covering parties" would probably have to fight their way back. The maxims in the picket-boats had been placed in them so that the picket-boats should try and cover the embarkation of those last few people who would rush down to the beach; the white-painted hospital lighter was there to, if possible, take off any wounded who could crawl or hobble to it.

In the complete absence of any interference by the Turks this fact had been almost forgotten.

The Sapper working-parties, who had been sprinkling petrol over the Ordnance and Commissariat stores, now began to return, and set to work with pick-axes to smash the engines of some motor-lorries which had to be left behind, and rip their tyres to shreds.

The Orphan having nothing whatever to do, and feeling very tired, wandered down to No. 3 Pier and found Bubbles and his picket-boat.

"I say, Bubbles, got anything to eat?"

Bubbles had. He produced a packet of sandwiches out of a haversack, and the crew brought the two of them a bowl of hot cocoa. They sat on the top of the picket-boat's cabin, and whilst they were munching away happily, they heard someone singing out: "'Ave you seen Mr. Orpen about?"

It was Plunky Bill's voice.

"Hello! What d'you want?" the Orphan called; "I'm here."

Plunky Bill came aboard. "Beg pardon, sir; I thought as 'ow you and t'other young gen'l'man could do with a couple of army macintoshes. I've just 'appened to come across two;" and he added confidentially: "If you'd like any more, I knows where I might be able to lay me 'ands on 'em."

"Where did you get them?" they asked; but Plunky Bill only told them that "he'd been looking round a bit". "I'll just stick 'em alongside 'Kaiser Bill', and then they'll be safe. You'll find a couple of them there 'lectric torches in the pockets."

"Whatever else have you got?" Bubbles laughed, seeing that he was bulged out with things.

"Nothin' much, sir; nothin' but a few pairs of them injy-rubber trench boots, sir. It do seem such a shame to leave 'em for the Turks, and they'll come

in 'andy on board."

He put these boots down below under the forepeak, and went away again, towards the beach.

"That makes up for the macintosh spoilt by that shell the other day," Bubbles said. "They're jolly good things; you can wear them in plain clothes."

They did think of calling him back and asking, him to bring down some more for the rest of the gun-room, but a picket-boat came lurching alongside with the Sub in it, and in their eagerness to know whether he had managed to get off the last of those guns they forgot about macintoshes.

"They're half-way to Mudros by this time," the Sub shouted happily. "I'm off to tell the Skipper. What's the delay? What are we waiting for?"

They told him of the men from the left flank, and away he went.

At about three o'clock the first destroyer came alongside the "Outer Hulk" and made fast. This would have been a difficult job in daylight, on account of the heavy sea which was running, the strong wind, a very strong current swirling down from the Dardanelles, the very limited space for manoeuvring, and the dangerous proximity of the lee shore. In the pitchy darkness of the night it was ten times as difficult.

Thank goodness, just about this time, the first of those men began to tramp down the road from the ridge, footsore and weary after their long and anxious march—long march, that is, for men who had spent so many weeks continually in trenches. The Orphan helped to guide them down to No. 3 Pier, and they limped into the waiting motor-lighters, and were taken across to the destroyer.

By a quarter to four, not a single soldier remained on the Gallipoli Peninsula except a Sapper "demolition" party busy setting fire to the petrol-soaked stores, and waiting to ignite the fuses which should blow up the magazines containing all the ammunition and explosives which had to be abandoned.

By four o'clock these Sappers had come back to the beach and embarked aboard a motor-lighter. The whole circle of the ridge above "W" beach and the slopes of the gully now began to flicker with little flames, and in an incredibly short time the strong wind fanned them until the whole place was a mass of roaring, crackling fire.

Captain Macfarlane, the few of his officers who had not yet gone off, and a few of his men, now collected at the end of No. 3 Pier, alongside which lay two steamboats and that white-painted motor-lighter laden with medical and surgical stores, a few injured men (including two soldiers with sprained ankles—actually the two last men to come down to "W" beach), and some R.A.M.C. orderlies. Bubbles, with his last load of military officers, with "Kaiser Bill" and the two macintoshes, had already gone out to sea, and was steaming across to Kephalo.

Those flames lighted up the whole of "W" beach in the most extraordinary

manner, and everything all round was visible—the little group on the pier, the stones on the beach, a white-tilted ambulance wagon with its Red Cross, half-way down the beach, the broad road running up between the huge masses of flame, the white hospital tents, an abandoned motor-lorry with its engines destroyed and its tyres hacked to pieces, the white stones which marked the boundary of the Naval Camp, and even the two "cuttings" which led to the Naval Mess "dug-out". Out by the "hulks" some of those last soldiers could be seen still scrambling aboard the destroyer.

Captain Macfarlane gave the order for the hospital-lighter to shove off, and for everyone to embark, so the Sub, the Orphan, Mr. Armstrong, and many more crowded into one of those steamboats and started away. The time was now about ten minutes past four, and before they had gone a hundred yards the magazine on shore blew up. It contained all the explosives which it had not been possible to take off, and made the most earth-rending, stupendous noise, sending up a huge mass of flame like a volcano, and flaming masses flew gyrating and twisting like huge gigantic Chinese crackers high up into the sky and spreading far and wide in every direction.

"My—blooming—oath—what—price—that—for—fireworks!" drawled Mr. Armstrong.

"Keep down! Keep down!" people shouted, as masses of rock came splashing into the water all round the steamboat, but none hit her; and as she turned round the end of the "Outer Hulk", on the inner side of which the destroyer and several motor-lighters still lay, crowded with troops, and faced the sea, the Orphan saw the other steamboat following, with Captain Macfarlane and the rest of his officers and men, and the white hospital lighter struggling out, with the water splashing up all round her, just as though she were under a heavy fire. A tremendous crackle of musketry broke out from the beach, and for a moment the Orphan thought that the Turks had come down to the ridge at last; but a Sapper officer in the boat told him that this was only the abandoned small-arm ammunition exploding.

Captain Macfarlane, passing them in his steamboat, sent them back to assist the hospital lighter if necessary; but she managed to make her way out safely, so in a few minutes they followed him.

Another destroyer waited for them outside; they saw her, steamed alongside, and climbed aboard with some difficulty owing to the heavy sea. The huge blaze on shore lighted up every face, and the first person the Orphan recognized was Dr. Gordon, the Volunteer Surgeon of the *Achates*.

"We've just had some pieces of rock fall on board," he said, "but no one is hurt. How about you? They were falling all round your boat."

"What are you doing here, sir?" the Orphan asked.

"They've sent a doctor to every destroyer to-night. Thank God, everyone has got off safely! You go and lie down; you look absolutely 'played out'."

"We got off all the men and the last guns—the very last they intended to take off," the Orphan said. "Isn't that grand?" But he would not go and lie down. He stood watching the flames and the destroyer silhouetted against them, as she backed out to let another take her place and empty the remaining motor-lighters. The motor-lighters came out and headed into the heavy sea; the destroyer backed out and went ahead into safety, and the last that the Orphan saw was a solitary little picket-boat pushing her way in towards No. 3 Pier and the flames, to make a final search for anyone left there, and then coming out again.

It was now about a quarter to five in the morning, and the marvellous evacuation had been successfully completed.

Then the Orphan staggered aft, crawled below, almost fell on to one of the leather cushions down in the ward-room, and went fast asleep.

Dr. Gordon, coming down a few minutes later, found him there, and felt his clothes. They were wet through, so he pulled a couple of blankets off a bunk and covered him up.

By this time there were very few of the beach party or its officers who had not found somewhere to stretch themselves and go to sleep. The strain of those last ten days and nights had been very great—fourteen hours of hard work day and night for most of them; for some a great deal more—and even the Sub, strong as he was, could not have "stood" many more such days and nights without a rest.

But the destroyer they were aboard had not finished her job. She and a cruiser now had to shepherd every tug, motor-lighter, trawler, and steamboat safely on its way across to Kephalo—especially those troublesome motor-lighters, which behaved so badly in a heavy sea. She went up the Straits, past "V" beach, where the fires blazing there showed up the castle walls of Sedd-el-Bahr and the poor old *River Clyde*; steamed up as far as Morto Bay to see that no craft of any kind had been left behind; and it was not until nearly seven o'clock, and after the Turks had been shelling the beaches for nearly two hours, both from Achi Baba and the Asiatic shore, that she started away for Kephalo. By eight o'clock she ran into that crowded harbour.

The *Achates* had left for Mudros several days previously, and thither Dr. Gordon, the Sub, Bubbles, the Orphan, and "Kaiser Bill" followed her late that afternoon in the troop-carrier *Ermine*. As this plucky little steamer passed Cape Tekke and Cape Helles the fires still raged, and a cruiser, a monitor, and two destroyers were bombarding the shore.

When the Orphan looked his last at Gallipoli Peninsula, as the *Ermine* steamed away to the west, the cliffs of Cape Tekke glowed in the rays of the

setting sun, with a great pall of black smoke above them, the masts of the sunken hulks at their feet, our own shells were bursting on the beaches, and a huge splash leapt up under the stern of the cruiser as a shell from "Asiatic Annie" fell into the sea close to her.

By nine o'clock, after a wet and "bumpy" passage through the head sea left by last night's gale, the Sub, Bubbles, and the Orphan found themselves once more in the Honourable Mess, where everybody asked hundreds of questions at the same time, and where Barnes soon had a glorious "feed" waiting for them. Fletcher, the stoker, had come aft directly they reached the ship, to find out whether they had brought the tortoise back safely.

"It was all due to him," the Orphan told Fletcher joyfully. "You said he would bring good luck, and he has."

"Kaiser Bill", however, did not show the slightest interest in getting back to the ship or his owner, and refused even to put out his head.

"His nerves are a bit out of order, I expect," Uncle Podger suggested.

"You should have seen him 'duck' when he heard the shells burst!" the Orphan laughed. "You're a bigger funk than I am; aren't you, old 'Kaiser Bill'?"

CHAPTER XXV
The "Achates" Returns to Malta

At nine o'clock on Sunday morning, the 9th January, a general "wireless" signal was made by the Naval Commander-in-Chief—"Helles evacuated successfully"; and every battleship, scout, sloop, and destroyer scattered widely over the Eastern Mediterranean received the welcome news at the same moment.

The greatest enthusiasm prevailed among the whole fleet, for everyone realized that though the evacuation was actually a retreat, yet it had been a wonderful achievement in the face of difficulties which had at one time seemed insuperable; moreover, it set free a large and seasoned army for employment elsewhere.

When, later on in the day, the officers and men who had taken part in the evacuation returned to their own ships at Mudros with yarns of last night's adventures, everyone marvelled how it had been possible to hoodwink the wily Turk a second time so completely, and to do so in the teeth of that south-west gale.

In the gun-room of the *Achates* that night, the Sub, Bubbles, and the Orphan tried to answer questions and eat at the same time.

"It was that south-west wind that sprang up," the Lamp-post said. "Directly it started blowing, the Turks thought to themselves, 'Well, they won't try to slip away to-night, at any rate', got out their hubble-bubble pipes, and began playing 'patience'."

"You must have been there, old Lampy," Uncle Podger laughed. "Was it pretty to watch? What kind of patience did they play?"

"You know what I mean," the Lamp-post said. "Don't try to be funny."

"I believe he's right," the Sub said, with his mouth full. "My jumping Jimmies, didn't we have luck?"

The China Doll sat listening, with his eyes opening and shutting, and his mouth wide open, fearfully excited, especially when the Orphan, in the interval of "Another helping, please, Barnes!" told them all about the shells coming into the "dug-outs", and the third one which just missed Bubbles outside the kitchen door.

In the middle of all this, the Pimple rushed in, shouting: "We're off to Malta! Off to Malta to refit! The signal has just come through! As soon as ever we get back all our men, off we go! You can't say I don't bring you news, can you?"

In a moment the evacuation, and the bursting shells, and all the thrilling adventures—even the two macintoshes and electric torches looted by Plunky Bill—had been entirely forgotten. They all yelled with joy, and wondered how long the *Achates* would remain at Malta, where she would go afterwards, and what ships would be there for them to challenge at cricket or hockey.

"You'll have to give me that dinner there, Rawlins, old chap," grinned the Lamp-post, referring to the "race" in their "water-beetles".

"Ra-ther!" said Rawlins. "We'll have a regular slap-up 'eat-till-you-burst' show at the Club, won't we?"

Dr. Gordon put his head into the gun-room to see whether Bubbles and the Orphan had finished "feeding" and were ready to come for'ard to the sick-bay and have their slight wounds properly dressed. But no one could worry about little things like that—now.

"Come in, sir! Come in!" they shouted. "Isn't it grand about Malta? Where do you think we'll go afterwards?"

"I don't know; I haven't the faintest idea," Dr. Gordon answered in his nervous way.

"Hadn't we better have a bath first, sir?" the two wounded warriors asked him. "We want one frightfully badly."

"All right," Dr. Gordon smiled. "I'll get the bandages and things into my cabin. Come along there, afterwards."

They had their baths, they had their scratches dressed; and then it was simply no use to try—they could not keep awake any longer, and they turned into their hammocks—on the half-deck—and slept like logs; though not before the Pimple, shaking Bubbles, told him that he must keep the forenoon watch next day. "I've been keeping double watches ever since you went skylarking over at Helles," he complained.

"Oh, bother you!" Bubbles groaned, and went to sleep.

Next morning, as Bubbles kept his "forenoon", the Orphan came to talk to him. He had a great idea of doing something for "Kaiser Bill", "so that he should always remember how he'd brought luck wherever he went, and all the righting and things he'd been through". They had a very long and secret conversation, and then the Orphan, saying: "I'm certain I can get it made on board—there's a stoker petty officer who says he can do it—I'll go and see him now," went away again.

Three days later, just before sunset, the *Achates* steamed out through the "gate" in the double row of submarine nets, left Mudros for the last time, and commenced to zigzag her way to Malta.

In the ward-room that night the Sub dined with Mr. Meredith, and the Orphan dined with the War Baby, sitting next to Dr. O'Neill, the Fleet-Surgeon, who was so delighted at getting away from the Dardanelles that he actually made himself quite agreeable.

"Not so much of the 'rats-in-a-trap' now, Doc," the cheery Fleet-Paymaster called across the table. "More of the 'bird-in-a-gilded-cage', eh? Don't cheer up too soon; we shall be right in the thick of the submarines to-night and to-morrow. You'd better blow up your safety waistcoat."

"That's all right, Pay. It's hanging up in my cabin, blown up tight."

"Good! I'll know where to steal it," grinned the Fleet-Paymaster.

After dinner the other gun-room officers were invited to come along and start a "sing-song". They came in, and the Lamp-post, itching to get at the piano, was stuck down in front of it and told to play.

As his fingers drew music from the battered, uncared-for old instrument, he lost himself in another world altogether. He didn't hear the Navigator asking why the China Doll had not come; or the Pimple and Rawlins say: "Oh, we forgot him; we left him in the gun-room"; nor notice them rush away with the Orphan, Bubbles, and the War Baby, and bring back the Assistant Clerk lashed in a bamboo stretcher, with a big cardboard label—pointing the wrong way—"This side up. Fragile—with care."

They rushed him through the ward-room door, his squeals drowned by

their shouts and the Lamp-posts music, and stood him upside down on his head, against the table.

"He's frightfully fragile! Listen how he cracks if you touch him!" And the Pimple nipped his ankle, the poor China Doll giving a squeak of pain.

"That's hardly comfortable, is it?" Dr. Gordon suggested.

"Well, look at the label, sir. 'This side up', so it must be right," they laughed. But Dr. Gordon made them unbuckle the stretcher and take it away, whilst the China Doll was "stood up" the right way, blinking his eyes, and opening and shutting his mouth. "Look at his lovely pink socks!" they cried, pulling up his trouser legs. "Aren't they pretty?" But the Assistant Clerk, with a frightened look at the Sub, who had forbidden him to wear them in uniform, tried to hide them.

The Lamp-post stopped playing and "came to earth" again.

"It's simply marvellous how you do it, old Lampy," said Uncle Podger, who had listened to every note. "That right hand of yours gave those black notes the time of their life; your left hand simply wasn't in it—never had a look in. You ought to give it a good start next time."

"Don't be an ass!" the Lamp-post smiled.

Then Mr. Meredith had to sing, and everyone joined in the chorus. After that the China Doll, pretending to be very shy, was pulled forward, and bleated some song like "Put me among the Girls", and received such an ovation for his silly performance, and became so highly delighted with himself and his popularity, that he thought he'd brave the Sub's displeasure, and not creep away and change those pink socks as he had intended to do.

The Commander went off to bed very soon; but just as the last chorus of "The Midshipmite" came to a tremendous end, the door opened, and in came Captain Macfarlane, smoking a cigar.

Everyone stood up.

"Have a whisky and soda, sir?" the Fleet-Paymaster and Navigator asked him. "We're having a sing-song."

"I thought I heard a slight noise," smiled the Captain tugging at his pointed, yellow beard. "May I ask what *you* are doing, Mr. Chaplain?" The little Padre happened to be taking lessons from the Sub as to how best to crawl through the back of one of the ward-room chairs, and had just got himself firmly wedged in, unable to move the chair up or down.

"I can *nearly* do it, sir," he said, standing up with the back of the chair round his chest, and his usually pale face almost purple.

"Nearly do it, Mr. Chaplain! nearly do it! How long have you been in the Service? I'll show you how to do it properly;" and throwing off his mess-jacket, and placing his cigar in safety, Captain Macfarlane wriggled his head and shoulders through the back of another chair, and slipped it down to his feet in

half a minute.

"It's very easily done, Mr. Chaplain," he said, just a little out of breath, as he resumed his cigar.

"It's all very well for you, sir. You are thin all the way down—the Padre's only thin 'up topsides'." the Navigator laughed.

The Captain sang a song, and joined in the choruses of others till the time came for his usual visit to the bridge. Then he put on his mess-jacket and wished them all "good night".

"Good night, sir!" everyone said, standing up as he went away.

After this the sing-song became a little more boisterous, until finally the climax came when the Fleet-Paymaster, bursting in with a cushion he had borrowed from the Padre's cabin, endeavoured to score a "try" between the legs of the piano. He was forced into touch, banged against the ship's side, the cushion seized, and a most delightful game of Rugby football followed.

Dr. Gordon had a little work to do—mending people—afterwards, whilst the sing-song gradually broke up, the clamour subsided, and one after the other all went away to turn in, and peace and quietness reigned once more.

On the way back to the gun-room the Sub asked Uncle Podger to come into his cabin.

"Look here, Uncle, that youngster of yours took advantage of my dining in the ward-room to-night to wear those pink socks. I don't care a tinker's curse if he wears all the colours of the rainbow *out* of uniform, but I had told him not to do so *in* uniform. It's just this: the snotties—all of us—are spoiling him, treating him like a plaything or a little girl. He can't even talk sensibly now, or make an ordinary remark without saying something silly to try and make us laugh at him. He wore those socks to-night to make the snotties laugh at him and "rag" him; and that silly song he sang, and that silly blinking of his eyes when the ward-room officers clapped him—well, it's got to be stopped. What a horrible time he will have, when he goes to another ship and tries his baby tricks there! and what will he be like when he grows up? He's a good little chap, really, and as plucky as paint at sports. We *must* do something."

"I don't know," Uncle Podger reflected. "I feel just as you do. He's being absolutely spoiled. He's absolutely useless in the office; I do believe he spends his time thinking of what he can do next to make them laugh at him. They were talking at dinner to-night of getting up a gun-room court martial and trying him one night before we get to Malta. The snotties knew you had ordered him not to wear those socks, and thought of trying him for that. The China Doll thinks he's going to have the time of his life."

"Right," said the Sub, "and I'll take 'President'; he *shall* have the time of his life."

"You won't be too hard on him?" Uncle Podger asked, a little anxiously.
"Right-o, old chap! Good night! I won't break him."

By the next morning the *Achates* had passed through the narrow Doro channel, where so many ships had been attacked by submarines, and zigzagged her way along the coast of Greece. In the gun-room, great preparations were made for the China Doll's court martial, which would be really done "top-hole" fashion now that the Sub had offered to be "President". All details were settled that afternoon. The Orphan must be "Prisoner's Friend", and Uncle Podger "Judge-Advocate". The War Baby had been asked to dine as the guest of the Honourable Mess, and afterwards to act as "Provost-Marshal", "Master-at-Arms", "Second Executioner", and "Prisoner's Escort". The Pimple appointed himself "First Executioner", and Rawlins and the Hun appointed themselves "Comic Jailers". But the Hun, who had not been well for some days, had again to be put on the sick-list and be slung in a cot on the half-deck, so that Bubbles took his place as "Second Jailer". The Lamp-post, of course, would be the "Prosecutor", and make up a really funny speech.

Before dinner they shifted the Hun in his cot, and slung him just outside the gun-room door so that he could look in and see the fun. "You'll have to be the 'crowd'," they told him, "and groan and hoot when the 'Prisoner' is dragged in or out—that is, if you feel well enough, old Hun."

They had a grand, cheery dinner, the most cheery and noisy since the ship had left Ieros; they entirely forgot Cape Helles or Suvla, the shells or the submarines. The China Doll simply giggled with excitement all the time. He longed for the trial to begin, and for himself to be the central figure and be able to "answer back" so cheekily.

When the meal was at last finished and everything cleared away, he helped to carry in the Master-at-Arms' table, and stood it across the top of the Mess, in front of the sideboard, for the Sub to sit behind as "Judge" and "President"; he helped bring in the Padre's reading-desk to make the witness-box, and he cleared all the litter of coats and boots from the brass "beading", or fender, which surrounded the place where the stove had stood in the old days. This was to be the Bar, and he would have to stand in the middle of it, facing the witness-box, with a "Jailer" on each side of him, and the War Baby, with his very long sword, behind him.

He himself had no sword, and would not be entitled to one until he reached the exalted rank of Clerk, so he was ordered to provide himself with a pen from the ship's office to take its place.

Directly after "Commander's rounds" at nine o'clock, the "Court" was

"cleared", and the China Doll, trembling with excitement, was sent to stand by his sea-chest until the "Jailers" and the "Master-at-Arms" came for him.

Punctually at ten past nine the War Baby, in helmet, tunic, and those beautiful scarlet-striped trousers of his, his long sword at the "carry", did the "goose step" solemnly along the half-deck, followed by Bubbles and Rawlins, their helmets on, the wrong way round, their monkey-jackets stuffed out with swimming-belts to make them look more "funny", and their drawn dirks in their hands. They dragged behind them the chain from one of the hatchway ladders, and having snapped a pair of handcuffs round the China Doll's wrists, lashed his arms to his side with the chain.

Then they escorted him solemnly back to the gun-room, amidst derisive shouts of "Go it, pickpocket! Wearer of Pink Socks! Booh! Pooh! Booh!" from the "crowd"—the Hun in his cot outside the gun-room door.

Behind the little table sat the Sub, smoking his pipe—that office pen, which represented the "Prisoner's" sword, and the gun-room cane in front of him. On his left, at the end of the little table, sat Uncle Podger with his "cocked" hat on, his sword between his knees, and a roll of papers in his hands. In front and on the right of the "Judge" was the stove fender for the "Prisoner at the Bar", and in front and on the left, the Padre's reading-desk, laden with a pile of volumes of Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, borrowed from the ward-room. The Lamp-post, as "Prosecutor", leant "gracefully" against it.

Behind the "Judge" stood the Pimple—a black mask hiding most of his face—brandishing a huge meat-chopper, kindly lent by the marine butcher.

The Orphan had vanished.

The China Doll was now marched to the Bar.

"Attention! Silence in Court!" shouted the War Baby in a shrill falsetto; and the two "Jailers", standing on each side of the China Doll, repeated it after him, trying to make funny faces, and jerking the ends of the chain coiled round the "Prisoner's" chest, whilst that luckless youth opened and shut his eyes, and kept saying: "Shut up! you're hurting!"

Silence, or comparative silence, having been obtained, Uncle Podger gravely read, from a long roll of paper, the horrible charge: "Whereas, Mr. Charles Stokes, commonly known as the China Doll, did, after being duly warned and cautioned not to wear pink socks"—(loud "booing" from the "crowd", and a request from the "crowd" for his cot to be shifted a little farther for'ard, so that he could see better).

After this interruption, and the Court had settled down again, the "Judge-Advocate" resumed: "pink socks, not in accordance with the Uniform Regulations of His Majesty's Navy, and also infringing the customs of the Honourable Mess, and being distasteful to the Honourable Members thereof, and did indulge this

noxious habit on sundry and divers occasions, to wit, notably at dinner on the thirteenth day of the first month of the year nineteen hundred and sixteen; therefore, the aforesaid Mr. Charles Stokes be now brought before a Court Martial, duly assembled, and his crime diligently, and with all due formality, examined into, and death or other such punishment as be deemed necessary, awarded."

"Prisoner at the Bar," the "Judge-Advocate" began sternly—("Tremble, China Doll," Rawlins implored in a whisper. "Shake the chain and the handcuffs.")—"having heard the grave charge, do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty, my Lord," squeaked the "Prisoner", knowing that this was just what no one would want him to say.

"The 'Prisoner at the Bar' pleads 'Not guilty'—not guilty, my Lord!'" shrieked the "Provost-Marshal", "Master-at-Arms", "Second Executioner", and "Prisoner's Escort", all rolled in one, waving his long sword; the two comic "Jailers" joined in to drown the "Prisoner's" voice.

There was now heard, from the deck outside, shouts of "Justice! Justice!" and a rather mild "booing" from the "crowd"; in rushed the Orphan and struck an attitude. "Am I too late to save my young friend's life?" he cried tragically, holding one hand against the front of his monkey-jacket, beneath which something bulged out. "The prisoner pleads 'Not guilty, my Lord!' and I am here to prove his innocence. Fleeing from the Dardanelles, flying from the post of danger, I—I—I—— Oh, hang it all; I can't remember any more!"

So down the Orphan sat, amidst groans from the "Jailers", the "First and Second Executioners", and the "crowd" outside.

"The 'Prisoner at the Bar' having pleaded 'Not guilty, my Lord!'" continued the "Judge-Advocate", "I will now request my honourable friend, 'Mr. Prosecutor', to proceed."

So the Lamp-post, having cleared his throat several times, and fixed the "Prisoner" with an "eagle glance", before which the China Doll's knees shook in the most realistic manner, proceeded: "My Lord, in my researches among my legal books" (here he rested his hand on the Encyclopædia) "I find but little mention of socks, and none of pink socks, which is sufficient proof that the crime, of which the 'Prisoner at the Bar' is charged, is one of a unique and most dangerous character. But" (and he banged the reading-desk) "in the article on 'Dyes' I find this: 'Pink dye is produced from coal-tar'"—(great sensation in Court; Bubbles pretended to faint against the bulkhead; the Pimple waved the meat-chopper so close to the "Judge's" head that he was told to put it down in the corner; and there was prolonged hissing from the "crowd").

Then the "Prosecutor", lightly touching on coal-tar soap, tarred roads—their advantage to motors and disadvantage to the fish in the streams which ran alongside them, briefly mentioned the good old custom of "tar and feathering",

which he trusted the Court would inflict on the wretched "Prisoner at the Bar". "These," he said, suddenly holding aloft the two incriminating socks, "are the abominated vestments or 'what-nots' owned and worn by that trembling, terrified tadpole, that cringing criminal in the dock. I will now, my Lord, proceed to call my witnesses."

"You're doing it spiffingly!" whispered Rawlins to the China Doll. "If you could only wink up a tear, and shake the chains a bit more!"

One by one, Uncle Podger, the "Jailers", and Barnes (in his shirt-sleeves) were called to the reading-desk, sworn on the office copy of the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, and each identified those socks as having been worn by the "Prisoner" on the occasion in question. The War Baby further gave evidence that he had found them that night concealed in the "Prisoner's" chest.

The Orphan, with some hazy idea of judicial procedure, tried unsuccessfully to obtain a hearing. At last he was heard to say: "That the 'Prisoner at the Bar' denied ever having seen them before; that having been brought up from the tenderest age on 'Pink Pills for Pale Piccaninnies', he so abominated that colour that he invariably fainted on seeing it". Here, with his free hand (for the other hand still clasped the bulge beneath his monkey-jacket), he seized the pink socks from the "Prosecutor" and held them in front of the "Prisoner's" face.

[image]

THE GUN-ROOM COURT MARTIAL ON THE CHINA DOLL.

The China Doll promptly fell back into the arms of the "Jailers" and "Provost-Marshal".

"See, my Lord!" and the Orphan pointed triumphantly (as Rawlins whispered, "Keep on fainting—I'll tell you when to stop"); "can the Court require further proof of his innocence?"

("Yes! Yes! Booh! Booh! Yah!" from the "crowd" and the Pimple.)

"Then I will produce the real criminal, the owner of those hateful socks;" and putting his hand inside his monkey-jacket, the Orphan drew out "Kaiser Bill", with his head out and legs dangling from his shell.

"There he is! Come to save the innocent life of that young officer—at the risk of his own shell!" (Tremendous sensation in Court; the "Jailers" flung their arms round each other and wept loudly—even the "Judge" smiled as he refilled his pipe.)

"I will now confront him with those socks, and the Court will see him recognize them," went on the Orphan, and dangled a sock in front of "Kaiser Bill".

Unfortunately, just at that moment the Pimple dropped the meat-chopper, and "Kaiser Bill", thinking, probably, that "Asiatic Annie" was getting busy again, promptly "ducked" inside his shell, and nothing would induce him to come out again.

The Lamp-post banged the reading-desk. "My Lord, you have seen for yourself that the Witness for the Defence refuses to perjure himself: the case is clear; I submit that the charge is proved."

In the general clamour and booing which followed, the China Doll endeavoured to make himself heard; but every time he opened his mouth, Rawlins or Bubbles slapped a wet sponge (thoughtfully provided by the Pimple) over his mouth, and the War Baby sawed gently at his neck with his sword.

Amid the general uproar, the Orphan was understood to be pleading for the clemency of the Court. "The 'Prisoner at the Bar'," he was heard to say, "resolved, at a tender age, to devote his life to his King and Country, and, leaving several disconsolate, doting wives and children to mourn his loss, had come to sea to make toast for the Honourable Mess."

"But he doesn't make it now; he never did! He always ate it himself!" yelled the "Jailers", the "First Executioner", and the "crowd".

"I look to the justice of the Court to acquit the miserable little worm—I mean, this gallant and impetuous officer—of the foul charge which—which—which—— Oh, hang it all! I've forgotten what comes next," the Orphan said, and, amidst "loud and prolonged cheering" from the Hun in his cot outside, sat down on the gun-room table with "Kaiser Bill" on his knees.

The Sub banged the table. "Has the 'Prisoner at the Bar' anything to say in his defence?"

The China Doll, thinking that at last the time had come for him to make the funny remarks he expected everyone to laugh at, began, in his most squeaky voice, his eyes opening and shutting: "My Lord, old Lampy is——"

"The Prosecutor! the Prosecutor!" they all shouted, whilst the "Jailers" clapped the sponge over his mouth.

"Is an ass!" shrieked the China Doll, struggling free.

"Muzzle the 'Prisoner'! Shove the sponge in his mouth! Cut his head off!" shouted the "Jailers", the "Provost-Marshal", the "First Executioner", and the "crowd".

The Sub banged the table for silence, and roared: "'Provost-Marshal', remove the 'Prisoner', and send back the 'Jailers'!" Whereupon the China Doll was lifted up, kicking and squeaking, and taken out into the half-deck, the War Baby keeping guard whilst the two "Comic Jailers" came back.

"Now look here," began the Sub, "we've had too much of this fooling of the Assistant Clerk. He's not a bad little chap, and we're simply spoiling him.

He thinks of nothing but how he can make us laugh at him. When he goes to another ship he'll have a rotten time, and grow up to be a 'rotter'. He wore those pink socks after I had told him not to do so, and to make you laugh at him all the more. Now all this 'rot' has to stop—from this very moment. He is not to be called China Doll any longer—the name will stick to him, and sooner or later spoil him. Stokes is his name, and Stokes—and nothing else—nothing else, do you understand?—you will call him in future. You can 'scrap' with him as much as you like, but you are to talk sensibly to him—and you are never again to call him China Doll. Go and fetch the 'Prisoner'."

The snotties never expected any ending like this, and, rather bewildered, brought back the excited Mr. Stokes.

"Take off those handcuffs and foolhardy chains," the Sub called out, "and bring Mr. Stokes over here."

The Assistant Clerk stood opposite the Sub, wondering why the others didn't giggle at the abject look of silly fright he tried to show.

"Stand up when I speak to you!" growled the Sub, and the Assistant Clerk straightened himself and looked frightened—naturally; he didn't know what was the matter.

"I have taken 'President of the Court' to-night, Mr. Stokes," the Sub began sternly, "and let you have your fun out of it, but I am going to say a few things to you which you are to remember. If you intend to become a credit to yourself and the Navy you must learn to obey orders—that is the first thing. Then you must learn to be manly, which you are not trying to do here. If you hadn't been just a silly, little puppy I should have beaten you; but from now on, you are to be called by your proper name—Stokes—and by nothing else—and—and—dash it all—come with me to my cabin and talk it over."

Ten minutes later they both came back, the Assistant Clerk looking as if he had shed tears.

The Sub put his hand on his shoulder. "Have a drink, Stokes?" and Mr. Stokes looking up, with a suspicion of a tremble on his lips, said: "Thank you, sir, I should like a ginger beer."

"Barnes!" called the Sub; "bring me a whisky and soda, and a ginger beer for Mr. Stokes."

The others kept very quiet.

The evening after that court martial had taken place, and just before dinner, Bubbles and the Orphan, vastly excited, knocked at the door of the Sub's cabin.

"We've had this made for 'Kaiser Bill'," they both began saying, bursting in. "Could we get Fletcher and the tortoise down to the gun-room after dinner,

and present it to him—properly?" and they pulled out a brass cross, shaped like a German "Iron Cross", suspended on a piece of coloured ribbon with a proper brooch and four "clasps".

The Sub examined it, smiling as he read on one side of the cross "Kaiser Bill—the Tortoise", on the other "Good Luck"; and on the clasps: "*Achates*, 1915-16"—"Smyrna"—"'W' beach"—and on the fourth—a very broad one: "Evacuation, Suvla—Helles".

"We got it made on board," they said. "Haven't they done it well?"

"Where did you get the ribbon?" he asked.

"Off the War Baby's straw hat. He'll never want it. Can we tell Fletcher to come down after dinner, and will you give 'Kaiser Bill' the medal? It would be best to come from you."

"All right; tell him to come to the gun-room after 'rounds'."

So off they rushed.

Just after nine o'clock old Fletcher came aft with the tortoise. They all met him outside, escorted him into the gun-room, and made him sit down in the one easy-chair, with the tortoise on his knees.

Then the Sub said: "We've had a medal made for 'Kaiser Bill', Fletcher; we thought you'd like to have it, just to remember what he had been through, and remind you about it later on."

The old stoker took the medal and its clasps, pulled his gold spectacles out of their case from inside his "jumper", fixed them on his nose, and beamed when he read the inscriptions. "Thank you very much, gentlemen! Thank you all, very much! I'll take it home with me, and I hope I'll take 'Kaiser Bill' home too. He did bring luck, didn't he? If we'd only had him with us, that last time in the picket-boat, we shouldn't have lost her. Should we, sir?"

Then Stokes, very nervous because this was his first public appearance under his real name, stuttered: "And, Fletcher, the Sub wants me to give you this box of cigars; he thinks 'Kaiser Bill' likes the smell of cigar smoke!"

"It's very kind of you all; thank you very much, gentlemen;" and the old stoker, beaming at them through his gold spectacles, added, artlessly: "If 'Kaiser Bill' doesn't enjoy the smell of them, I know someone who does. Thank you all, very much indeed!"

Next morning, just after daybreak, every one of the midshipmen (except the Hun in his cot) came on deck to see the old walls of Malta standing up out of the glittering sea, ahead of the ship.

As they watched, and chaffed Rawlins about the dinner he had to "stand" the Lamp-post at the Club, the messenger-boy from the "wireless" room brought

aft the usual morning "Wireless Press News".

"Beg pardon, sir, but there's something about you this morning," he said, coming up to the Orphan.

"About me! What d'you mean?"

"There, sir," and the messenger-boy pointed to the end of the last page.

They all crowded round the Orphan, who read: "The following additional Naval honours appeared in last night's *Gazette*", and at the end of the list came—and the Orphan's head buzzed—"Distinguished Service Cross—Midshipman Vincent Orpen".

For a minute he wondered whether it was possible that there could be another midshipman of the same name; but whilst the others thumped him on the back and congratulated him, another messenger came flying down from the bridge: "The Captain wants you, sir, at once."

Not knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, the Orphan flew up to the fore bridge.

Captain Macfarlane smiled at him and tugged his beard.

"Is it really true, sir?"

"I imagine so; I sent your name in."

"What's it for, sir?"

"I think, Mr. Orpen, for working that maxim in your picket-boat, at Ajano."

"Thank you awfully, sir! but Plunky Bill was wounded twice, sir."

"Was he the seaman who fired it before you 'took on'?" asked the Captain.

"Yes, sir; he was hit twice before he gave up."

"I think, Mr. Orpen, you'll find that he has not been forgotten."

"Thank you, sir, awfully! I—I—must go and tell the Hun and the Sub—won't they be pleased?"

The Orphan thereupon dashed down the bridge ladder.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
At the Villafield Press, Glasgow, Scotland

[image]

Sketch map of Gallipoli and The Dardanelles

* * * * * * * *

BY FLEET SURGEON T. T. JEANS, R.N.

"The manifold excellences of Fleet Surgeon Jeans' work—its freshness, its originality, and above all its abiding humour."—Outlook.

Large crown 8vo, cloth extra. Illustrated

Gunboat and Gun-runner: A Tale of the Persian Gulf.

"That boy must be a dullard whose pulse does not quicken, or his imagination begin to glow, when he reads this exciting tale."—Bookman.

John Graham, Sub-Lieutenant, R.N.: A Tale of the Atlantic Fleet.

"A real workaday narrative of midshipmen's life as seen through the eyes of a young gunroom officer. We cannot imagine a better book for the mature boy."—Evening Standard.

On Foreign Service: or, The Santa Cruz Revolution.

"His book is among the very first we would recommend."— Glasgow Herald.

Ford of H.M.S. Vigilant: A Tale of the Chusan Archipelago.

"A distinctly good story."—Naval and Military Record.

Mr. Midshipman Glover, R.N.: A Tale of the Royal Navy of To-day.

”A really first-class book of naval adventure.”—Literary World.

LONDON: BLACKIE & SON, LTD., 50 OLD BAILEY, E.C.

A Word from Project Gutenberg

We will update this book if we find any errors.

This book can be found under: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/45960

The Full Project Gutenberg License

Section 1. General Terms of Use & Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate ac-

cess to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at https://www.gutenberg.org . If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this ebook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Guten-

berg™ web site (https://www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and The Project Gutenberg Trademark LLC, the owner of the

Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3. below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES – Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND – If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS,' WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PUR-

POSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY – You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need, is critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation web page at https://www.pglaf.org .

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is in Fairbanks, Alaska, with the mailing address: PO Box 750175, Fairbanks, AK 99775, but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887, email business@pglaf.org. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit https://www.gutenberg.org/donate

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation meth-

ods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: https://www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For thirty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

https://www.gutenberg.org

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.