

CHAPTER CXI.

THE NAVY'S WORK IN 1915.

THE NAVY'S TASK AND THE LESSONS OF WAR—CHANGES AT THE ADMIRALTY IN 1915—LORD FISHER AND MR. CHURCHILL—MR. BALFOUR AS FIRST LORD—CONSTRUCTION POLICY—CONTROL OF THE NORTH SEA—PATROL WORK—DESTROYERS IN ACTION—THE METEOR'S EXPLOIT—WORK ON THE BELGIAN COAST—THE GERMAN SUBMARINE "BLOCKADE"—SUBMARINE WARFARE—BRITISH COUNTER-MEASURES—THE SUBMARINE MENACE "WELL IN HAND"—BRITISH BLOCKADE POLICY—OPERATIONS IN THE BALTIC—THE NAVY AND THE DARDANELLES—WORK IN THE ADRIATIC—THE NAVY AND THE PERSIAN GULF—THE CONQUEST OF GERMAN COLONIES.

THE part played by the Royal Navy during the last nine months of 1915 was not remarkable for dramatic incidents or decisive effect. No battle was fought on the grand scale, and no large offensive movements, apart from those necessitated by cooperation with the Allied military forces, and by the operations at the Dardanelles, were undertaken. No attempt was made by the Germans to bring about an engagement of the first magnitude, nor again to inveigle the Grand Fleet into a position of their own selection. The High Sea Fleet remained behind the protection of its barrier of submarines, mines, sand-banks, and land fortifications.

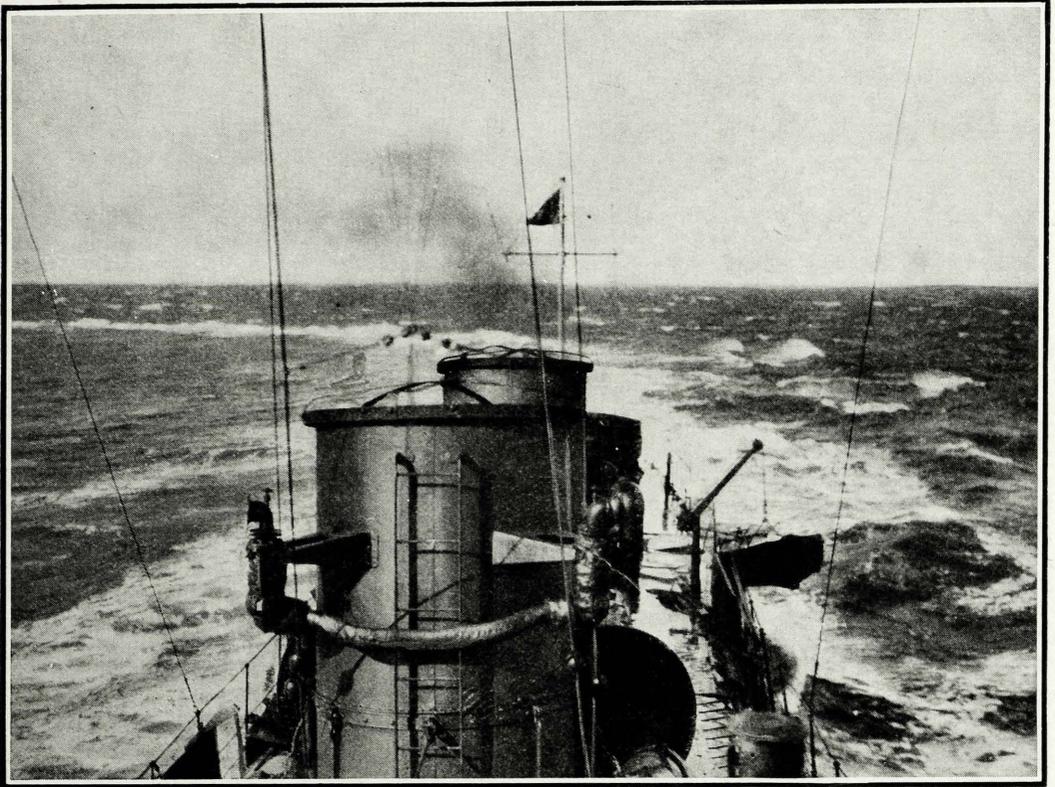
It was the intervention of the British Fleet that robbed Germany of the speedy victory upon which she had so confidently relied at the outbreak of war, and during 1915 the force under Sir John Jellicoe continued to assert an unchallenged, if only a conditional, command of the seas, and in a strategic sense to dominate the war. Behind its buckler, the ocean pathways were held, the enemy's sea trade paralysed, and the maritime communications secured from material interference and molestation. At the same time it exerted a strangle-hold upon the economic condition of Germany which, although it had not yet won the war, promised inevitably when drawn

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tighter to hasten its end victoriously for the Allies.

So far, the sea war had followed a normal and expected course. It was not surprising that after the action of January 24, when their battle-cruisers suffered discomfiture and loss, the High Sea Fleet should remain inactive. The disparity of his navy in numbers, in gun-power, and in efficiency, which had been so strikingly demonstrated, was alone sufficient to account for the decision of the Supreme War Lord not to accept the challenge to battle offered by the British Fleet. But while it was thought unwise to send the main fleet out for the purpose of engaging a superior force, the much-vaunted process of attrition, by which equality between the opposed navies was to be attained, had also completely come to naught. It was this failure, and that of the efforts by the raiding cruisers in the outer seas to destroy British commerce, which led to the adoption of an alternative scheme for starving England.

The distinctive features of the so-called submarine blockade were the sinking of passenger ships and traders without warning, and a general war upon mercantile traffic, in which neutrals as well as Allied vessels suffered. While in the use of the under-water boats to the extent of their opportunity the record of Germany's naval officers was characterised by skill and daring, their methods were marked



DODGING AN ENEMY SUBMARINE.

The zig-zag wake of a French torpedo boat in the Mediterranean.

by so little regard either for the dictates of humanity or the laws of warfare that their acts drew down upon them and their masters the reprobation of the world.

The performances of the submarines were, indeed, so startling and spectacular that there was some inclination to attach undue importance to this class of vessel. Its successes, however, were attained mainly by stealth and surprise, and not by reason of any inherent superiority as a fighting agent. Neither against warships nor in the raid against merchantmen did the submarine find it possible to accomplish any result of great military value. While there was serious loss of life, the effect of the destruction of a certain amount of useful shipping was altogether disproportionate to the effort employed. The British seamen, put upon their mettle to meet the novel menace, were not long before they devised measures of protection, and thus a truer estimate of the submarine as an instrument of naval warfare was obtained. With further development its value might be expected to increase, but it had so far proved itself no more than a useful adjunct to the battle fleet. Such lessons as could be drawn from the naval

incidents of 1915 did little to modify opinion in regard to the types of vessel which should be represented in an effective navy. Nothing yet pointed to the extinction of the battleship and battle-cruiser as the principal representatives of naval power. The advantages of superiority in speed and armament received further demonstration in the scuffles between the lighter craft on outpost duties as well as in the more important actions between larger vessels.

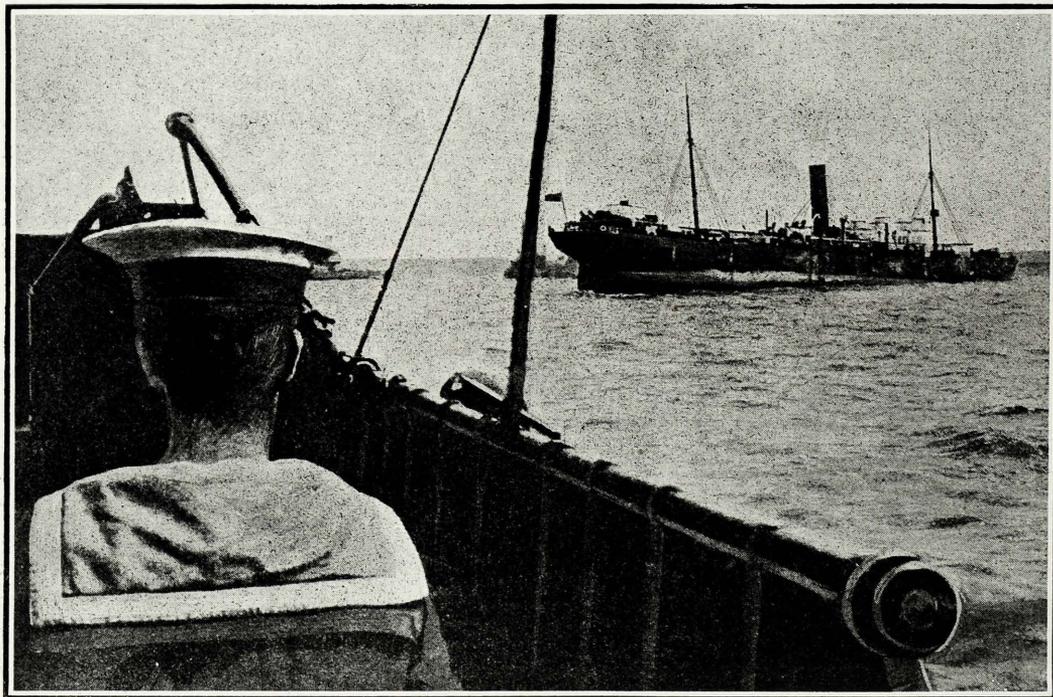
Apart from the measures taken to counteract the activity of the submarine, the British Navy supplied the requisite support upon which the whole of the operations on sea and land depended. With the assistance of the fleets of the Allies the lines of communication with the various centres of military activity in the Mediterranean were kept open, and the reinforcement of the armies by men, stores, and every provision for their continued effectiveness was maintained. In earlier chapters the great tragedy at the Dardanelles, which began with the naval action on February 19 and continued until the concluding act upon which the curtain was dropped when the last British and French soldiers left Helles on January 10

1916, was set forth. Whatever may be the historian's verdict upon the "gamble" at the Dardanelles, the performances of the seamen and soldiers must redound to their imperishable honour. The conditions under which the sea engagements took place, the landing was made, and the withdrawal effected, were quite unexampled in the record of the world's wars, and never before had there been displayed greater endurance, heroism, and valour. France, Britain, and the Dominions have every reason to be proud of the achievements of their sons on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Throughout the operations, as Sir Ian Hamilton said in his dispatches, "the Royal Navy has been father and mother to the army. Not one of us but realizes how much he owes to Vice-Admiral de Robeck; to the warships, French and British; to the destroyers, mine-sweepers, picket boats, and to all their dauntless crews, who took no thought of themselves, but risked everything to give their soldier comrades a fair run in at the enemy."

Connected with the Gallipoli adventure was the change in the administration of the Navy, which came about when Lord Fisher, on May 14, 1915, placed his resignation of the office of First Sea Lord in the hands of Mr. Asquith. It was not accepted until nearly a fortnight later, and the reason for Lord Fisher's

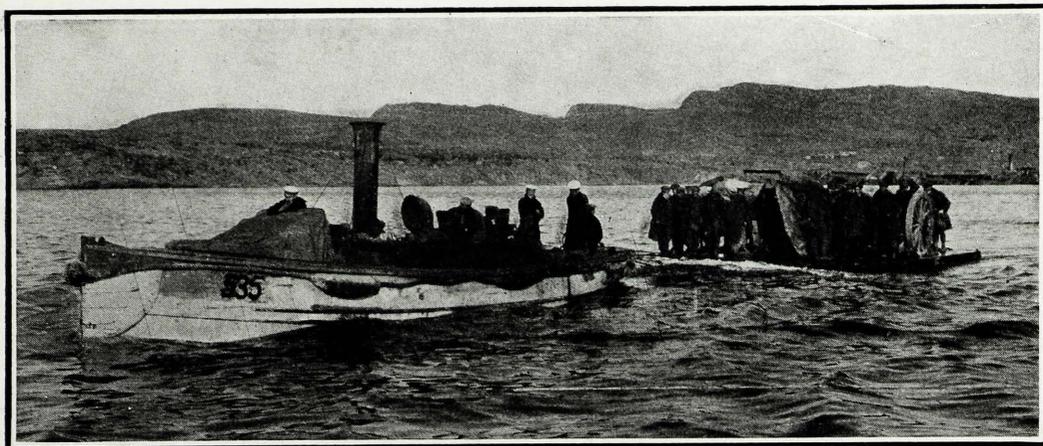
action was not explained. During the interval a change of Ministry occurred, and a Coalition Cabinet was formed, when it was found that Mr. Churchill had also left the Admiralty and had been succeeded in the office of First Lord by Mr. A. J. Balfour, with Admiral Sir Henry Jackson as First Sea Lord. For about six months afterwards Mr. Churchill held the sinecure of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, which office he resigned on November 11, 1915, and in the explanation of his conduct which he made in the House of Commons four days later he complained that, in regard to the "legitimate war gamble" at Gallipoli, as Mr. Churchill himself called it, he "did not receive from the First Sea Lord either the clear guidance before the event or the firm support afterwards which I was entitled to expect." To this charge the only reply made by Lord Fisher was the following statement next day in the House of Lords:

"I ask leave of your lordships to make a statement. Certain references were made to me in a speech delivered yesterday by Mr. Churchill. I have been 61 years in the service of my country, and I leave my record in the hands of my countrymen. The Prime Minister said yesterday that Mr. Churchill had said one or two things which he had better not have



ANSWERING THE "S.O.S." MESSAGE.

British torpedo-boat destroyer going to the assistance of a steamer torpedoed by a German submarine.



THE BRITISH EVACUATION OF GALLIPOLI.

Big guns leaving Suvla Bay in broad daylight.

said, and that he had necessarily and naturally left unsaid some things which will have to be said. I am content to wait. It is unfitting to make personal explanations affecting national interests when my country is in the midst of a great war."

To what extent responsibility for the fiasco at the Dardanelles rested upon these two men, or to what degree it was shared by others, was not made clear. In the new Board of Admiralty one other change was made, the Duke of Devonshire succeeding Mr. George Lambert, M.P., as Civil Lord. Vice-Admiral H. F. Oliver remained as Chief of the War Staff, and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Arthur Wilson also continued to be associated with the Admiralty in an advisory capacity.

In one notable respect, the change at the Admiralty was followed by a complete change in policy. During the Churchill-Fisher administration, information on the subject of the whereabouts of the Fleet, its constitution and movements, had been consistently refused. Every measure necessary to maintain secrecy in regard to these matters was taken, and the actual situation of the Fleet was, as Mr. Churchill picturesquely phrased it, "lost to view amid the Northern mists." About two months after Mr. Balfour became First Lord, the Archbishop of York was permitted to visit the Fleet and to supply an account of his fortnight's stay with the seamen to *The Times*. After this exception had been made, excursions to the various naval bases became frequent, it was understood at the suggestion of the Foreign Office, and not only Allied but neutral journalists and other representatives of foreign countries were taken on board the

vessels and shown the naval establishments at these places. Information thus obtained was published in the form of articles in the world's Press, and to a large extent the veil of mystery which had enveloped the principal British naval force in the war was withdrawn.

There were many indications that during 1915 the strength of the British Fleet both absolutely and relatively had undergone considerable augmentation. Not only did the journalists who visited the naval bases mention the names of vessels which had been under construction, but in official dispatches it was made evident that new classes and types of ships had been added to the Fleet. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, the official "Eye-Witness" at the Dardanelles, was permitted to describe several types of vessels of the monitor class and other ships which had been adapted by modifications of construction to meet the submarine menace, but Admiral Bacon, in his dispatch of the operations off the Belgian coast, mentioned several such vessels by name. Mr. Churchill, in his apologia, also spoke of his successor as First Lord finding himself, week by week, upborne upon an ever-swelling tide of deliveries of craft of all kinds, and of a kind best suited to the purposes of this war, as a consequence of Lord Fisher's return to the Admiralty in 1914. No man, he said, had ever been able to put war purpose into the design of a ship like Lord Fisher. Then in regard to the Grand Fleet, there was no doubt that during the period under review its standard of efficiency was considerably improved by constant sea training and frequent gun practice. The tangible results of the Navy's ubiquitous

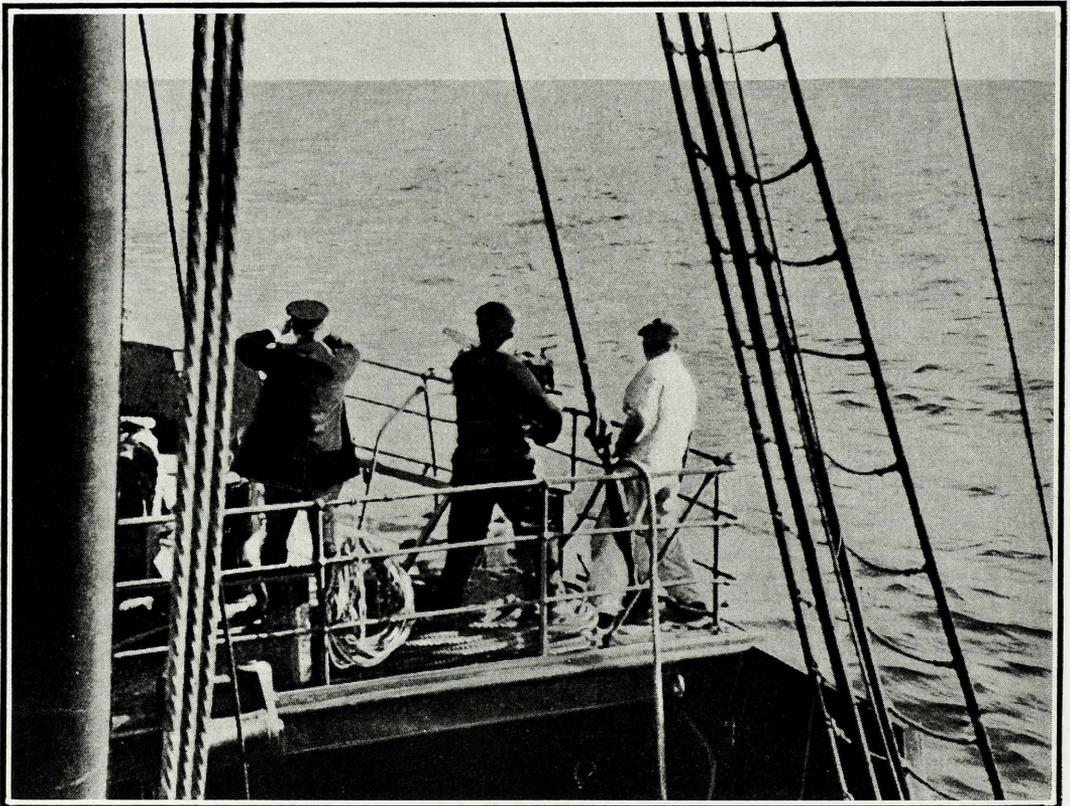
and all-powerful activity were felt in the inviolability of our shores and in the unaffected conditions of the daily lives of the people. Not always, however, was this sufficiently recognized, for, as Lord Crewe said in Parliament, on February 15, 1916, "we had come to take the protection of the Navy so much as a matter of course, like the shining of the sun or the falling of the rain, that we sometimes forgot to be grateful." A tribute was manifestly due, however, to the endurance, fortitude, and skill of the seamen, who were severely tried, not only by the exceptional vigilance demanded owing to the stern necessity for perpetual watch and ward, but by the strain of the constant climatic discomforts and adverse weather conditions of service by night and day in the North Sea.

In justice to our seamen also, the tremendous power of the Fleet to which they were opposed should not be under-valued. When the war began, the naval strength of Germany was only second to our own, and her capacity for ship and gun construction was nearly on an equality with that of this country. It was made manifest in many ways that the increase

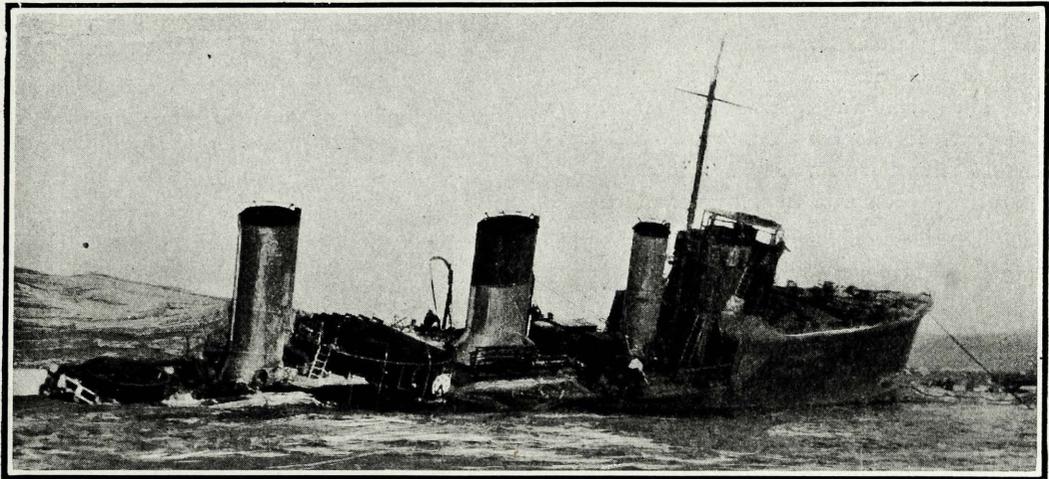
in the striking power of their navy during 1915 was not to be estimated by the use made of it. Germany had not relinquished the hope of smashing our naval power, but the selected moment did not arrive. So long as her navy remained undestroyed, there could be no relaxation in vigilance, for there were always risks and possibilities, and it was essential, therefore, to make every possible use of our own shipbuilding and engineering resources. Germany mocked the world when she said that she was fighting for the freedom of the seas. It was for the subjugation of those who had really made the seas free that she was fighting—and intriguing—and no other nation had enjoyed the freedom of the seas in the past more than she had herself. What kind of freedom other nations would enjoy if her greed for power were satisfied the action of her various agents fully demonstrated.

The naval aspect of the war at the end of 1915 was made clear in a letter which Mr. Balfour addressed to an American correspondent. He said:

If anyone desires to know whether the British Fleet has during the last year proved itself worthy of its



ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR ENEMY SUBMARINES.
Officers on the bridge of a French war vessel in the Mediterranean.



BRITISH DESTROYER STRANDED IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

The port side of the H.M.S. Louis, which ran aground during a south-westerly gale.

traditions, there is a very simple method of arriving at the truth. There are seven, and only seven, functions which a fleet can perform :

It may drive the enemy's commerce off the seas.

It may protect its own commerce.

It may render the enemy's fleet impotent.

It may make the transfer of enemy troops across the sea impossible, whether for attack or defence.

It may transport its own troops where it will.

It may secure their supplies, and (in fitting circumstances) it may assist their operations.

All these functions have so far been successfully performed by the British Fleet.

During 1915, therefore, the British and Allied Fleets fulfilled their mission, and proved that the potency of sea power was not an illusion.

After the battle of the Dogger Bank on January 24, 1915, and largely as a result of that engagement, there was a period of comparative quiet up to the end of the year. Undoubtedly the severe drubbing received by the German battle-cruisers, and the light cruisers and torpedo craft accompanying them, was one of the main causes for this. The result of the action, moreover, might have been more decisive had it not been for the unfortunate shot which wrecked one of the Lion's feed tanks and placed her out of action. It must have been obvious to the Germans that this sort of raiding was much too risky to be profitable. That this was fully recognized seems to be borne out by the removal, which was reported soon afterwards, of Admiral von Ingenohl from his command of the High Sea Fleet. A favourite of the Kaiser, this officer took charge of the Fleet in January, 1913, having previously been Commander-in-Chief in China. Earlier still he had commanded

the Emperor's yacht. His successor in the High Sea Fleet was Vice-Admiral von Pohl, who, as Chief of the Admiralty Staff, had signed the declaration of the waters around the British Isles as a "war zone" as from February 18, 1915, and it may have been for the purpose of supervising the actual carrying into effect of this policy that he was placed in command of the Fleet. Although it was not so called, the British counterstroke to this attempt of Germany to "starve England into submission" by submarine warfare on merchant shipping took the shape of a blockade of the enemy's territory, with the object, as far as possible, of preventing commodities of any kind from reaching or leaving him. These two blockades formed a substantial, if not the main, part of the naval operations in the North Sea and adjacent waters during 1915.

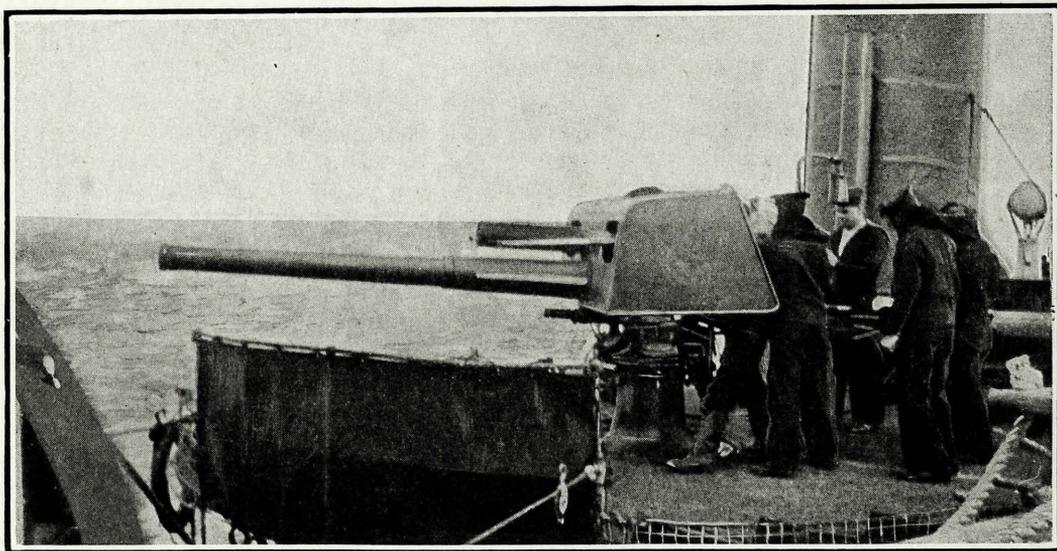
The control which the British Fleet maintained in these waters was of a very effective character, and remarkably complete. No single enemy ship, apart from submarines, was enabled to come within reach of the coasts of Great Britain, nor, so far as was known, did any succeed in breaking through the naval guard into the Atlantic. The measures taken soon after Lord Fisher's return to office to declare the whole of the North Sea a military area, the reduction of navigation lights, the stoppage of fishing in certain localities, and the closing of East Coast ports to trawlers of foreign registry, proved their worth in enabling the Fleet under Sir John Jellicoe more efficiently to regulate traffic and to check hostile or suspicious movements. Journalists who visited

a naval base in the autumn of 1915, and boarded certain warships, were informed that the Grand Fleet was assisted day and night by 2,300 auxiliary craft, mine-sweepers, patrol boats, and the like. The constitution of this vast auxiliary organization lessened the strain upon the officers, and men of the main fighting Fleet at the same time that it strengthened their grip upon the enemy by the consistent watch on his outlets. As Mr. Frederick Palmer, the American author, wrote after his visit afloat in September, 1915, the "hardest part of the war for the Navy was the early days, when the Fleet was continually at sea looking for battle. Now, securely ready, it could steam out to action immediately the patrols, which are continually sweeping the North Sea, reported any signs of the enemy."

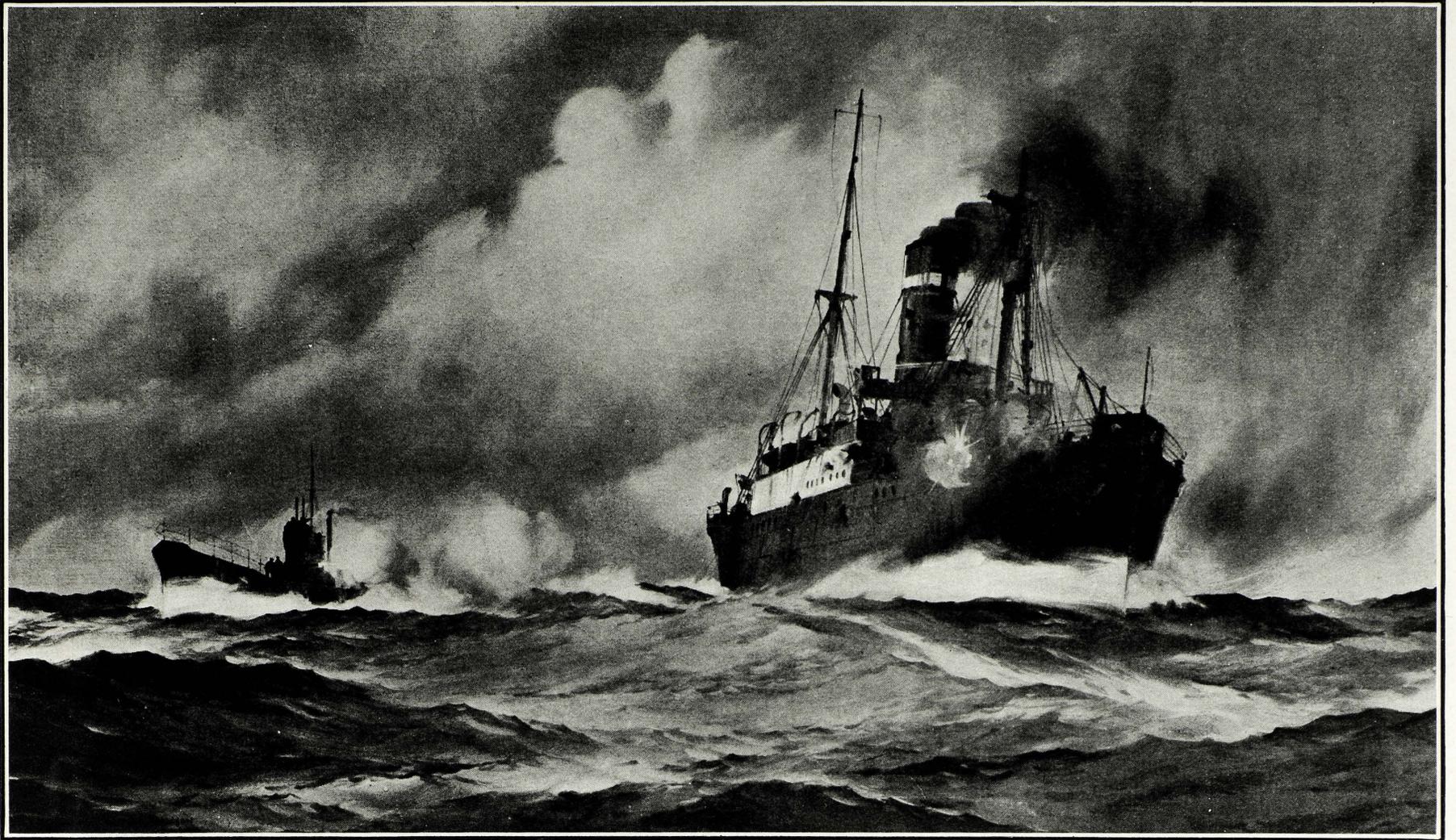
Two losses of armed merchant cruisers which occurred early in 1915 illustrated the arduous and perilous character of patrol service in bad weather. On January 25 it was officially announced that the *Viknor*, formerly the cruising yacht *Viking*, which had been taken into the Navy and commissioned on December 12 by Commander E. O. Ballantyne, R.N., had been missing for some days, and must be accepted as lost with all hands. Bodies and wreckage which were washed ashore on the north coast of Ireland indicated that the vessel had sunk in that locality, either on account of the rough weather which prevailed at the time, or probably by striking a mine after being carried out of her course. On February 24

it was officially stated that the *Clan McNaughton*, formerly of the *Clan* steamship line, which had been commissioned for patrol duties, had been missing since February 3, and no further news of her was received. Unsuccessful search was made, and wreckage, supposed to be portions of the ship, was discovered, pointing to the probability that a mine had destroyed the vessel, although this could not be definitely established. About 500 officers and men perished in these two ships. The submarine also constituted a menace to the patrol service, but whether due to the vigilance displayed, or because the efforts of the "U" boats were mainly directed to the attack on commerce, the loss from this cause was comparatively negligible. The only ship reported sunk by submarine while engaged on patrol duty was the *Bayano*, armed merchant cruiser, which was torpedoed at 5 a.m. on March 11 off Corsewell Point, in the Firth of Clyde. About 200 of her crew, including Commander H. C. Carr, in command, were lost, the vessel going down within four minutes of being struck.

Three months later, on the morning of June 10, the British Navy lost its first torpedo boats to be sunk in the war, the cause being a submarine attack. It was officially announced that these boats, Nos. 10 and 12, were operating off the East Coast at the time, and only one submarine was mentioned. The survivors were 41 in number, the complement of each boat being about 35. Among those



IN THE NORTH SEA.
Manning a quick-firer during patrol work.



ATTACKING COMMERCE IN BRITISH WATERS.
A German submarine shelling a British merchant vessel on her way to an English port.

lost was Lieutenant Edward W. Bulteel, R.N., the commander of No. 12. The torpedo boats belonged to a class of thirty-six, originally called "coastal destroyers," which were built between 1906 and 1909. They were of 215 tons displacement, and had a speed of 26 knots with oil fuel. Although they were constantly at sea in all weathers, the torpedo boats of the British Navy were practically immune from mishaps, and during the first eighteen months of the war Nos. 10 and 12 were the only boats reported lost by enemy action. Most of them were known to have been employed upon escort duties, and this absence of casualties in transportation testified to the skill and efficiency of the service. Two other torpedo mishaps were also officially reported in June. On the 20th the cruiser Roxburgh, Captain B. M. Chambers, was struck by a torpedo from a submarine off the Firth of Forth, but the damage was not serious, and the vessel steamed into port with no casualties. On the 30th the destroyer Lightning was similarly damaged and reached harbour, but fourteen of her crew were missing after the occurrence. The Lightning was one of the oldest class of British destroyers, built in 1894-5.

The fighting which took place in the North Sea, as will be understood from what has been already said, was confined to small affairs between outpost vessels, in which the British craft usually held their own, though not at times without loss. On May 1 there was a series of such affairs in the neighbourhood of the Galloper and North Hinder lightships. In the forenoon the destroyer Recruit, an old boat of the 30-knot type, built in 1896, was torpedoed and sunk by a submarine. Four officers and twenty-one men were saved by the trawler Daisy. About 3 p.m. two German torpedo boats attacked a division of British patrol vessels, consisting of the Barbados, Lieutenant Sir James Domville, Bart., R.N. (commanding the division), Columbia, Miura, and Chirsit, under the command of Royal Naval Reserve officers. The German boats approached the division from the westward, and began the action without hoisting their colours. After an engagement of a quarter of an hour the enemy broke off the fight. The Columbia was sunk by a torpedo, and of her crew of 17 only one man was saved. Lieutenant-Commander W. H. Hawthorn, R.N.R., who commanded her, was stated by the Admiralty to have displayed gallantry and good seaman-

ship on many occasions. On the Germans breaking off, the direction of their retreat was communicated to a division of the Third Destroyer Flotilla, composed of the Laforey, Leonidas, Lawford, and Lark, which chased the enemy, overhauled them, and sunk both the torpedo boats after a running fight of about one hour. Two German officers and 44 men were rescued, and there were no casualties on the British side. Small though these actions were in importance, they revealed the traditional qualities of determination and devotion to duty of the British seaman. Sir James Domville, on being attacked by the German torpedo craft, commanded his division of weak fishing vessels with skill and gallantry. He remained at the wheel of his own boat after the skipper had been wounded, and personally worked the helm. The Admiralty announced that generally he handled his ship in a seamanlike manner under heavy fire, to avoid being torpedoed. On the other hand, there was afforded a further illustration of the callousness of German methods in the treatment accorded to the crew of the trawler Columbia after she was sunk. A lieutenant and two men were taken on board one of the German torpedo boats, and when the latter were afterwards sunk the Germans, on being asked what had become of these British seamen, said that they were below, and time was short. In contrast to this action of the Germans in leaving their prisoners to drown was the strenuous effort made by the British seamen to rescue their enemies; 46 men of the 59 in the German boats were saved, and Lieutenant Hartnoll, R.N., even went into the water himself to rescue a German.

Just as the German submarines during the month of June gave evidence of their activity by the torpedoing of the Roxburgh and Lightning, so in the following month the continued work of British submarines was again illustrated. The only clash of arms in the North Sea during July was the sinking of a German destroyer of the "G 196" class, on the 26th, by a British submarine under the command of Commander C. P. Talbot. The submarine was on patrol at the time off the enemy's coast, and although neither full particulars nor the number of the British submarine were published officially, the incident bore a resemblance to that nine months earlier, when Commander Max K. Horton sunk the German destroyer "S 116" off the Ems. Commander Talbot



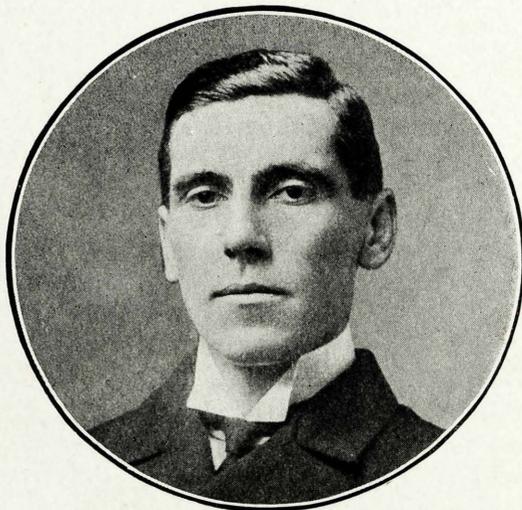
[Russell

COMMANDER C. P. TALBOT,

Commanding a British submarine which sank a German destroyer in the North Sea, July 26, 1915.

was afterwards awarded the D.S.O. for his achievement. He had already been favourably mentioned in dispatches for his services in command of submarine "E 6" for services in action with the enemy in the Heligoland Bight.

In August there was a renewal of "liveliness" on the part of the Germans in the North Sea, which mainly centred round the doings of the auxiliary cruiser *Meteor*. This vessel was formerly a Hamburg-Amerika liner. During June she came into prominence as a commerce raider in the Baltic. Having been equipped with mines, and the means to lay them, she "broke through the British forces," according to the German account, on the night of August 7. Next day she met the British armed patrol vessel *Ramsey*, commanded by Lieutenant H. Raby, R.N.R., which was sunk with the loss of half her crew of about a hundred, including the commander. The Germans stated that they destroyed the *Ramsey* "after a splendid manoeuvre," and according to unofficial accounts this manoeuvre consisted in the *Meteor* disguising herself as an ordinary merchant ship, with masked guns and torpedo tubes, and flying Russian colours. The *Meteor* subsequently burned the Danish merchant vessel *Jason*, off Horn's Reef, and later transferred the crew of that ship and the survivors from the *Ramsey* to a Norwegian steamer. As regards her minelaying activities, a wireless message from Germany to the Sayville Station, U.S.A., stated that she succeeded

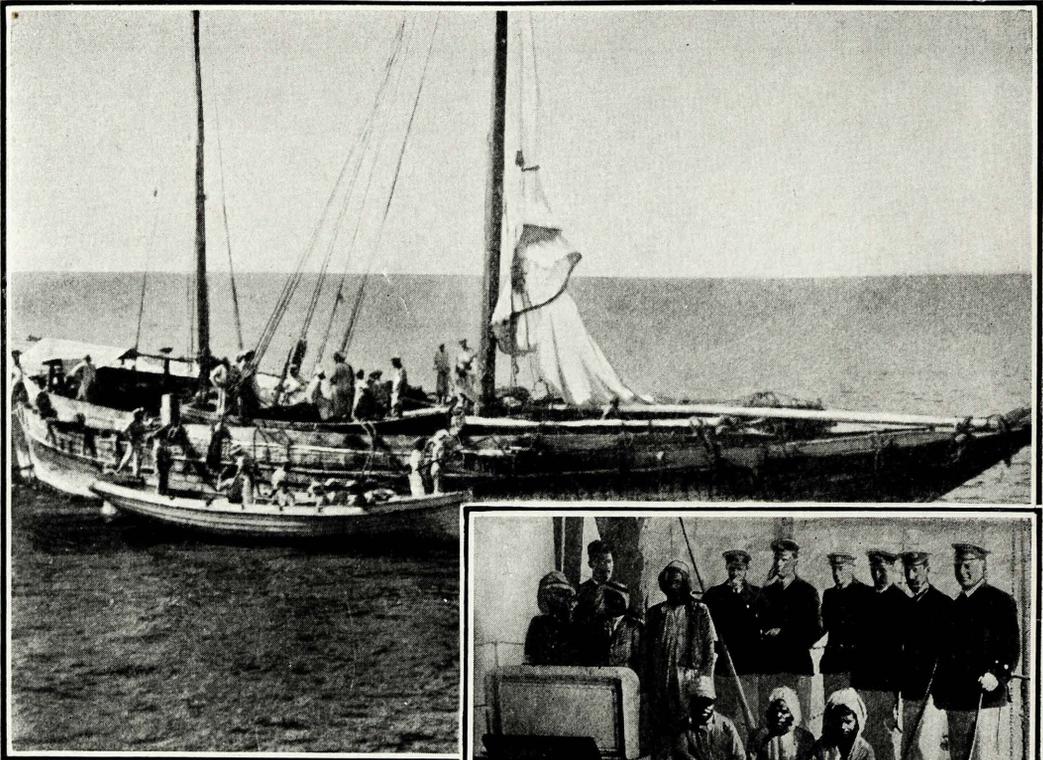


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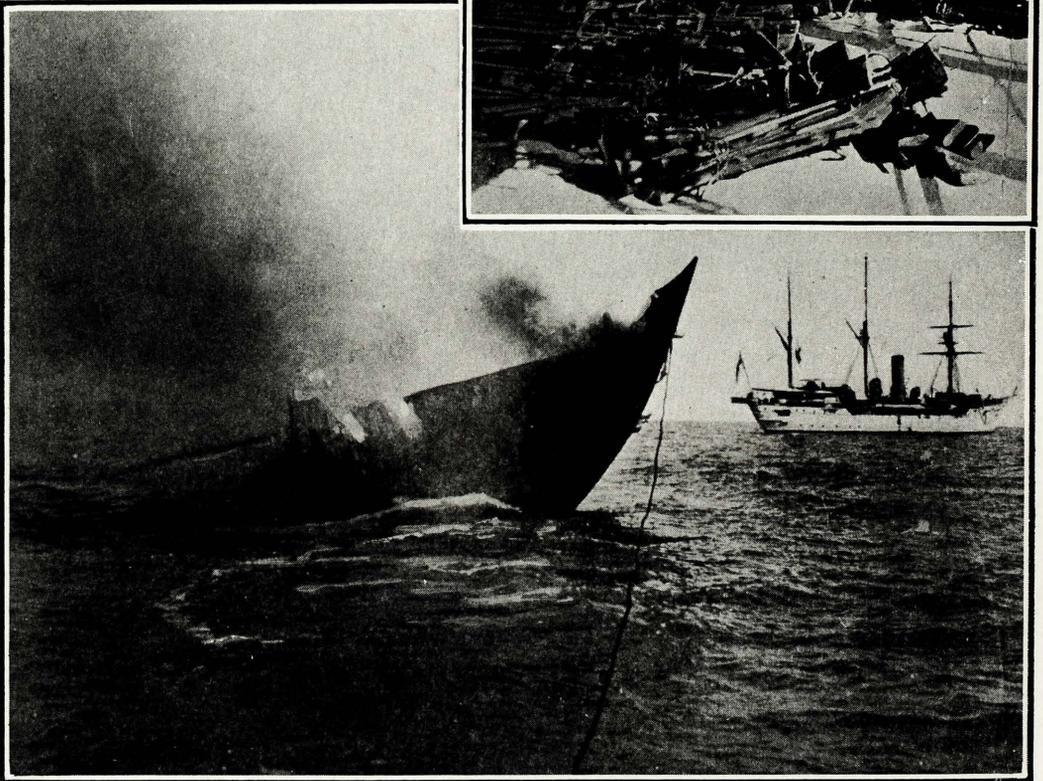
CAPTAIN E. P. C. BACK,

Commanding the British cruiser *Natal*, destroyed by internal explosion on December 30, 1915.

in reaching the Orkneys and in laying a new field in that neighbourhood. Whether this was so or not, the British destroyer *Lynx* had the misfortune to strike one of her mines on August 9, and was sunk with the loss of about seventy officers and men, this total including Commander John F. H. Cole and Lieutenant Brian Thornbury, the commander and first lieutenant of the vessel. Four other officers and twenty-two men were saved. The *Lynx* was a comparatively new destroyer, of the "K" class, launched in 1913, and up to the time war began she had been serving in the Fourth Flotilla, attached to the Home Fleet. At length, on August 9, a stop was put to the brief but exciting career of the *Meteor*. A squadron of British auxiliary cruisers got on her track, but the German commander, cunning to the last, was not going to risk a fight with superior force. Before the cruisers could overtake his vessel, he blew her up by detonating her remaining mines, having first ordered the crew to take to the boats. They were only some fifteen miles from the German coast, and succeeded in making good their escape. Thus ended a romantic adventure of the kind which had been rather scarce up to that time. It was thought at first that the *Meteor* started out on a similar mission to that of the *Königin Luise*—also a Hamburg-Amerika liner—which attempted on the first day of the war to get into the Thames estuary and strew a number of mines, but was caught and sunk off the Suffolk coast. Another and equally plausible theory



British Naval men boarding an Arab dhow in order to search for contraband.



The captured dhow on fire and sinking after a British war vessel had confiscated its contraband.
Centre picture: Prisoners and rifles on board a British war vessel.

ARAB SMUGGLERS IN THE PERSIAN GULF.



**GERMAN COAST
DEFENCE IN FLANDERS.**

**Bottom picture: A big gun in
position on the coast.**

was that she hoped to break through the North Sea guard and reach the trade routes to begin commerce raiding, as the *Berlin* had tried to do some months earlier, but without avail, being driven to take refuge at Trondhjem. Whatever her object, however, the measure of success the *Meteor* attained under a dashing and enterprising captain highly pleased the Germans, and when the crew returned to Kiel they received a great ovation, in which Prince Henry of Prussia took part.

The British Fleet suffered another misfortune in the same week as the *Meteor*'s exploits occurred. This was the torpedoing of the auxiliary cruiser *India* off the island of Hellevoer, near Bodö, at the entrance to the West Fiord, Norway. Commander W. G. A. Kennedy, with 21 other officers and 120 men of the ship were saved, but 10 officers and 150 men lost their lives. In attacking the *India* at the spot at which she was torpedoed, about two and a quarter miles from land, the German submarine violated international law, and the Norwegian Government sent a protest to Berlin on account of this disregard of neutral rights in connexion with what had always been maintained to be Norwegian territorial waters.

In the last four months of 1915 there were

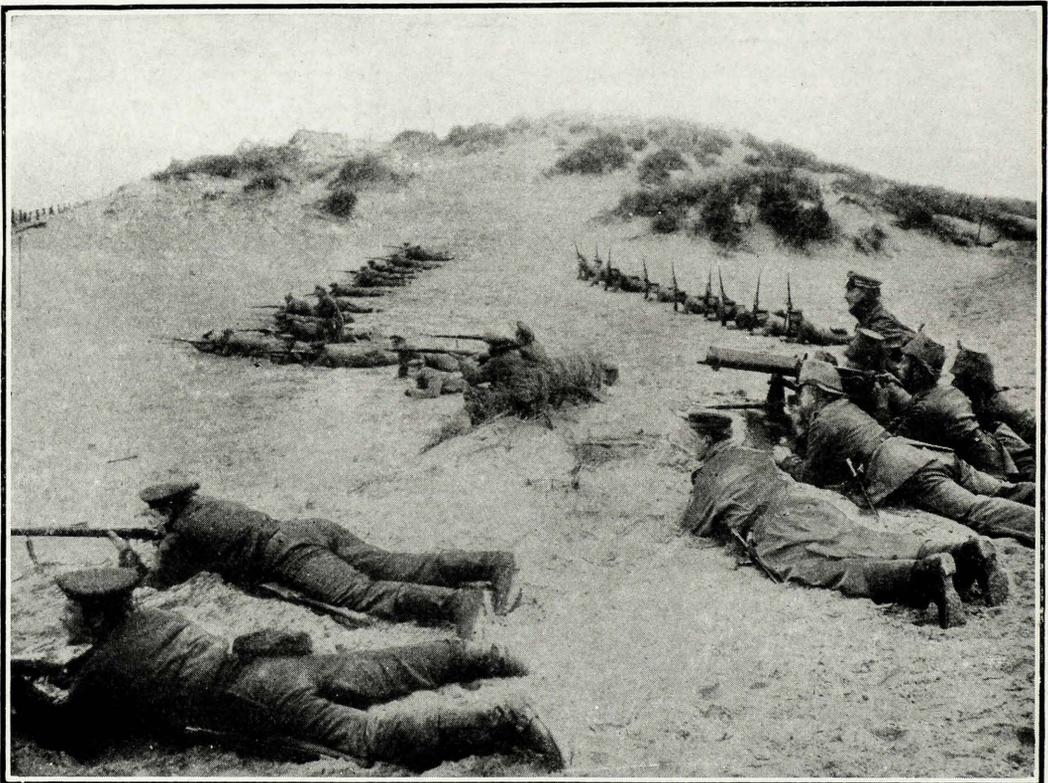
fewer events of martial significance to record in connexion with affairs in the North Sea. The stranding and loss of the cruiser *Argyll*, on October 28, emphasized afresh the perils to which the seamen are constantly liable apart from those connected with the action of the enemy. The *Argyll*, under the command of Captain J. C. Tancred, grounded off the east coast of Scotland, and became a total wreck, but fortunately her crew were saved. More deplorable, on account of the sacrifice of life involved, was the blowing up of the cruiser *Natal* on December 30, by an internal explosion. The vessel was in harbour at the time, and Captain E. P. C. Back, Commander John Hutchings, 23 other officers, and 380 men were killed or drowned.

We may now turn to a very important and highly interesting phase of the Navy's work in Home waters during 1915, the support given to the Army operating in the region of the Belgian coast. The early work of the naval flotilla under Rear-Admiral the Hon. H. L. A. Hood has already been described (Vol. III., p. 154). After the bombardment of Zeebrugge on November 23, 1915, other bombardments followed at frequent intervals. On December 1 airmen cooperated in an attack on Zeebrugge. On the 10th the Germans admitted that British

warships had opposed an advance attempted in the region of Nieuport. On the 16th the monitor squadron, repaired and refitted after its arduous and hazardous work during October and November, was back off the coast bombarding Westende. The opening of the new year saw no slackening of the naval efforts, and the airmen from the Dunkirk station especially distinguished themselves. Their cooperation took the shape of spotting the fall of the shells from the warships, and also of bomb attacks on objects of military importance. On February 12 and 16 an unprecedented stroke was delivered on submarine bases, railway stations, gun positions, and military objects in the Bruges-Ostend-Zeebrugge district, when 34 and 48 aeroplanes respectively made attacks under the direction of Wing-Commander C. R. Samson, assisted by Wing-Commander A. M. Longmore and Squadron-Commanders J. C. Porte, I. T. Courtney, and C. E. Rathborne. Never before had so many machines been employed together for an attack of the kind, and as a spectacle this arrival of clouds of aircraft over the enemy's positions was a brilliant and dramatic one. There were several air attacks on a smaller scale against the Mole at Zeebrugge, submarine

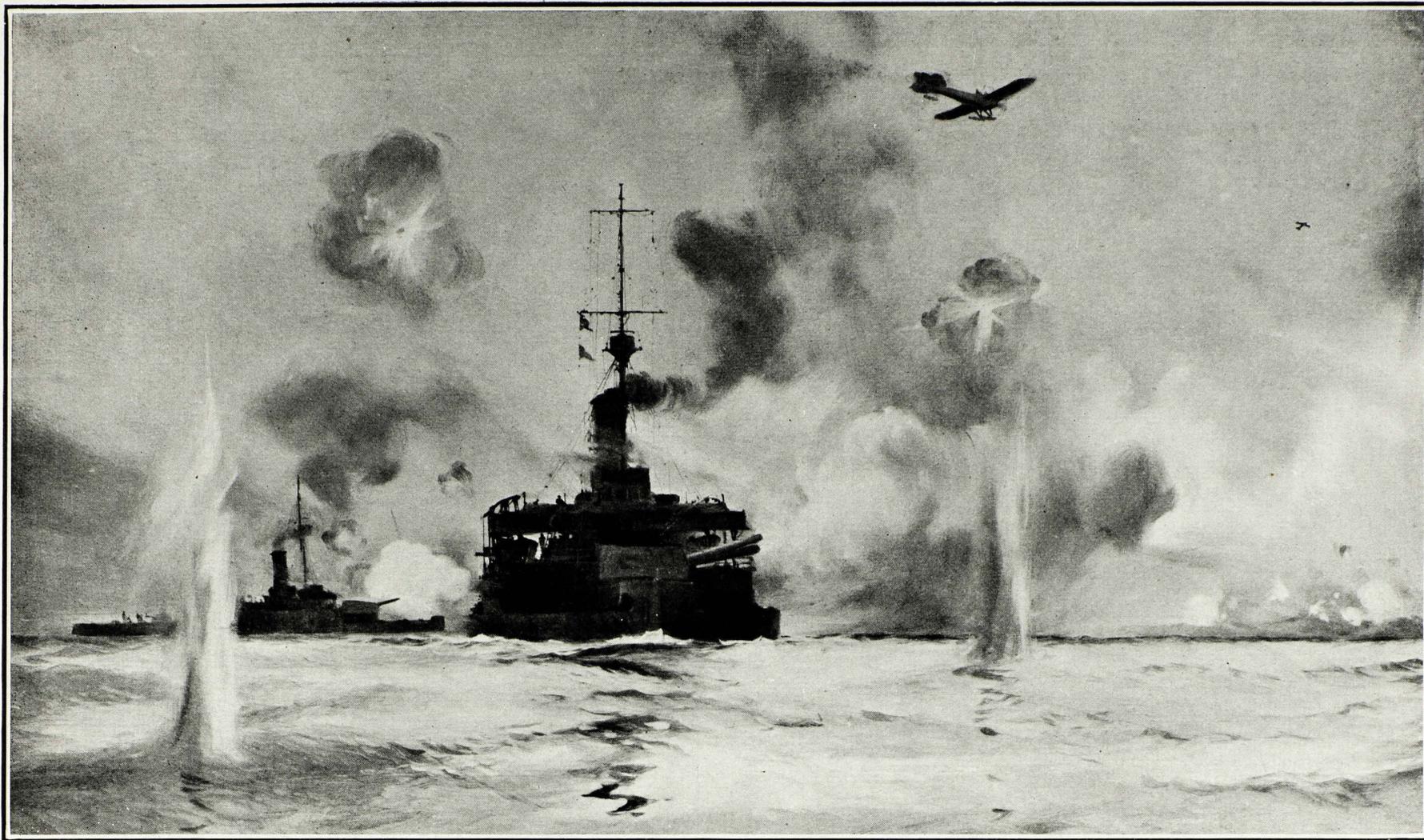
works at Hoboken, near Antwerp, and the like. Operations by the warships were also continued as occasion demanded. On April 3 some German minelayers, whilst endeavouring to extend the minefields off Zeebrugge, were reported to have been fired upon and driven into port. A month later, on May 7, the first loss of a naval vessel off the Belgian coast occurred when the destroyer *Maori*, Commander B. W. Barrow, was struck by a mine and foundered. The crew took to their boats as the destroyer was sinking. Her sister-ship, the *Crusader*, Lieutenant-Commander T. K. Maxwell, was in company, and lowered her boats to assist in picking up the *Maori's* crew, but before this could be done the Germans opened fire from shore batteries, and the *Crusader*, after being under fire for one hour and a half, had to leave her boats and retire. In all, seven officers and 88 men were taken prisoners into Zeebrugge.

In April, 1915, Rear-Admiral Hood was succeeded as Admiral Commanding the Dover Patrol by Vice-Admiral R. H. S. Bacon. Under the new commander, the vessels in this force were destined to play a prominent part in the Allied advance on land which developed in

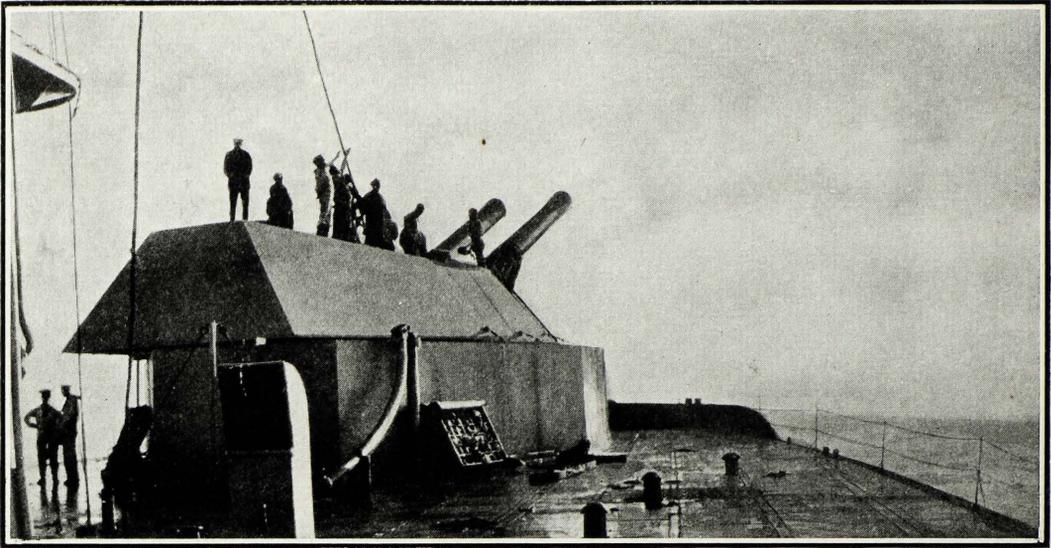


GERMAN COAST DEFENCE IN FLANDERS.

German marines sniping on sand dunes.



BRITISH WARSHIPS SHELLING THE BELGIAN COAST BETWEEN NIEUPOORT AND WESTENDE.

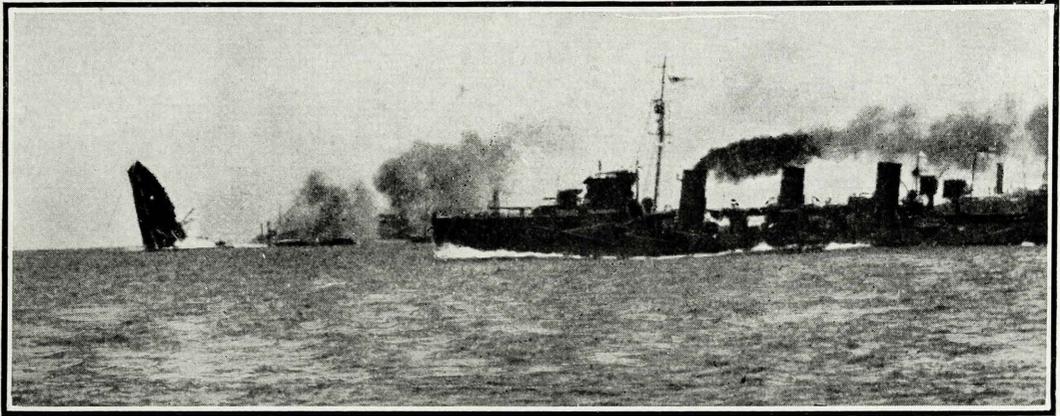


OFF THE BELGIAN COAST.
The gun turret in a British monitor.

September and October. On the evening of August 22 Vice-Admiral Bacon left England with a force of no less than 80 vessels. In this total were included several new monitors, the existence of which in use in home waters was officially revealed for the first time. One group was named the Lord Clive, Sir John Moore, Prince Rupert, General Craufurd, Marshal Ney, and Prince Eugene, and besides this class with soldier names there were others with numbers like the M 25. There were also trawlers and drifters, for mine-sweeping and other duties, and a new class of "fleet messengers," understood to be fast motor-boats. With this strangely-assorted force, organized and equipped since war broke out, attacks with important results were made on six occasions, and on eight other days bombardments, on a smaller scale, of fortified positions took place. The damage inflicted on the enemy was known to have included the sinking of one torpedo-boat, two submarines, and one large dredger, the total destruction of three military factories and damage to a fourth, extensive damage to the locks at Zeebrugge and the destruction of 13 guns of large calibre, in addition to the destruction of two ammunition depôts and several military storehouses, observation stations and signalling posts, damage to wharves, moles, and other secondary places. The personnel of Vice-Admiral Bacon's command was made up largely of officers of the Royal Naval Reserve, whose fleet training had necessarily been scant, and by men whose work in life had

previously been that of deep sea fishermen, but the manner in which all overcame the difficulties attendant on the cruising in company by day and night under war conditions of such a large fleet was highly commended by the Admiral, and the results, he said, showed how deeply sea adaptability is ingrained in the seafaring race of these islands. Three vessels, the armed yacht *Sanda*, drifter *Great Heart*, and mine-sweeper *Brighton Queen* were lost in the operations, and the casualties were 34 killed and 24 wounded, which were proportionately small considering how the ships were constantly exposed to gunfire, aircraft, mines, and submarines off an enemy's coast.

The nature of the work performed by the Navy in the North Sea in 1915 was valuable and effective. Except on the Belgian coast, it did not include any offensive operations, and it was rather of a useful and laborious character. Reference has already been made to the expansion of the Fleet to meet the heavy calls upon it. Not only drifters and trawlers for mine-sweeping, armed yachts and other vessels for patrol duties, motor-boats for dispatch carrying and the like, but many entirely new vessels of novel design were introduced. Indeed, throughout the year the Fleet was being increased considerably in numbers and, even to a larger extent, in material strength. In addition to the vessels under construction when war broke out, which were completed and passed into service under Sir John Jellicoe, there was a vast fleet of new ships laid down



THE LAST MOMENTS OF A TORPEDOED TRANSPORT.

Sinking of the French liner *Carthage* by a German submarine off Cape Helles.

since the war. Not all these additional ships, of course, joined the naval force in the North Sea, but it must have been due to the general augmentation of the Fleet there that the large demand upon what Mr. Churchill called the "surplus ships" for the undertaking at the Dardanelles could be met without the strain which would otherwise have been caused being felt.

The work accomplished by the destroyers in the North Sea was beyond all praise. Under conditions of exceptional severity and extreme discomfort, they performed their allotted tasks with success. To them fell the protection of the trawlers and drifters sweeping constantly for mines, or employed upon outpost duty, and the immunity from mishap of the big ships of the Grand Fleet during their periodical cruises and sweeps through the North Sea was also a tribute to the vigilance of the torpedo craft in attendance. The work of all those craft, too, which come under the generic term of "auxiliaries" has received commendation which was well deserved. In "The Fringes of the Fleet," Mr. Rudyard Kipling wrote :

Words of command may have changed a little, the tools are certainly more complex, but the spirit of the new crews who come to the old job is utterly unchanged. It is the same fierce, hard-living, heavy-handed, very cunning service out of which the Navy as we know it to-day was born. It is called indifferently the Trawler and Auxiliary Fleet. It is chiefly composed of fishermen, but it takes in everyone who may have maritime tastes—from retired admirals to the son of the sea-cook. It exists for the benefit of the traffic and the annoyance of the enemy. Its doings are recorded by flags stuck into charts: its casualties are buried in obscure corners of the newspapers. The Grand Fleet knows it slightly; the restless light cruisers who chaperon it from the background are more intimate; the destroyers working off unlighted coasts over unmarked shoals come, as you might say, in direct contact with it; the submarine alternately praises and—since one periscope is very

like another—curses its activities; but the steady procession of traffic in home waters, liner and tramp, six every sixty minutes, blesses it altogether.

As to the spirit of the men, in spite of the hardships they endured and the grey dulness of their lives in waiting and watching for an enemy who remained sheltered behind the protection of his fortified bases, the Archbishop of York bore striking testimony in describing in *The Times* on July 28, 1915, his ten days' visit to the Fleet. Said Dr. Lang: "Their one longing is to meet the German ships and sink them; and yet month after month the German ships decline the challenge. . . . Officers and men have all the responsibilities of war without the thrill and excitement of battle. Day by day they have to be ready for action. Leave is almost impossible. . . . Yet in spite of all they are full of *cheerfulness*. Every captain had the same word—nothing could be better than the spirit of the whole crew."

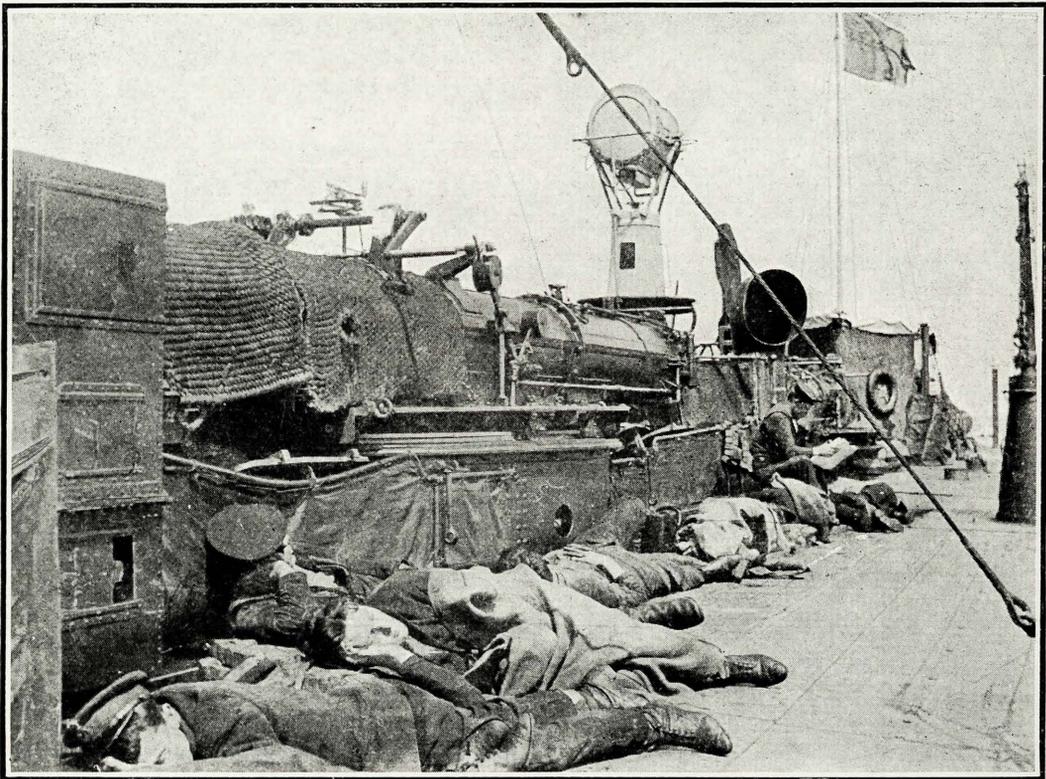
In December, 1914, Admiral von Tirpitz proclaimed, in an interview with an American journalist, the intention of Germany to employ submarines as a weapon against British merchant vessels. What would America say, he asked, if Germany were to declare a submarine war against all hostile merchant vessels? Asked by the interviewer if he was considering such measures, the Admiral replied: "Why not? England wishes to starve us: we might play the same game and encircle England, torpedoing every British ship, every ship belonging to the Allies that approached any British or Scottish port, and thereby cut off the greater part of England's food supply." The threat thus revealed was accepted with

enthusiasm in Germany, and it was eventually formulated in the shape of a "warning to peaceful shipping," published in the Imperial Gazette on February 2, 1915, and of a declaration of the waters around Great Britain and Ireland as a "war zone," published in the same journal on February 4. In the one case, merchant ships were urgently warned against approaching British ports, since the German Navy was to act with all the military means at its disposal against the transports which were about to convey to France large numbers of troops and great quantities of war material, and the traders "may be confused with ships serving warlike purposes." In the other case, Vice-Admiral von Pohl issued a long statement charging the Allies, and especially Great Britain, with illegal acts and violations of international law, which it was asserted had been the real cause of the German proclamation.*

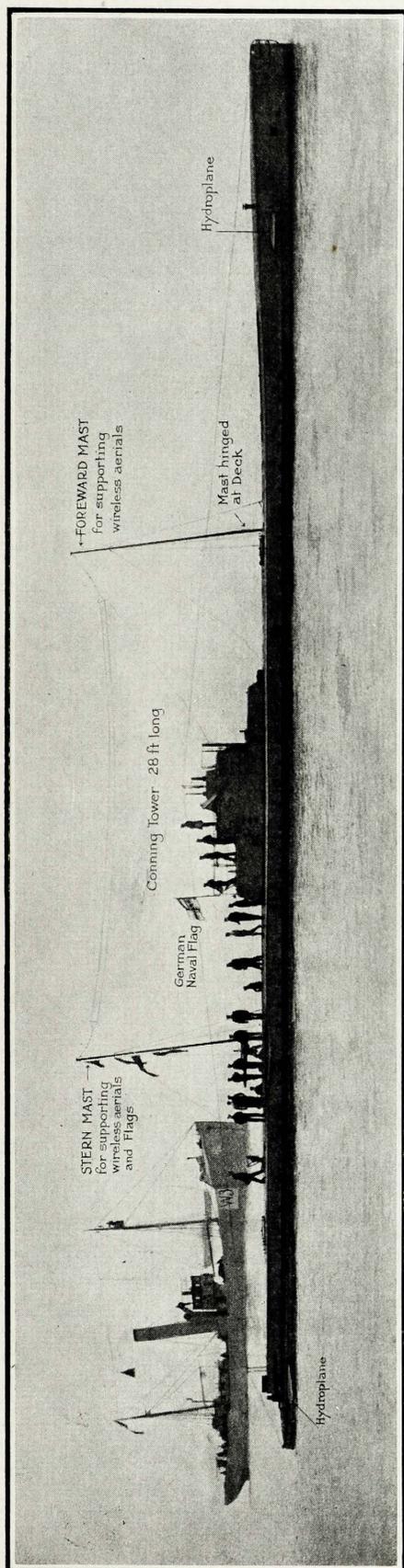
The motives which led the Germans to adopt a policy of submarine war on merchant shipping were probably many-sided. Leaving out of account here its political aspects, and the

* The text of this proclamation will be found in Vol. V., p. 270.

moral effect which may have been hoped for from the extension of "frightfulness" from land to sea warfare, the situation from the naval point of view was clearly defined. Each successive effort by which the Germans had sought to nullify the effect of the supremacy possessed by the British Fleet had failed. They had first tried mine-laying on an extensive scale, using mercantile ships under neutral colours and similar wiles for the purpose. This was counteracted by the expansion of the mine-sweeping flotillas, and the battle in the Heligoland Bight was a salutary blow to the torpedo craft which had made a few dashes into the North Sea and attacked the fishing fleets. Then the submarine assaults upon the Grand Fleet and its attendant vessels had attained but a small result, a few old cruisers being the principal victims of this form of the war of attrition which had for its object the whittling down of our sea strength. There followed the cruiser raids upon the East Coast, but after two safe expeditions of this kind to Yarmouth and Scarborough a third ended disastrously for the raiders when they were brought to action by Sir David Beatty off the Dogger Bank on January 24,



OFF THE ENEMY'S COAST.
A torpedo-boat destroyer's crew resting.



VIEW OF THE GERMAN SUBMARINE U35 SHOWING THE LARGE SUPERSTRUCTURE, WIRELESS MASTS, QUICK-FIRING GUN, AND OTHER FITTINGS.

1915. Finally, there was the attack on the trade routes in the outer oceans, which, by careful preparation in peace, combined with the skill of enterprising captains like von Müller, of the *Emden*, had taken its comparatively small toll of merchant shipping. The battle off the Falklands, however, destroyed the backbone of this undertaking, and it was only a few weeks before the scattered remnants of Germany's cruiser force abroad were rounded up or sought refuge in neutral ports.

The German Navy had thus to cast about for a fresh weapon to strike at England, and its choice fell upon, or maybe there was chosen for it by outside authorities, a submarine war on commerce. In peace time, opinion had been divided as to whether the submarine would come to be used in this fashion, but in the main it agreed with the view expressed by Lord Sydenham, in a letter to *The Times* on July 14, 1914—only three weeks before war broke out—as follows :

Capture of vessels at sea is an old right of war. The right to kill unresisting non-combatants, engaged in peaceful avocations, has never been recognized. The submarine cannot capture and must destroy. I do not believe that the sentiment of the world in the twentieth century would tolerate for a moment proceedings which have hitherto been associated only with piracy in its blackest form.

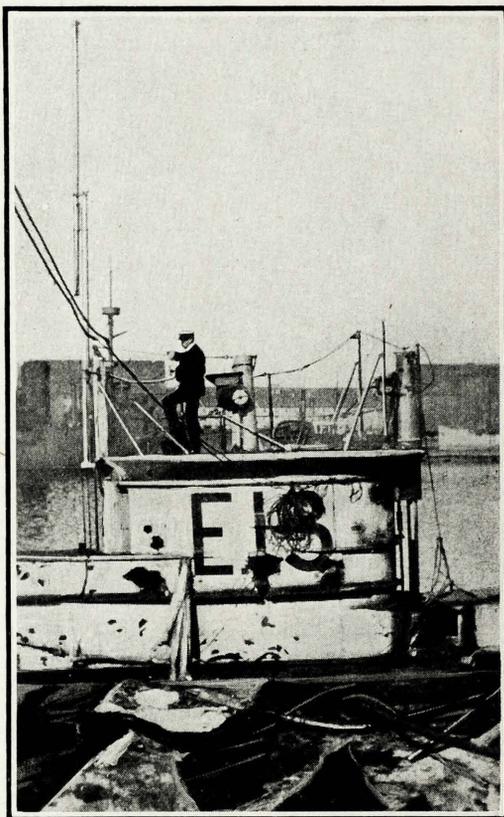
In the interval between the declaration of war and the introduction of the so-called submarine blockade on February 18, 1915, there had been tentative attacks on a few merchant ships by German submarines in the North Sea and English Channel. On October 20, 1914, the steamer *Glitra* was stopped by U17, her crew ordered into the boats, and then destroyed, and a month later the steamers *Malachite* and *Primo* were stopped off Havre by U21 and similarly treated, although in their case the gun of the submarine was used to destroy them. The *Primo* did not sink at once, as the Admiralty reported her still afloat next day, but on fire, the submarine having apparently to make off before completing its task, possibly because the sound of firing brought help to the vessel. This case may have convinced the German authorities that gun attack was not sufficiently decisive. On October 26, 1914, one of their submarines had, without warning, fired a torpedo into the passenger steamer *Amiral Ganteaume*, on passage from Ostend to Havre with 2,000 unarmed Belgian refugees on board, including women and children. Had it not been for the timely aid of another steamer, whose master

promptly placed her alongside the stricken vessel, this outrage would have been as great, so far as the sacrifice of innocent life was concerned, as the *Lusitania* case. As it was, it called forth expressions of horror throughout the civilized world, and the Germans could not, therefore, have been ignorant of the general feeling in regard to such attacks on merchant ships. On January 21 the steamer *Durward* was stopped off the Dutch coast by U19 and her crew ordered to the boats, after which the vessel was blown up by bombs placed in the engine-room, with time-fuses—a more effective method of destruction than gunfire.

These early instances of submarine attack upon merchant ships served to illustrate the possibilities of such warfare to the Germans, and the attempt against the *Amiral Ganteaume*, the worst form of attack, elicited the opinions of neutrals on the subject. Before the blockade came into force, too, there was afforded an example of the spirit in which it was to be met by the merchant seamen upon whom it was directed. The British steamer *Laertes*, Captain W. H. Propert, a vessel of 4,541 tons, belonging to the Ocean Steamship Company, was sighted by a German submarine on February 10 off the Dutch coast and ordered to stop. The captain ignored the signal, rang for full speed, and steered a zigzag course. The submarine chased his vessel on the surface and, failing to get into a position for discharging a torpedo, opened fire from a gun. The *Laertes* was worked up to 16 knots by the efforts of her engine-room complement, and for an hour the submarine tried vainly to overtake her, shelling the vessel all the time. She also managed to get off a torpedo, which passed a few yards astern. At length, when she was only about 500 yards away, the submarine dived and made off. As a mark of appreciation "for his gallant and spirited conduct in command of his unarmed ship when exposed to attack by the gunfire and torpedo of a German submarine," Captain Propert was given a commission as temporary lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve, and on March 5, 1915, was received by the King, when his Majesty handed him the Distinguished Service Cross. The Admiralty also presented a gold watch to each officer, and a grant of £3 to every member of the crew of the *Laertes*.

When at length the submarine "blockade" opened it was not carried into effect with any sort of uniformity. According apparently to the character of the submarine commander

there were various degrees of severity, though all were more or less callous of human life. No attempt was made to carry out the procedure laid down by international law of detaining, visiting, and searching merchant ships before capture, and of taking them into port for trial in the prize courts. On the contrary, the primary aim and object was destruction, even though this involved the death of or risk to many hundreds of innocent non-combatants



SUBMARINE E13.

The vessel ran aground on the Danish Island of Saltholm, and was shelled by a German destroyer. Fifteen of her crew of thirty were killed.

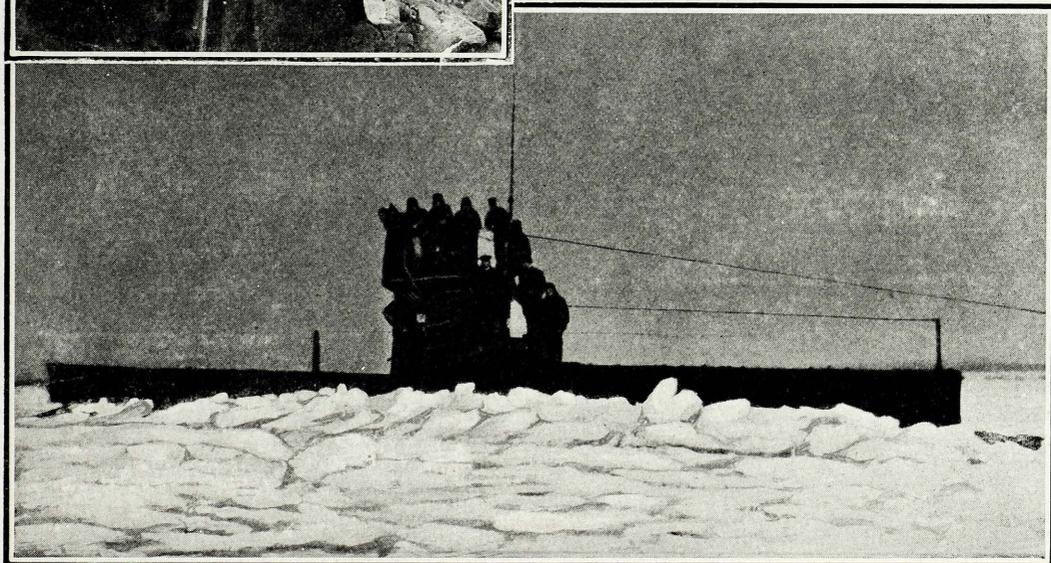
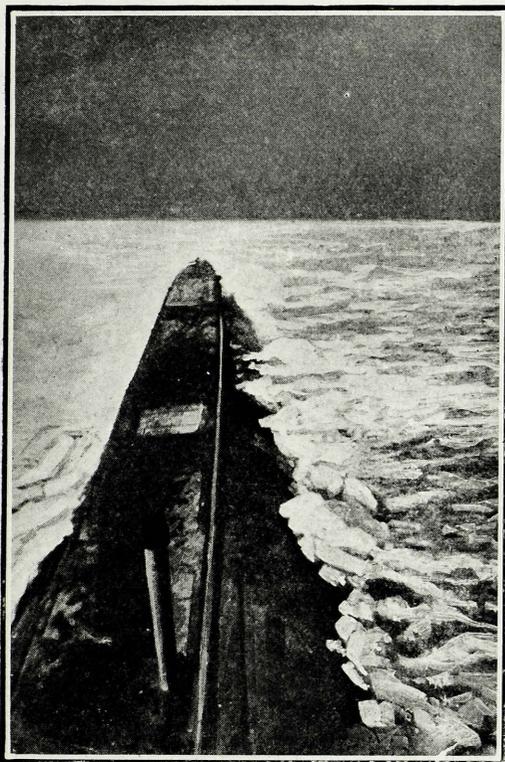
A few cases will illustrate the various methods adopted by the "U" boats.

Some of the very worst crimes of the submarine raiders were those in which attacks were made by torpedo without warning of any kind or with insufficient notice to enable those on board to take to the boats. The *Lusitania* case, already dealt with in an earlier chapter, was the one which, from the huge loss of life, most shocked the world. It will remain for all ages an indelible stain on the German Navy. Equally callous, though the casualty list was not so high, were the circumstances attending

the sinking of the Elder Dempster liner *Falaba* on March 28, 1915, to the south of St. George's Channel. The German submarine U28 gave her people five minutes to take to their boats, but before this period had elapsed a torpedo was fired at point-blank range—not more than a hundred yards or so—and as a result 101 lives were lost of the 237 persons on board. The submarine's crew jeered at the helpless situation of the people in the water, including women and children, and it was declared in evidence at the

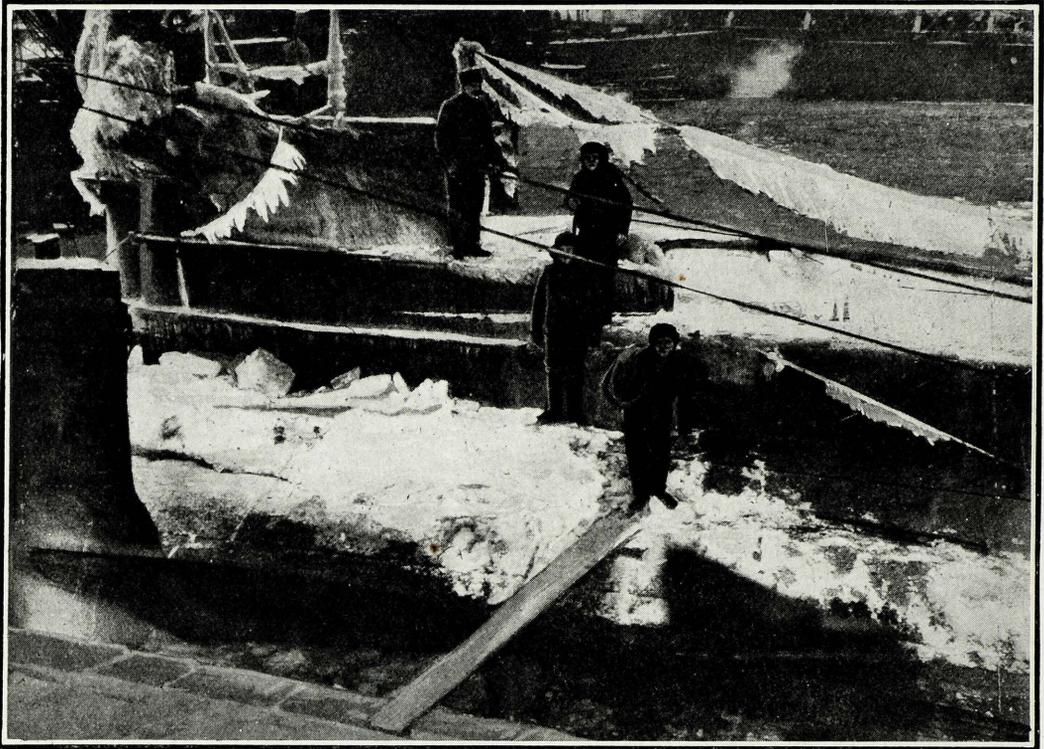
official inquiry by Lord Mersey afterwards that many victims might have been saved by the Germans merely by the latter stooping down and reaching out their hands to them in the water. As showing the utter disregard of the laws of humanity by the "U" boats in their campaign, the sinking of a Belgian relief ship may be mentioned, in spite of her being given a "safe conduct" permit by the German Minister at The Hague. On April 10, 1915, the *Harpalyce*, a four-masted steamer of 5,940 tons, was on her way from Rotterdam to Norfolk, U.S.A., in ballast. She flew a large white flag bearing the words, "Commission for Belgian Relief" in very large letters, visible for eight miles, and the inscription was also painted in large characters on the sides of the vessel. When off the North Hinder lightship she was torpedoed without any warning, and sank before the boats could be lowered, 17 of her crew of 44 losing their lives.

As some of the larger submarine boats were completed, the Germans resorted more to the use of the gun in enforcing their so-called blockade. They probably found this course more economical, as the number of torpedoes carried in each boat is limited, and except under favourable conditions these weapons are, perhaps, not so accurate as guns. Torpedoes, moreover, are costly missiles, some of those of the smallest calibre absorbing about £500 each. It was characteristic of the Germans that they endeavoured to get the most out of



BRITISH SUBMARINE AND CREW IN THE BALTIC.

Top picture: The vessel cutting its way through the broken ice.



BRITISH SUBMARINE AND CREW IN THE BALTIC.

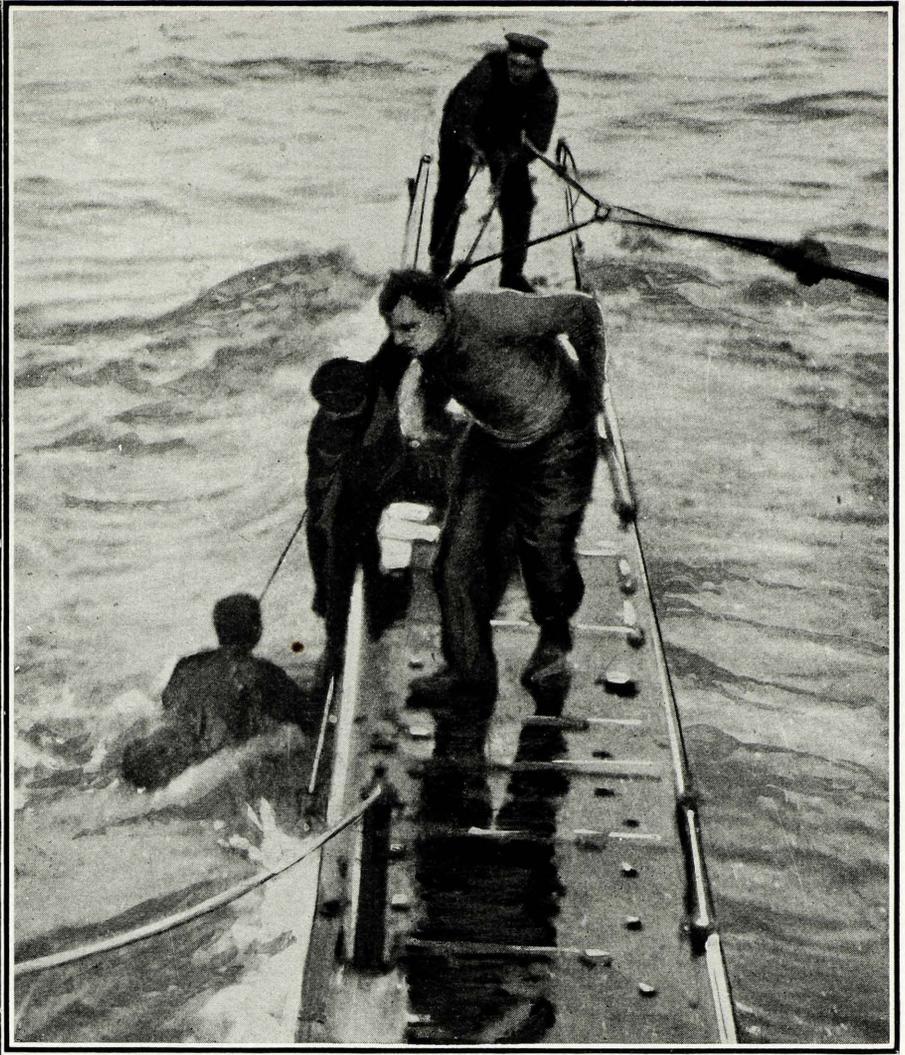
them, however, for on April 13, 1915, the French Ministry of Marine asserted that, contrary to Article 1 of the Hague Convention, which forbids the use of torpedoes which do not become harmless after they have missed their mark, examination of torpedoes from German submarines which were found in the English Channel proved that their immersion apparatus had been systematically jammed, so as to turn the torpedo into a floating mine. Many thrilling stories filled the newspapers, during the time the "blockade" was at its height, of submarines attacking ships with their guns, and of the stubborn and heroic resistance and general coolness under fire displayed by the merchant seamen. A typical occurrence of this kind was the experience of the steamship *Vosges*, Captain J. R. Green, of the Moss Line. While on passage from Bordeaux to Liverpool, this vessel was sighted on March 27, 1915, by a German submarine off the western entrance to the English Channel, about 60 miles west of Trevoise Head. "I had always made up my mind," said Captain Green afterwards, "to make a fight of it in such an emergency, and I ordered all steam up in order to get away. I turned my stern to the enemy, and then ensued a duel of skill. Foiled of using his torpedo, the submarine manœuvred to bring

his gun into action, and his superior speed, despite the fact that we were making over 14 knots, enabled him to do so." For an hour and a half, with the submarine ever getting nearer, this unequal combat was maintained. The bridge of the steamer and her funnel were both riddled with shell, and the engine-room was also pierced, the chief engineer being killed whilst exhorting his men to further efforts. The submarine, baffled by the determination of the British seamen not to give in, then gave up the chase and sheered off, but the *Vosges* was so severely damaged that she sank about two hours later, a patrol yacht fortunately arriving in time to take off the survivors. "I wish," said Captain Green, "I had had a gun. If I had, there would now be one enemy submarine less. We have one satisfaction, and that is that the German did not see us sink." King George, it was announced on April 10, had awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross, and the Admiralty granted him a temporary commission as lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve. As in the case of the *Laertes*, gold watches were presented to the officers and £3 to each of the crew.

A third form of attack was that by aircraft. This had very unsatisfactory results from the



A German sailor, barefooted and holding on to a rope, watching his comrades swimming towards the submarine.



British sailor hauling a German up the side of the submarine while another leans over to lift him on deck.

GERMAN SAILORS RESCUED FROM DROWNING BY THE CREW OF A BRITISH SUBMARINE

German point of view, as no vessel was reported to have been destroyed by aeroplanes, although several attempts by these machines were made. Many vessels of neutral countries, of course, suffered during the blockade, and among those damaged from the air was an American steamer, the *Cushing*, which was assaulted on April 28, about midway between Flushing and the North Foreland. The fact that the ship had her name painted on both sides in letters 6 feet high, and that she was flying the American flag, did not safeguard her from the attentions of the aeroplane, and two bombs were dropped, but only slight damage was caused. A much more successful and general mode of attack was that described in the case of the *Durward*, of placing bombs in the engine-rooms of steamers. Besides being more economical from the German standpoint, this procedure was more humane, since the time taken for the "U" boats' crews to reach the vessels and fix the explosives also allowed the merchant seamen opportunity to escape in their boats. Yet another method, adopted very largely in the case of cargoes of wood-pulp from Scandinavia and the like, was for the Germans to set fire to ships and leave them burning hulks, dangerous to the navigation of friend and foe alike.

This review would be incomplete without reference to the one bright feature of the "blockade" on the German side—the combination of adherence to duty with humanity towards those whom they were ordered to attack which marked the conduct of certain of the German submarine commanders. The name of Otto Weddigen at once springs to mind in this connexion. In command of U29, this officer figured in various episodes of the blockade in March, 1915. On the 11th he attacked and sank the steamer *Aden-wen*, off the Casquets, and so considerate were his methods that in this and other exploits he earned for himself the nickname of "the polite pirate." He gave the crew of the steamer ten minutes to launch their boats, observing, "We wish no lives to be lost." He noticed that one seaman fell into the water, and thereupon sent a suit of dry clothes for him. At the same time he informed the master of the vessel how sorry he was to have to destroy his ship. Later on, he stopped and destroyed the French steamer *Auguste Conseil*, off the Start, and in taking leave of the vessel's crew, he asked them to "give his compliments to

Lord Churchill." Two or three months later, when the "U" boats sought to create a fresh impression by attacks on the fishing fleets, and when many fishermen were brutally done to death without being given a chance for their lives, a welcome exception to the general practice occurred when the commander of one submarine allowed the crew of a trawler he attacked to get away in their boat. "We are not Prussians," he declared to the skipper; "it is only the Prussians who would let you drown."

Among the odd events which marked the "blockade," one of the most dramatic was the

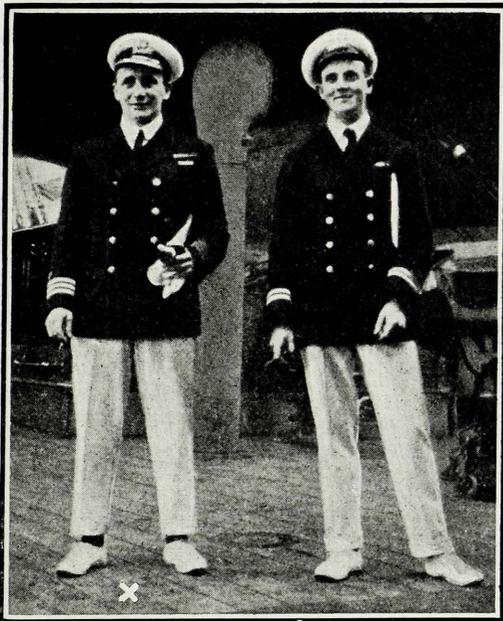


"THE POLITE PIRATE."

Otto Weddigen, who commanded the U29, which figured in various episodes of the blockade in March, 1915.

bombardment of the towns of Parton, Harrington, and Whitehaven on August 16. This was rather a clever exploit on the part of the submarine commander who carried it out, and on this account was conspicuous in comparison with other incidents, for in spite of the gloating joy which characterized the German newspapers in referring to the submarines' work, there was no great amount of skill demanded to destroy harmless merchant ships, or lay in wait to hit a huge liner with a torpedo at short range. The shelling of these Cumberland towns, however,

had an historic interest as well, for it was here that Paul Jones, the American seaman, carried out his raid during the War of Independence in April, 1778. He sailed from Brest in command of the sloop *Ranger*, and appearing off Whitehaven, surprised the garrison and landed. Reaching the half-ruined battery supposed to be able to defend the harbour, he spiked its old guns and captured the pensioners who manned them. He ordered the 300 ships in harbour to be set on fire, but before this could be done, the alarm was raised and he beat a hurried retreat. Thus the German commander who turned up off the same coast showed his acquaintance with British naval history. He



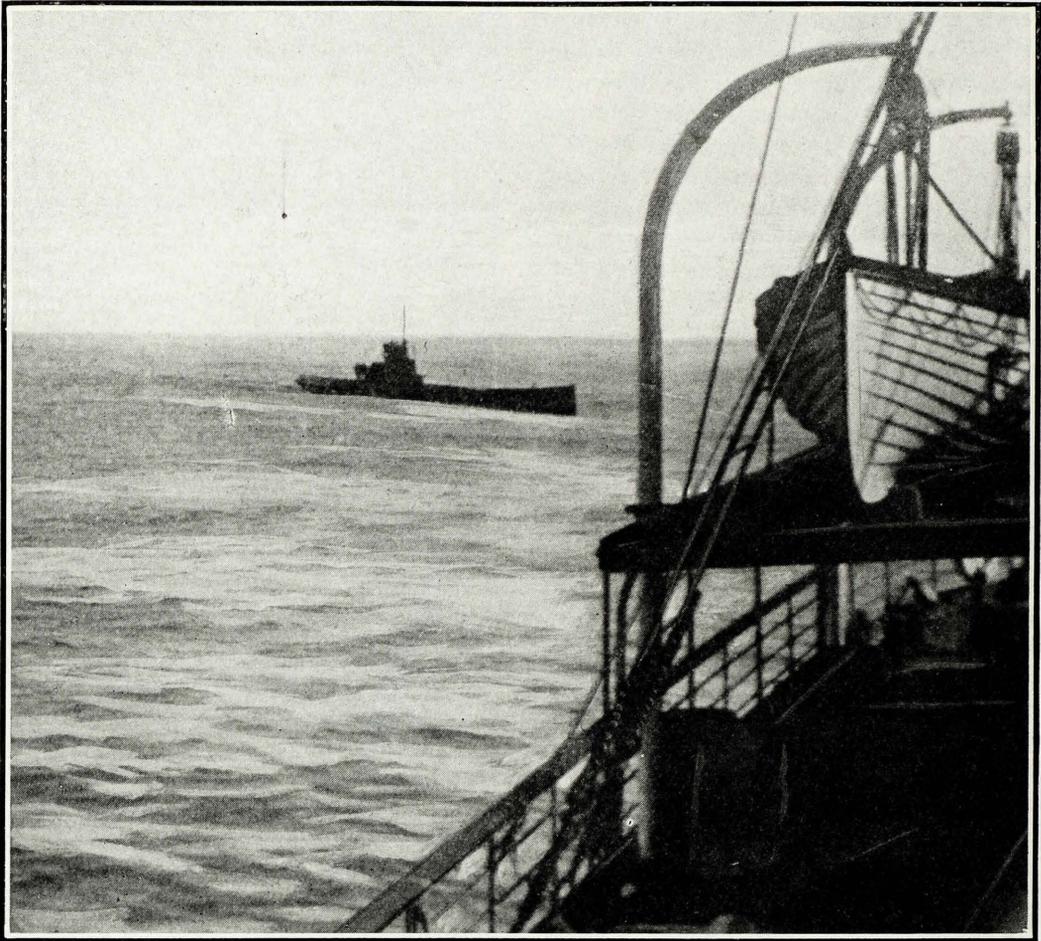
BRITISH SUBMARINE COMMANDERS.
Commander Max Horton (marked with a cross).

shelled the three towns mentioned for about an hour, but no material damage was done beyond that caused by a few shells which hit the railway embankment north of Parton and delayed traffic for a short time. Some fires were also caused, but there were no casualties.

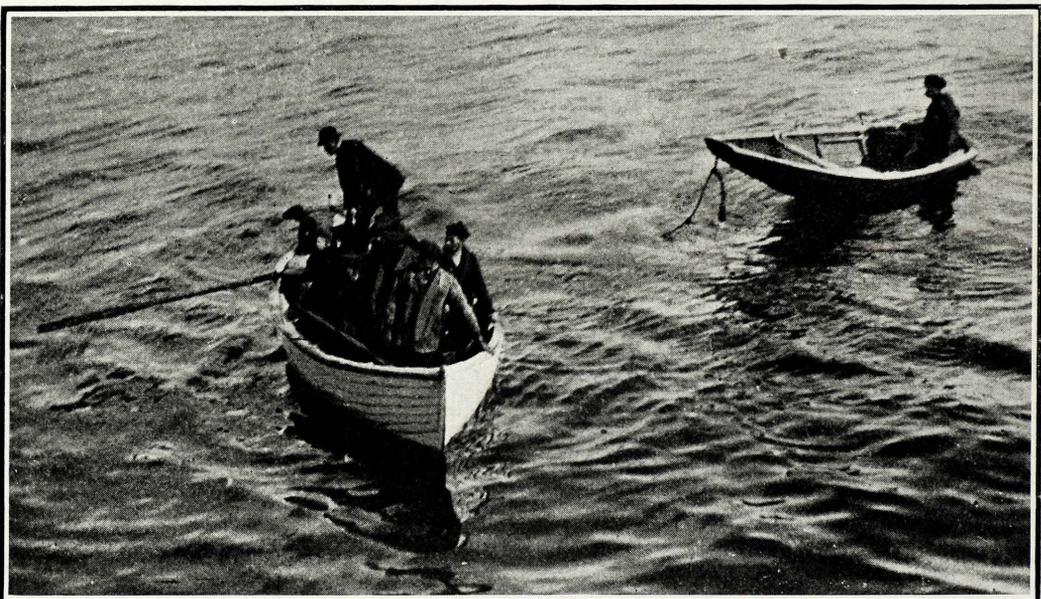
It will have been gathered that the Germans were not allowed to have things entirely their own way, so far as the merchant seamen were concerned. The manner in which the British crews met the new menace was magnificent, and shed lustre on the already high traditions of their service. Speaking at a meeting of the Navy League on March 24, 1915, Lord Sydenham said that "Sea-power did not begin and end with ships of war. One of the most start-

ling features of this war was the employment of the general maritime resources of the country, and the seafaring population drawn upon for dangerous duties had shown great heroism. Merchant captains showed no dread of German pirates, and were learning how to deal with them." From King George downwards there was natural appreciation expressed of the work of the merchant service in this connexion. His Majesty graciously accepted in August, 1915, a copy of the annual report of the Merchant Service Guild, and in so doing said he realized what magnificent work had been done by the brave officers and crews of his merchant service during the months of war. On February 28 the first case of a merchant vessel turning the tables on a submarine occurred in the English Channel. The *Thordis*, a small coasting steamer of 501 tons, was on her way from Blyth to Plymouth with coal when she sighted a submarine's periscope off Beachy Head. The master, John W. Bell, ordered his little crew of twelve on deck in case of an emergency, and the submarine was observed to cross the bow of the collier to the port side, where a position was taken up thirty to forty yards off. Then the wake of a torpedo was noticed, but in the swell which prevailed at the time it missed. Captain Bell then determined to go for his assailant. He put his helm hard over to starboard, and ran over the periscope, which was torn away against the side of the collier, a crash and crunch being felt at the same time under the keel of the ship. No trace of the submarine was seen afterwards, but oil was observed floating on the water. On being dry-docked at Plymouth, the Admiralty announced that the injuries to the keel and propeller of the *Thordis* confirmed the evidence that the vessel rammed and in all probability sank a German submarine after the latter had fired a torpedo at her. For this feat Captain Bell and his crew earned the prizes of £500 offered by the *Syren and Shipping* newspaper and other private donors to the first British merchant steamer to sink an enemy submarine, and the captain's share was publicly presented to him by the Lord Mayor of London at the Mansion House on April 12, 1915.

It was not, however, left to the merchant service to fight the submarine raiders, but the Royal Navy put into execution counter-measures which met with great success. Naturally, the character and scope of these were not divulged, but that they accomplished their



A German submarine shelling and chasing a Danish steamer while on a voyage to Iceland.

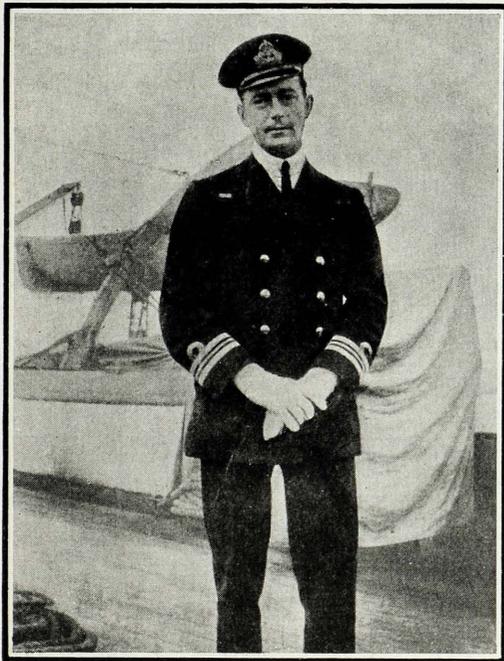


The steamer managed to escape, and afterwards the crew rescued several Russian sailors whose vessel had been sunk by the same submarine, which had abandoned the survivors to the mercy of the sea.

THE GERMAN SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN AGAINST MERCHANTMEN.

purpose was clear not only by the failure of the Germans to "blockade" Great Britain, but by the manner in which they found it expedient, after six months' trial, to accede to American requests to abate the virulence of their warfare against non-combatants. About this time, journalists who were permitted to visit the Grand Fleet were shown a map marking points where German submarines had been sighted, and the results of the attacks on them classified under "Captured," "Supposed Sunk," and "Sunk." When asked how these boats were caught, the officers replied, "Sometimes by ramming, sometimes by gunfire, sometimes by explosives, and in many other ways which we do not tell." During the first ten days of March two submarines, U8 and U12, were sunk by British destroyers off Dover and the Firth of Forth respectively, and U29 (Commander Weddigen's boat) by another warship, but after this the Admiralty decided not to issue particulars of such losses inflicted on the enemy. On August 26, 1915, when Squadron-Commander A. W. Bigsworth was successful in destroying, single-handed, a submarine by bombs from his aeroplane off Ostend, this incident was revealed, with the following explanation :

It is not the practice of the Admiralty to publish statements regarding the losses of German submarines, important though they have been, in cases where the enemy have no other sources of information as to the



LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER CROMIE.

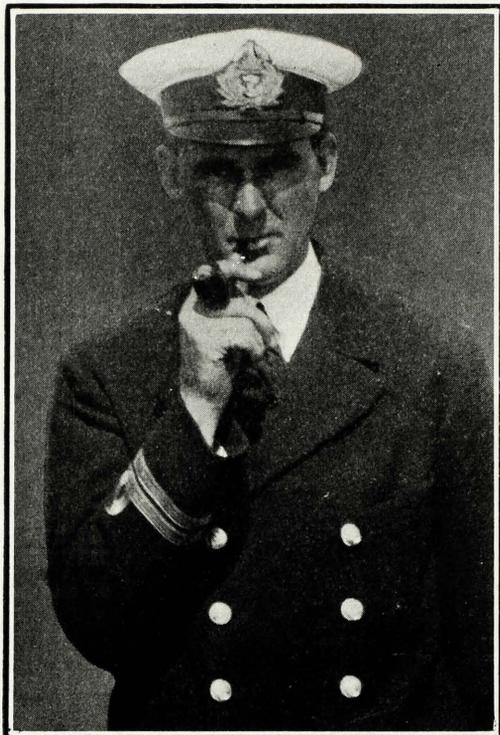


LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER GOODHART.

time and place at which these losses have occurred. In the case referred to above, however, the brilliant feat of Squadron-Commander Bigsworth was performed in the immediate neighbourhood of the coast in occupation of the enemy, and the position of the sunken submarine has been located by a German destroyer.

The mystery attaching to the number of German submarines accounted for inspired a good deal of speculation at this time. Thus an American journal stated on September 23 that it was positively known that 67 had been sunk since May, 5, 28 of these being of the newest and latest construction. In answer to a question on this matter, Mr. Balfour stated in Parliament on September 30 that an inevitable margin of doubt attached to any attempt to estimate the numbers of enemy submarines destroyed, because a submarine was not like an ordinary vessel, and there was every gradation from absolute certainty through practical assurance down to faint possibility. Facts like these were not fitted for statistical statement. Although, therefore, the British people could not have their very natural curiosity satisfied on this interesting point, the effect of this and other authoritative pronouncements was to show that, as Lord Selborne said, the Navy had the submarine menace well in hand.

In addition to the attitude adopted towards the German campaign by the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine, a third stand was made in the region of diplomacy. As a measure of reprisal for the wanton and illegal attacks on



SQUADRON-COMMANDER BIGSWORTH,
In the uniform of a Lieutenant, R.N.

shipping, Mr. Asquith on March 1 outlined in the House of Commons certain measures which were to be adopted in reply to what he described as the "organized campaign of piracy and pillage" undertaken by the enemy. Henceforth, he declared, the British and French Governments held themselves free to detain and take into port all ships carrying goods of presumed enemy destination, ownership, or origin, the object being to prevent commodities of any kind from reaching or leaving the German Empire. No mention was made in the speech of "blockade," "contraband," or other technical terms, the reason being, said the Premier, that "the Government were not going to allow their efforts to be strangled in a network of juridical niceties," but their policy, he added, would be enforced without risk to neutral ships or to neutral and non-combatant lives, and in strict observance of the dictates of humanity. The text of the official Proclamation giving effect to these views was published in the *London Gazette* on March 15.

In carrying out the policy the Admiralty established a "cruiser cordon" for the detention of the ships carrying goods of presumed enemy origin or destination. The nature or composition of this force was not

revealed, nor was it stated who the officer in command was; but on August 7 a number of awards were announced by the Admiralty to officers and men "in recognition of their services in the patrol cruisers since the outbreak of war," and some of those honoured were shown by the "Navy List" to have been serving under Rear-Admiral D. R. S. De Chair, whose flagship was the *Alsatian*, armed merchant cruiser. In a note to these awards it was stated that the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet spoke in the highest terms of the manner in which the patrol cruisers had performed their arduous task, especially during the winter months, under exceptionally bad weather conditions. They had suffered severe losses, said the Admiralty, both in officers and men, and had been exposed continually to dangers from mines and submarines. An idea of the working of the patrol cruisers and their satellites may be gained from an article published in *The Times* on October 6, 1915, in which Mr. Gilbert Hirsch, an American journalist, described how the sea passage north of Scotland was kept by the Navy. Relating how he visited the harbour-master's office, he said:

Through the window to the commander's left a dozen of the Government's small harbour boats were to be



CAPTAIN JOHN W. BELL,
Master of the *Thordis*, who, together with his crew, earned the prizes of £500 for the first British steamer to sink an enemy submarine.

seen moored to the quay, and beyond them, dotting the harbour, more than a score of neutral merchant vessels. Some of these, like the *Oscar II.*, on which I had just crossed, were detained only temporarily, for examination of passengers or cargo. Others were prizes, to be held till the end of the war.

These were the flies caught in the great web spun by the British across the northern trade route. Beyond the harbour's mouth, in the waters about these Orkney Isles, about the bleak Shetland Islands to the north, and the Hebrides to the south-west, along the eastern coasts of Scotland, and out across the North Sea towards the Norwegian shore, converted cruisers on patrol duty are for ever weaving their criss-cross courses, with Dreadnoughts waiting within easy call. . . . I pictured a similar web centring at Dover, in which all the Channel shipping becomes enmeshed; a third at Gibraltar,



COMMANDER E. C. BOYLE.

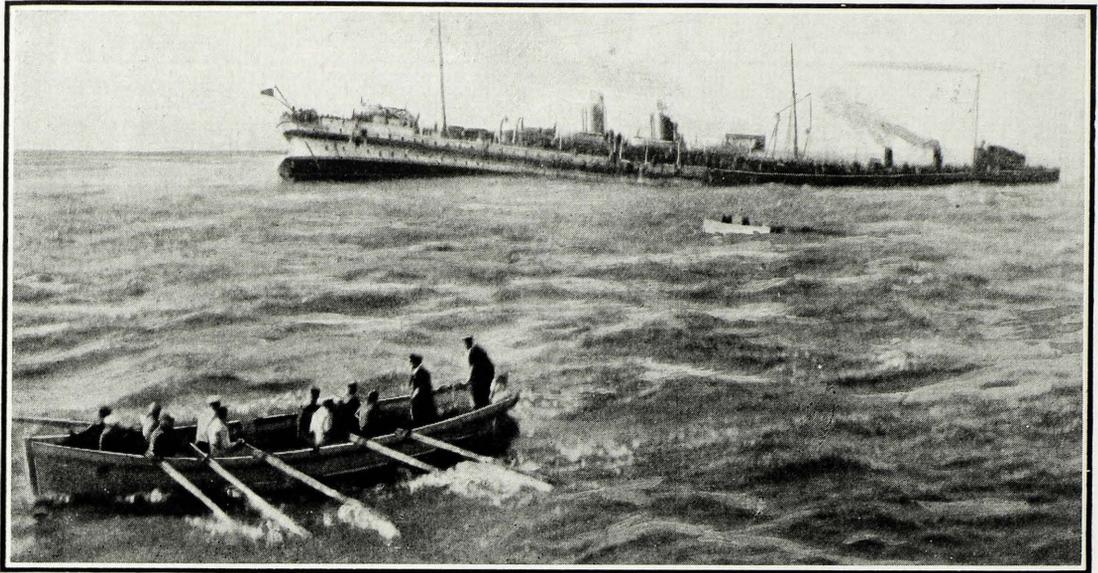
Awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery, in command of Submarine E 14, when he dived his vessel under enemy minefields and entered the Sea of Marmora, April 27, 1915.

which controls, even more effectively, traffic between America and the Mediterranean ports. And I got a vivid idea of the completeness with which England dominates transatlantic intercourse; I understood for the first time what Englishmen mean when they declare that "Britannia rules the waves."

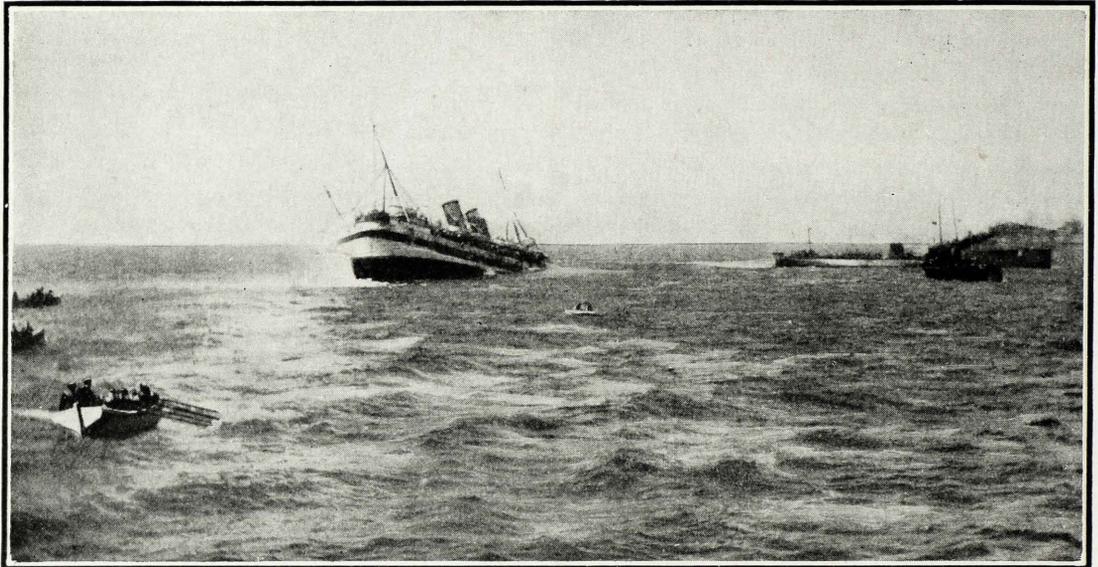
The manner in which the British and French Governments established this cordon was the subject of Notes from the United States, which would have preferred the procedure to be modelled strictly on precedent and a regular blockade declared. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into the legal and diplo-

matic questions thus raised, but it may be noted that in some measure the force of the American contentions was recognized when, on October 26, an Order in Council was published modifying the British prize law by the abrogation of Article 57 of the Declaration of London. By this article the flag which a ship was entitled to fly was sufficient evidence and guarantee of her character. Experience had shown, however, that it was necessary to go beyond the nationality of the flag to the nationality of the owner, and therefore it was decided to revert to the old prize law formerly in force, under which, even if an enemy had only a part interest in a ship, that part could be condemned and its value realized by various methods known to the Courts.

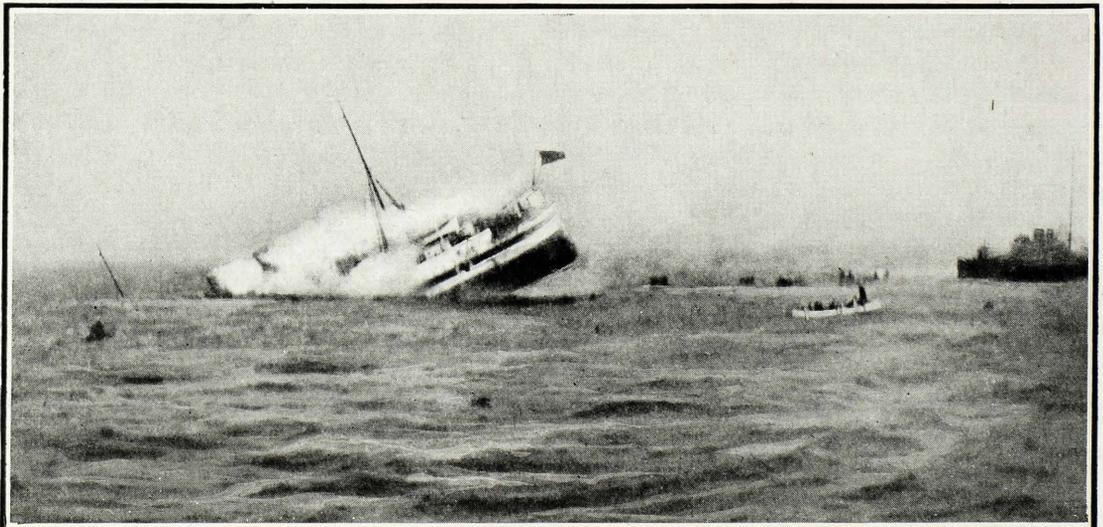
At what date British submarines first penetrated into the Baltic was not officially disclosed, but very early in 1915 they made their presence known there. When the light cruiser *Gazelle* was torpedoed off the island of Rügen on January 25, Swedish newspapers referred to the attacking submarine as British. So long as the greater part of the opportunities for submarine work was denied to the boats on account of the ice their activity did not attract so much attention as at a later period. An admirable summary of the Russian Fleet's work from the outbreak of war to the end of March, 1915, was contained in a report of Admiral von Essen, the Commander-in-Chief, to the Tsar. This statement showed that during the first period of the war the German Fleet confined its activities purely to observing the naval measures adopted by Russia for the protection of her coasts. This allowed time for the Russian defences to be placed in order and extended farther out to sea. The area reserved for the movements of the defending fleet was carefully mined, and entirely closed to merchant shipping. Later on there were several skirmishes between cruisers and outpost vessels, and although most of these were of an indecisive character the Russian seamen proved their worth. The Germans also used submarines to a considerable extent to try and reduce the strength of the Russians. Within two months, said Admiral von Essen, twenty submarine attacks were delivered, only one of which, that on the cruiser *Pallada* on October 11, 1914, was successful. In ten cases the torpedoes missed their mark, and in the nine others the Germans were unable to use the torpedo at all. Generally



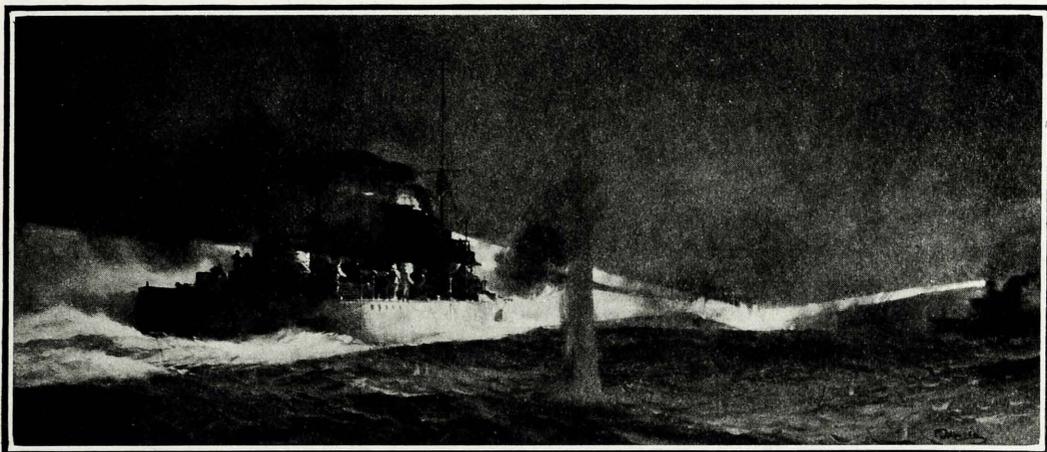
The Anglia as she appeared shortly after striking the mine.



The stern of the Anglia rising out of the water. Some of the wounded were transferred to the boats, while others, unable to retain their precarious footing, slipped into the sea, and were saved by sailors.



The last of the Anglia.
THE SINKING OF A BRITISH HOSPITAL SHIP IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL.



AN ENCOUNTER OFF THE BELGIAN COAST.

Two French torpedo-boats attacking a German destroyer off Ostend.

speaking, the report concluded, the Russian Fleet during these first eight months of war gained much experience in dealing with the modern weapons at the disposal of the Germans. Its numbers were not diminished, but, on the contrary, had been increased by new ships, and the morale and confidence in the future of the Russian sailors was stronger than ever.

With the melting of the ice, there was a natural development in hostilities, but the command of the Baltic remained in dispute, in spite of the superiority of force possessed by the Germans. Early illustration of this was afforded when the Russian Fleet supported the successful raid into East Prussia from March 18 to 22, 1915, during which the town of Memel was captured. The fact that there was no German naval force at hand to deal with the Russian warships, without the cooperation of which the enterprise could not have been carried out, indicated that the Germans were caught napping. They apparently poured forth their wrath in sending a division of seven battleships, with a score or more torpedo craft, to cruise along the Courland coast and fire on the coast villages at Polangen and elsewhere during the next few days. About two months later the great German campaign against Russia began, and on both sides the naval forces cooperated with and conformed their movements to the undertakings of the troops on shore. Libau, at one time a Russian naval base, but since 1910 an open maritime town, fell to the German Army, supported by gun-fire from the ships, on May 9, and gradually the Germans began to extend their activity higher up the coast to Windau and other places, until the time came for them to

make an effort in force against the Gulf of Riga. It was a matter of deep regret that before these operations developed, however, Admiral von Essen, a brave and resourceful officer and a capable Commander-in-Chief, died in hospital at Reval from pneumonia. Sir John Jellicoe and Sir David Beatty were among those who expressed their condolence. Vice-Admiral Kanin was appointed to be the new Commander-in-Chief, a choice which was fully justified by the successful handling of the Russian sea forces during the next few months.

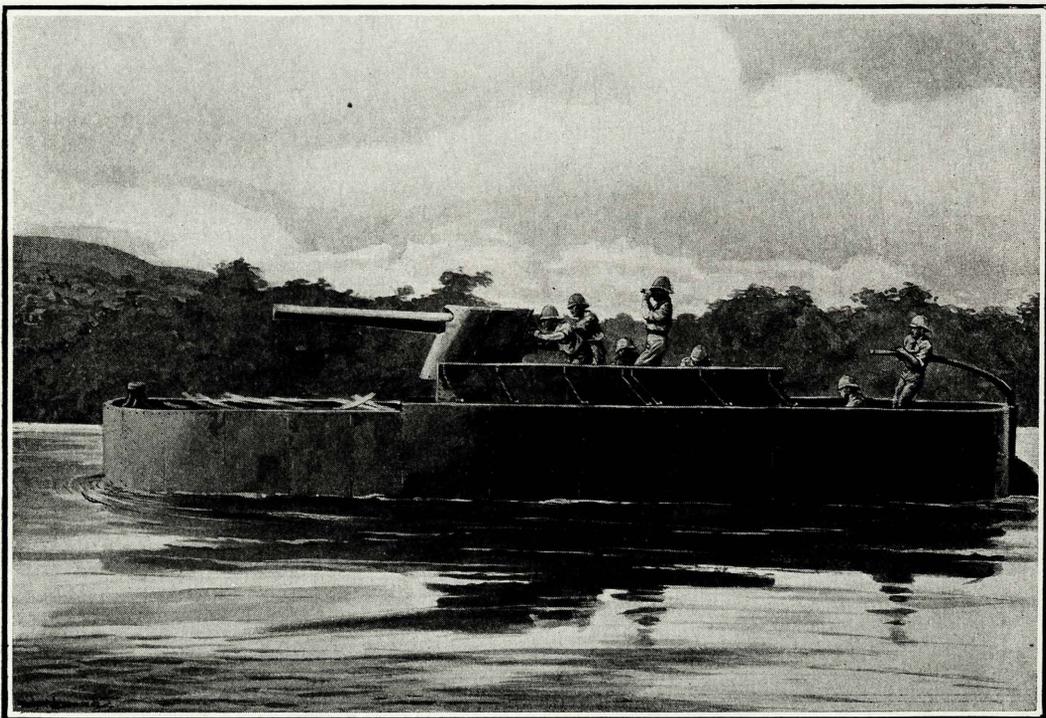
In the week beginning on August 16, 1915, a large German fleet endeavoured to seize control of the waters of the Gulf of Riga. The success of this operation would have had an important bearing upon the military situation in this region, as it might have made possible the transport by sea of reinforcements to the invading army of General von Below, and perhaps turned the Russian flank. But the enterprise failed, and the Germans eventually retired with loss. After mine-sweepers, protected by the heavier ships, had cleared the waters at the entrance, the enemy succeeded on August 18 in penetrating into the Gulf, favoured by the thick fogs and misty weather prevailing. For the next two days reconnaissances were made, but on the 21st the Germans, influenced by the losses they had sustained and the barrenness of their efforts, evacuated the Gulf. This abandonment of the enterprise, coming at a time of great depression owing to the German military advance in the eastern theatre of war, had an enormously reassuring effect in Russia and throughout the Allied countries. It is not surprising that some exaggerated stories became

current in regard to it. One of these, told to the Duma itself, was that four barges full of troops had attempted to land at Pernau, but had been annihilated, but the fact was that the vessels were empty steamers sunk by the Germans to block navigation. However, the Russian official *communiqués* showed that two cruisers and not less than eight torpedo craft of the Germans were either sunk or put out of action during the week's fighting, whereas the Russians lost only the gunboat *Sivoutch*, which was sunk in Moon Sound, after a brave defence, by a German cruiser.

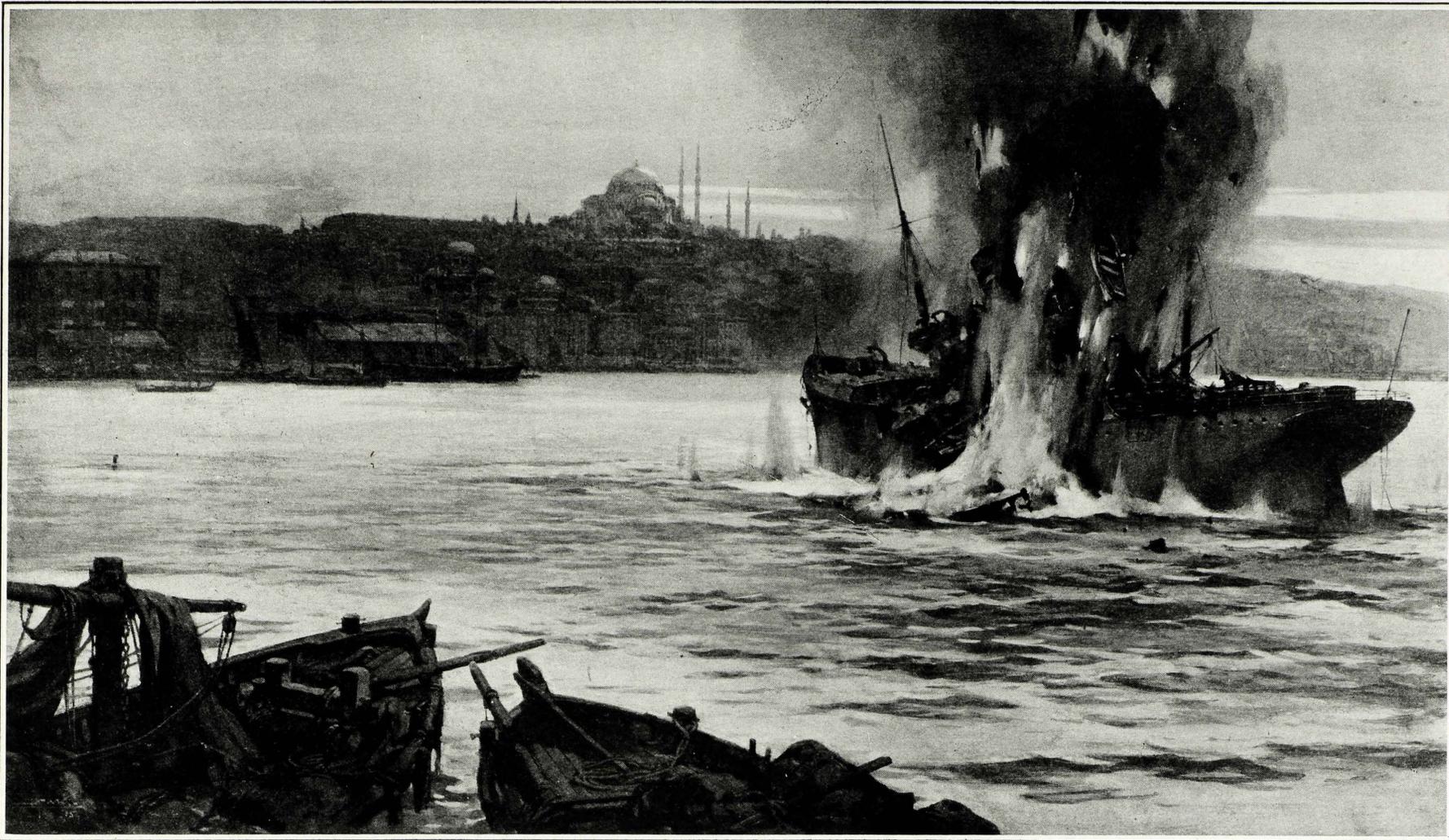
Apart from the Riga fighting, the year in the Baltic was chiefly distinguished for submarine operations. A number of British boats were placed under the Russian Admiral, and their successes were very striking. On July 2 a battleship of the "Pommern" type was torpedoed, and on August 19 the battle-cruiser *Moltke* was likewise hit and damaged. On October 23 the cruiser *Prinz Adalbert* was sunk off Libau, on November 7 the light cruiser *Undine* suffered a similar fate off the south coast of Sweden, and on December 17 the light cruiser *Bremen* and a torpedo boat were sunk. On July 30 a large transport was sunk, and on October 16 the Russian *communiqué* reported that five German transports had been destroyed

by British submarines and a sixth forced to run ashore. At the end of September the Russo-British submarines directed their efforts towards a fresh field when they began to attack German merchant ships. During October these vessels were sunk or driven ashore at the rate of something like one or two a day, and although this rate was not maintained, the reason was due to the decrease in traffic, which remained in port rather than risk being intercepted. This turning of the tables upon the Germans had a great moral as well as a material effect—it showed that two could play the game of setting submarines to attack the floating trade, while at the same time it stopped the supply of iron ore and other minerals into Germany from Scandinavia. The impotence of the Germans to deal with the submarine menace was also a marked feature. They resorted to extensive minelaying, but were unable to keep the British boats out of the Baltic, or to frustrate their activity and that of the Russian submarines in its waters. The British submarine commanders who specially distinguished themselves in this work were Commander Max K. Horton, Commander Noel F. Laurence, and Commander F. A. N. Cromie.

In previous chapters the great battles to obtain control of the Gallipoli Peninsula have



THE CAMEROON CAMPAIGN.
British gunboat on the Wuri River.



BRITISH SUBMARINE IN ACTION IN CONSTANTINOPLE HARBOUR.
Turkish transport, "Stamboul," sunk by Submarine "E11," commanded by Lieutenant-Commander M. E. Nasmith, V.C.

been fully described. The big engagements, however, cover but a comparatively small part of the work which was performed by the Royal Navy during the eleven months in which the adventure lasted. That work revealed qualities which shed lustre on the high traditions of the Service, and as the facts became known to the world the cause for marvel was, not that the enterprise did not achieve its object, but that it accomplished so much. Mr. Churchill gave the first official hint of a coming adventure when he said, in the House of Commons, on February 15, 1915, that the victory at the Falkland Islands swept away difficulties in the employment of our naval strength. "It set free," he said, "a large force of cruisers and battleships for all purposes; it opened the way to other operations of great interest." He showed that while there was a powerful German cruiser squadron still at large in the Pacific or the Atlantic it had to be watched for and waited for in superior force in six or seven different parts of the world at once. He also said that the strain upon the Navy in the early months of the war had been greatly diminished by the abatement of distant convoy work and by the clearance of the enemy's flag from the oceans. The way was thus clear for the employment of our naval resources in a new offensive undertaking, and the choice fell upon an attempt to force the Straits of the Dardanelles with the aid of the "surplus fleet," as Mr. Churchill called it, of the *Majestic*, *Canopus*, and similar classes.

There was some mystery at first as to whether the plan for a purely naval attack on the outer forts had a naval origin or not, but in his valedictory speech on November 15, 1915, Mr. Churchill showed clearly that it had not. After dealing with the evidence in favour of action at the Dardanelles, he said that Lord Fisher favoured a joint operation of the Fleet and the Army in this quarter, and that his schemes involved the cooperation of Powers which were neutral and of an army which was not available. The futility, in fact, of ships attacking without a military force to follow up and make good their work was obvious. As was said in a previous chapter,* "Even if the initial attacks were to be delivered by ships alone, it must have been manifest from the very beginning that at some stage of the enterprise military assistance would be required. Ships might have forced the Straits, but they could not occupy

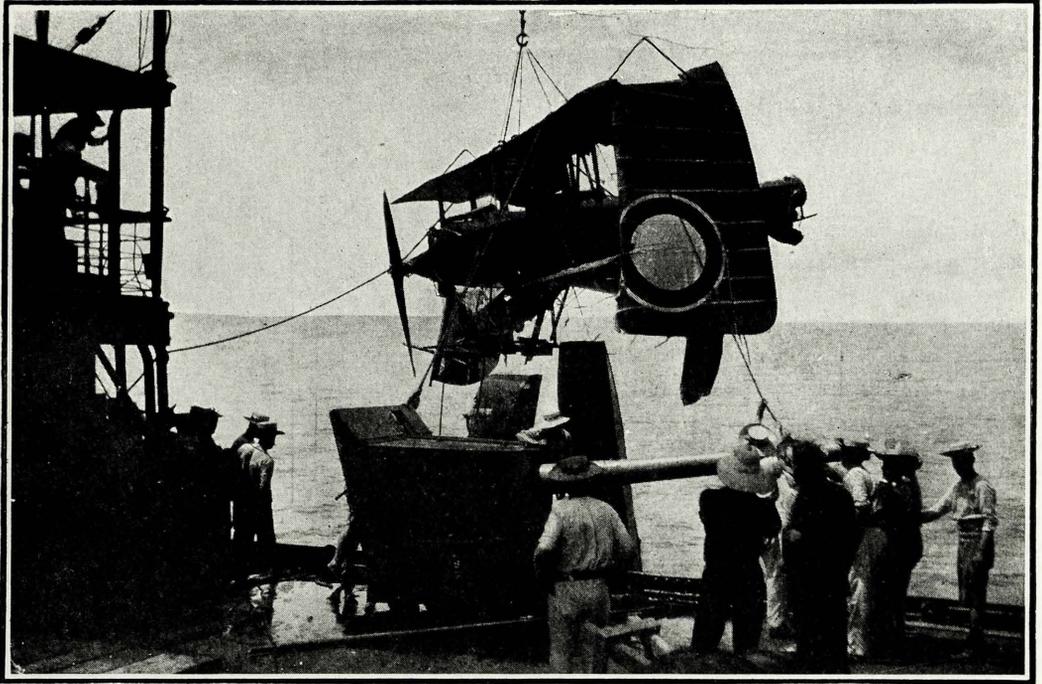
Constantinople." All the conditions, therefore, pointed to a joint operation being necessary, but a mistake was made when the naval part of the undertaking was put into execution before its military counterpart was available or ready. Action opened on February 19 with the bombardment of the forts at Cape Helles and Kum Kale with deliberate long-range fire, and in the afternoon six battleships, the *Vengeance*, *Cornwallis*, *Triumph*, *Suffren*, *Gaulois* and *Bouvet*, closed and engaged the forts with their secondary armaments, the *Inflexible* and *Agamemnon* supporting at long range. All the forts except one on the European side were apparently silenced, and no Allied ship was hit.

Of the first phase of the campaign, Mr. Churchill said it "was successful beyond our hopes." "The outer forts," he said, "were destroyed; the Fleet was able to enter the Straits and attack the forts in the Narrows." Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, however, in a long letter to *The Times*, on November 24, 1915, said in reference to this statement:

This is the first time I have ever heard this view expressed, because almost all naval men who took part in the early bombardments with whom I have spoken express the opinion that it was the difficulty in smashing the outer forts which first opened their eyes to the true nature of what their task would be when the time came to attack the Narrows. The first bombardment was on February 19, and was confined to the outer forts at Helles, Seddul Bahr and Kum Kale. These works were fully exposed, and can be partly enfiladed. They mounted old-fashioned Krupp guns, mostly 9.5's, and some larger, but the extreme range was only some 10,000 yards. They were erected, in fact, to sweep the entrance to the Straits, and not to oppose a long-range attack from the sea.

Proceeding, Mr. Churchill said that "across the prospect of the operations a shadow began to pass at the end of the first week in March. The difficulties of sweeping up the mine-fields increased, and although great success was obtained by the ships in silencing the forts, they were not able at that stage to inflict decisive and permanent damage. The mobile armament of the enemy began to develop and become increasingly annoying." Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett interprets the "shadow" as being the parting of the ways between Mr. Churchill and Lord Fisher. "It would seem," he wrote in his letter to *The Times*, "as if Lord Fisher became sceptical of the whole enterprise directly he realized the inability of the Fleet to clear the enemy's minefield, or to locate any other underwater defences, the difficulties of silencing the forts of the Narrows by long-range direct fire, and the inability of the Fleet to knock out the mobile batteries on both sides of the Straits.

* Vol. V., page 365.



IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA.

Destruction of the *Königsberg*: Hauling a wrecked seaplane aboard a British warship.

He evidently realized that none of the conditions precedent for a successful attempt to force the Narrows had been fulfilled, and under the circumstances the Fleet might be faced with a grave disaster." On Mr. Churchill the difficulties appeared to have the effect of increasing his determination to rush the matter through. It was decided, so he told the House of Commons, that the gradual advance must be replaced by more vigorous measures. Vice-Admiral Sackville H. Carden, then commanding the Allied Fleet, "was invited to press hard for a decision, and not to be deterred by the inevitable loss." The Admiral was, however, stricken down with illness on the 16th, and invalided by medical authority, when Rear-Admiral John M. de Robeck, second-in-command, took his place, with the acting rank of Vice-Admiral. The attack in force took place on March 18, and failed with the loss of the British battleships *Irresistible* (Captain Douglas L. Dent) and *Ocean* (Captain A. Hayes-Sadler), and the French battleship *Bouvet*, the last-named sinking with the greater part of her crew. Mr. Churchill evidently thought, and led the public to believe also, that this action on March 18 was a deliberate attempt to force a passage through the Narrows and reach Constantinople, but careful study of the facts concerning it proves that it was nothing of the

kind, and was never intended to be so by the officers commanding. It was only an attempt to clear the triple minefield below the Narrows. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett stated in his letter to *The Times* that, in addition to the three capital ships sunk outright, the French battleship *Gaulois* was run ashore on Rabbit Island to prevent her sinking, and the battle-cruiser *Inflexible* was so badly damaged by a mine that it was thought at one time she must sink. He added :

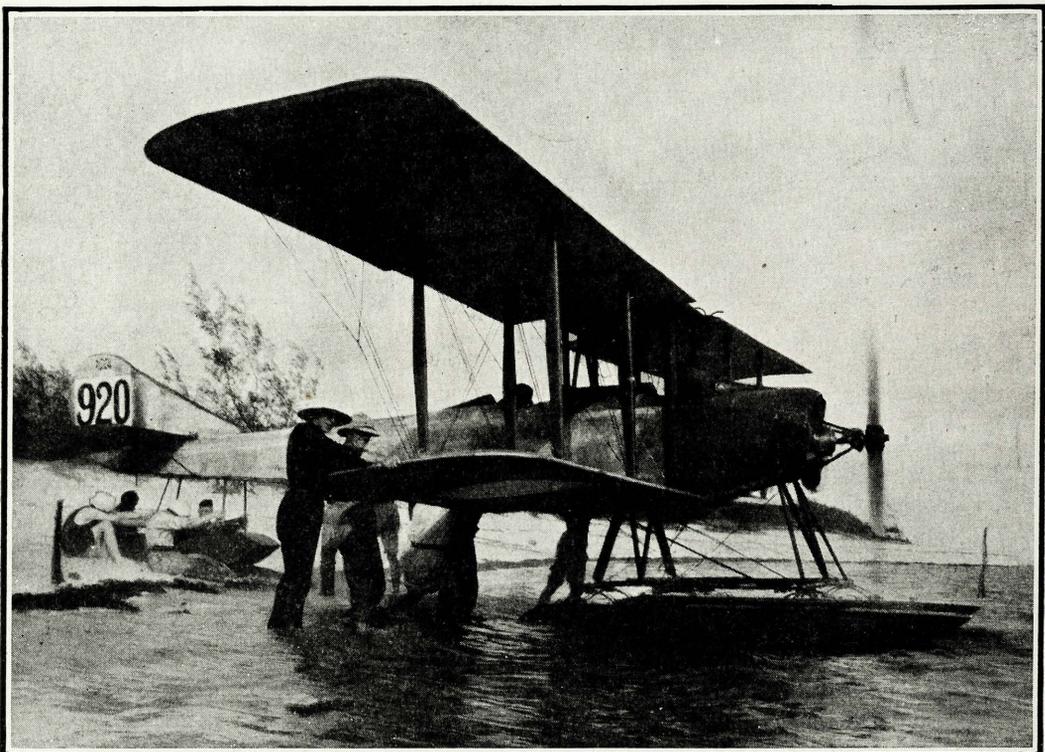
The Fleet was prepared, of course, to take advantage of any favourable condition that might possibly arise for a dash through, but it was hardly within the scheme of operation that this dash should take place on the same day. The plan of campaign was for the Fleet to silence the forts at the Narrows, those at Kephez Point and Fort Dardanus, to enable destroyers and trawlers to sweep the minefield, which they had hitherto been unable to do. . . . But the facts underlying the naval attack are simple, and the merest tyro can understand them. We attempted a most difficult operation, as usual underestimating our opponents and without any adequate information on the essential points. We persisted in our effort, even when none of the conditions precedent to forcing the Narrows—on which the experts based their consent—were fulfilled. In consequence we got a fair and square beating, at which we cannot complain. We went all out on March 18. There were no half-measures. How many Englishmen would have slept soundly in their beds that night had they known that our latest and greatest Dreadnought, the *Queen Elizabeth*, was a long way up the Straits throughout the whole of the 18th amongst drifting mines, one of which actually knocked out the *Inflexible*, of the same division and on the same alignment, off Aren Koi ?

After March 18 it was decided to substitute

for the purely naval operation a joint naval and military attack, and on the 19th the Admiralty in their official *communiqué* stated that "The operations are continuing, ample naval and military forces being available on the spot." Unfortunately, as already narrated in Chapter XCII., though the troops were on the spot, they had been wrongly loaded in the transports, and Sir Ian Hamilton, having reluctantly decided that the cooperation of the whole of his force would be required to enable the Fleet effectively to force the Dardanelles, had first of all to redistribute the troops in the transports to suit the order of their disembarkation. It was impossible to do this at Mudros, and therefore all the ships had to return to Egypt. A whole month elapsed before the military force was able to attack the peninsula on April 25, with the result known. This delay probably sealed the fate of the expedition. The invaluable element of surprise was lost. Had the Army been on the spot and ready to land when the Fleet began to bombard on February 19 it is difficult to see how, in view of the facts revealed later, it could have failed in its purpose.

We have already told the tale of the landings in Gallipoli. Further information concern-

ing the Navy's part in that stupendous undertaking serves to emphasize the warm-hearted eulogy passed by Sir Ian Hamilton. To the difficulties, already of a considerable and unprecedented magnitude, in which the seamen had to labour to support the Army on shore, to keep it supplied with food and munitions, to protect its reinforcements and transport its wounded, there were added others when the arrival of enemy submarines took place. The first of these boats to arrive was believed to be a vessel commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Otto Hersing, the successful assailant of the *Pathfinder* in the second month of the war. He was said to have left Wilhelmshaven on the day the British landed in the peninsula, and he reached the Straits exactly a month later, when he torpedoed the battleships *Triumph* and *Majestic*. A description of their sinking, as well as of the destruction of the *Goliath* by a Turkish destroyer has already been given. Henceforth the right wing of the Army had to be left to take care of itself during the night, it being too dangerous for ships to be stationed at this point. The news of the *Goliath's* destruction seems to have determined Lord Fisher's attitude towards the Dardanelles under-



IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA.

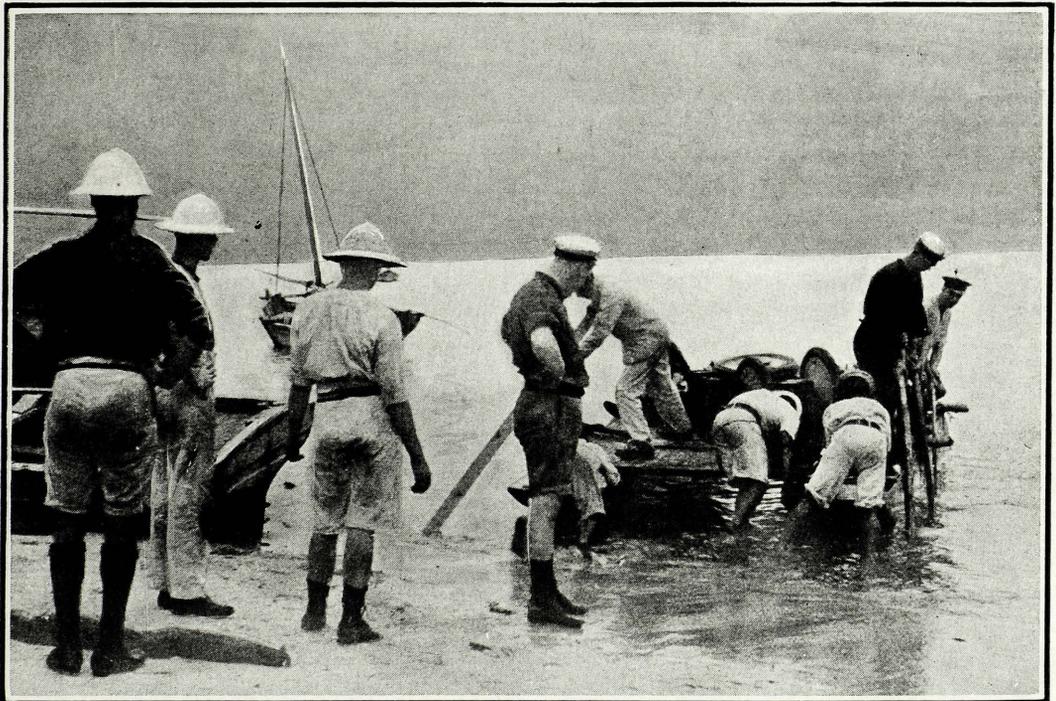
A British seaplane about to start on a scouting expedition.

taking, for he resigned next day. The increasing drain upon ships and men caused by the expedition, for no apparent result, evidently convinced the First Sea Lord that stronger action was necessary than an expression of his "doubts and hesitations" which the Prime Minister said in Parliament on November 2 had been in the mind of the Government's chief naval adviser before the naval attack was begun.

The advent of submarines off the Straits changed the aspect of the naval force there. The big ships had to retire to sheltered harbours, protected by booms and nets, and for a short time the Fleet was represented by destroyers and small craft, whose work was beyond all praise. These frail, unprotected vessels rendered noble service under extremely dangerous conditions, being frequently under fire to which they could not reply. At length the deficiency was made good by the utilization of a fleet of monitors which had been ordered in the previous year for another purpose by Lord Fisher. These vessels, so constructed that they can carry the guns of a cruiser or battleship, according to their size, without having the vulnerability to submarine attack of those types, began to arrive in July. Three classes of monitors were mentioned, one with two

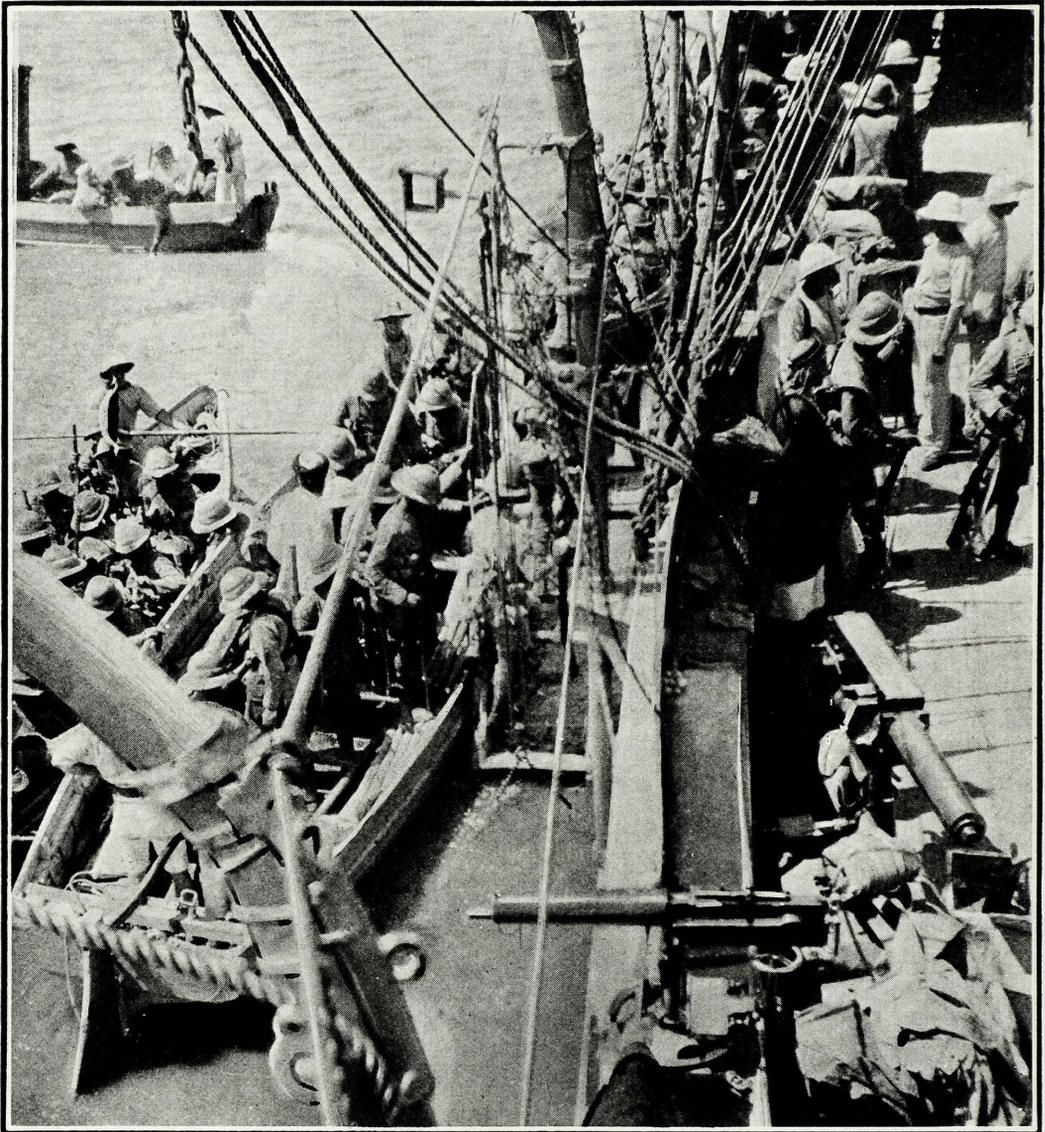
6-in. guns, another with one 9·2-in. forward and a 6-in. aft, and a third with two 14-in. guns. Old cruisers of the Edgar class also appeared, having been structurally adapted to render them practically immune from torpedo attack. Owing to the bulges on their sides, they were known as "blister ships." They played an important rôle on the occasion of the new landing at Suvla Bay on August 6 and the subsequent operations, when they commanded every vantage-point and kept the Turks from showing themselves near the cliffs and from counter-attacking.

Towards the end of 1915 the enemy submarines were reinforced, whether by boats sent out from German ports or by craft transported in sections to Austria and re-launched into the Adriatic was uncertain; probably in both ways. Baulked of opportunities for attacking the Fleet on the spot at the Dardanelles, their activity was diverted to the long line of communications through the Mediterranean, and in the last three months of the year their chances in this connexion improved owing to the dispatch of a new expedition to Salonika. At first, owing mainly to the surprise which they effected, the "U" boats achieved a certain amount of success. On August 14 the transport Royal Edward was sunk in the Ægean with the



IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA.

A raft constructed of seaplane floats used for getting supplies ashore.



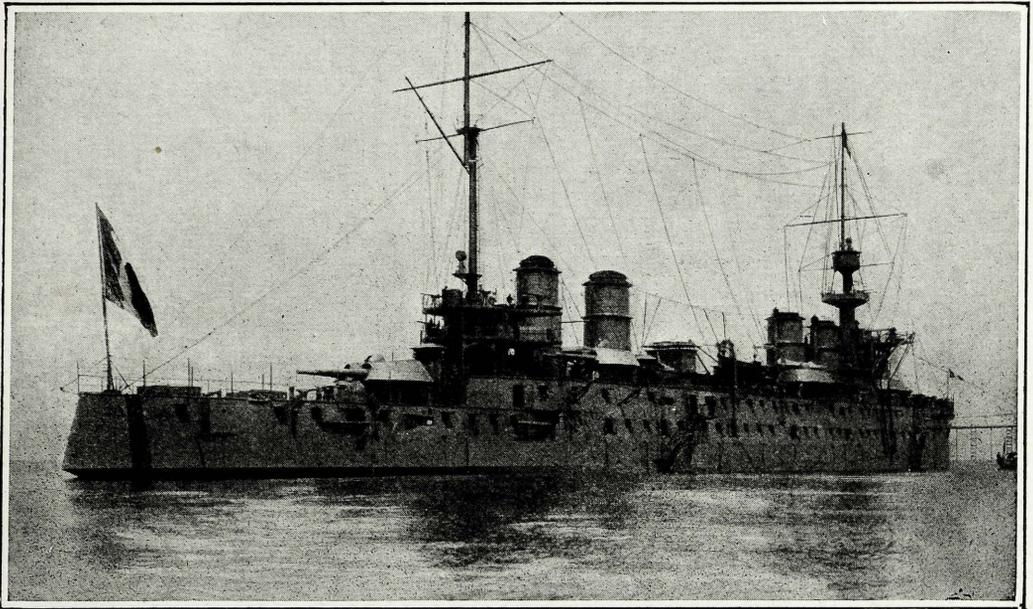
ON THE RIVER TIGRIS.

British troops re-embarking on board a vessel after a fight with the Turks in Mesopotamia.

loss of about 1,000 lives, and subsequently the Southland, Ramazan, Marquette, Woodfield and Mercian were also sunk or damaged by submarine attack. A new group of boats got through the Straits of Gibraltar in the first week of November, as stated by the French Ministry of Marine, and off the North African coast they destroyed several merchantmen. On November 7 the Italian liner Ancona was torpedoed without warning, and also shelled, being sunk with the loss of about 300 lives. On December 30 the P. and O. Company's steamer Persia was torpedoed and sunk off Crete, with the loss of 200 lives. Here again no warning was given. Whether the attacking boats in this new campaign were Austrian or German was

uncertain, and it was also reported that Turkish submarines were being utilized. Another locality where they attained a measure of success was on the western frontier of Egypt, the armed boarding steamer Tara and the Egyptian gunboats Prince Abbas and Abdul Moneim being destroyed in the Bay of Sollum. By the end of the year, however, the preventive measures taken by the Allies in concert had appreciably lessened the submarines' activity. Many suspected places were examined for possible stores for the raiders, and some were occupied by Allied forces, including the Kaiser's villa at Corfu.

A brilliant chapter in the history of the Dardanelles undertaking is that concerned with



THE FRENCH CRUISER LEON GAMBETTA.
Torpedoed in the Adriatic by an Austrian submarine.

the doings of French and British submarines which penetrated into the Sea of Marmora. After negotiating all obstacles in the tricky and hazardous passage through the Dardanelles, and passing under the minefields, these vessels up to October 26 had succeeded in sinking or damaging two battleships, five gunboats, one torpedo boat, eight transports, and 197 supply ships of all kinds. This activity had a marked effect on the reinforcement and supply of the Turkish Army in the peninsula. The great exploits of Commanders Boyle and Nasmith have been described (Vol. VI., p. 96). More than one submarine entered the harbour at Constantinople itself and attacked shipping at the wharves, and the Turkish powder mills at Zeitunlik and railway cutting near Kara Burnu were also shelled. The measure of risk attaching to this work was shown by the heavy losses sustained by the Franco-British flotilla, the submarines Saphir, Mariotte, Joule and Turquoise, E.15, AE.2, E.7, and E.20 being sunk or captured during the year.

The naval situation in the Adriatic throughout 1915 resembled that in the North Sea in that no important fleet actions took place. The Austro-Hungarian Fleet was contained at Pola by the Franco-British forces from August, 1914, to May, 1915, when the Italian Navy joined in the task, and although "liveliness" increased after this it was confined to coast raids and

affairs between outposts. When the entry of Italy into the war relieved his force of its duty as immediate guard over the Adriatic, Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère, who had commanded the Franco-British Fleet since the return to England in August, 1914, of Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, issued an Order of the Day in which he referred to the remarkable endurance with which the work had been done. He thanked his subordinates for the tireless zeal, energy, and abnegation which every one of them had displayed in supporting him in the most arduous and thankless tasks which naval forces ever had to accomplish. On October 10 the retirement of the Admiral, owing to ill-health, was announced, and Vice-Admiral d'Artige du Fournet was appointed Commander-in-Chief in his place.

In the war of attrition by submarine, mine, and other methods, both sides suffered a few losses. The Austrian light cruiser Zenta was sunk on August 16, 1914, in a sweep up to Cattaro by the Allied Fleets. On December 28 the French submarine Curie tried to enter Pola harbour, but became entangled in the defence obstructions and was captured, when the Austrians renamed her the Zenta in memory of their lost cruiser. French submarines operating in the Adriatic were rather unlucky, no success being reported by them up to the end of 1915, while in addition to the Curie the Fresnel and Monge were lost. The former was destroyed on December 5, 1915, off San Giovanni di

Medusa, being attacked while aground; and the latter on December 28 off Cattaro. Austrian submarines were more successful, and in 1914 attacked the Waldeck Rousseau and Courbet, neither of which, however, was sunk. On April 27, 1915, they torpedoed and destroyed the cruiser Leon Gambetta, in which nearly 600 men were lost, at the entrance to the Otranto Straits, and on July 7 and 18 respectively the Italian cruisers Amalfi and Giuseppe Garibaldi were sunk. On June 11 a British cruiser of the "Liverpool" class was torpedoed, but only damaged. The Austrian flotilla had several losses during this warfare. The first boat reported sunk was the submarine which attacked the Waldeck Rousseau on October 17, 1914. On July 1, 1915, U.11 was seriously damaged in an air attack by a French aviator, Sub-Lieutenant Rouillet, who hit the boat with two bombs. A fortnight earlier another novel combat had taken place—a duel between submarines. The Italian boat Medusa was torpedoed by an Austrian submarine and sunk, and divers who went down to examine the wreck found the hull of an Austrian boat as well, showing that both combatants in this action went to the bottom. Oddly enough, a second

duel of the kind occurred in the Adriatic on August 11, when the Austrian submarine U.12, which had torpedoed the Courbet in the previous December, was torpedoed by an Italian submarine and sunk with all on board. Two days later U.3 was also sunk, and about one-half of the Austrian flotilla was reported to have been accounted for at this time.

Towards the end of 1915 the naval control of the Adriatic by the Allies became of increased utility because of the need for transporting an Italian Army to Albania and for bringing away Serbian troops and refugees. The dispatch of an expeditionary force to Valona was accomplished with complete success, and reflected great credit upon the Italian Navy. It was officially stated at Roma that 260,000 men were moved between the western and eastern shores of the lower Adriatic, under the escort of the Allied Fleet, and a large quantity of animals were also carried, 250 steamers being needed for the work. During the same undertaking 300,000 cwt. of materials were transported in 100 steamers, mostly of small tonnage so that they might be able to put in on the opposite shore. The Austrians threatened this enterprise by 19 submarine attacks, and by



THE SURVIVORS OF THE CREW OF THE LEON GAMBETTA.

activity in the air, by mining certain areas, and raids by torpedo craft and cruisers, but such was the efficiency displayed by the Allied seamen that only three small steamers were lost, two by striking mines and a third by being torpedoed after she had discharged her cargo. Not a single Serbian soldier was lost at sea. Considering that these operations were carried on in a restricted area of water, and along routes well known to the enemy and without alternatives, it was a magnificent achievement of which the Italian Commander-in-Chief, Admiral the Duke of the Abruzzi, and the Allied admirals associated with him, may well have been proud.

The naval position in the Black Sea attracted increased attention when Bulgaria entered the war on October 14, 1915, and on the 27th the Russian Fleet bombarded the port and harbour of Varna. One or two of the new "Dreadnoughts" were engaged, with other battleships, and the railway station, custom house, wireless station, and other military objects were destroyed. Rear-Admiral R. F. Phillimore, formerly Principal Naval Transport Officer at the Dardanelles, was present in the Russian flagship as Chief of the British Naval Mission, and it was afterwards reported that he inspected the naval bases in the Black Sea. The Russian forces made good use of their control of its waters, and destroyed hundreds of Turkish craft carrying supplies to Constantinople. In such skirmishes as took place with the Ottoman Navy, moreover, they asserted their superiority, even the battle cruiser Goeben being worsted, proving that her efficiency as a fighting unit had been greatly lowered. The Turks' losses included the cruiser Medjidieh, sunk by a mine near Odessa on April 3, 1915. She was refloated two months after by the Russians. Once or twice hostile submarines were reported to have appeared, whether German, Turkish, or Bulgarian was not known definitely, but they achieved no success, and on July 15, 1915, one boat was reported to have been sunk. Six submarines sent in sections to Varna for the protection of the port were unable to prevent its bombardment, during which they also suffered loss and damage.

There remains to be noted the assistance and support given by the Royal Navy to the military expeditions on the rivers at the head of the Persian Gulf and in the various German Colonies. These enterprises were not only rendered possible by the protecting shield of the

Grand Fleet, but owed no small measure of their success to the help given on the spot by the seamen. In Mesopotamia a naval brigade accompanied the expeditionary force, and a gunboat flotilla also cooperated. In September, 1915, Sir Mark Sykes, describing the operations in Mesopotamia, mentioned in terms of high praise the conduct of the seamen of the Royal Navy and Royal Indian Marine serving there. The flotilla working with the expedition, he said, included paddle steamers which once carried passengers, armoured and armed tugs, a launch carrying 4.7-in. guns, "a steamer with a Christmas-tree growing amidships, in the branches of which its officers fondly imagine they are invisible to friend or foe," and a ship which started life as an aeroplane in Singapore, shed its wings but kept its aerial propeller, took to the water and became a hospital. This fleet, he added, was the cavalry screen, advance guard, rear guard, railway, headquarters, heavy artillery, line of communication, supply depôt, police force, field ambulance, aerial hangar, and base of supply of the Mesopotamian Expedition.

Lastly, the indispensable character of the Fleet's help to the conquest of the German Colonies was fittingly acknowledged by General Botha, who, after the final surrender of German South-West Africa in July, 1915, said at Capetown that "the success of this expedition would have been impossible but for the help of the British Navy, for whose protection South Africa ought ever to be grateful." The same was true of the operations against the Cameroons, which were crowned with success in February, 1916, and in which naval officers and men afforded assistance and support in many ways, notably by the transport of heavy naval guns several hundreds of miles to the siege of Garua and other places. In East Africa a blockade of the entire German coast was declared on February 28, 1915, and a blow at the enemy's power was struck when the monitors *Severn* and *Mersey*, under Captain E. J. A. Fullerton, ascended the Rufigi River and knocked out the German cruiser *Königsberg*, which had been hiding there since October, 1914. This daring and difficult task was completely successful on July 11, 1915, the two shallow-draught monitors, aided by aeroplanes spotting, bringing their heavy guns to bear with telling effect. The episode afforded another illustration of the working of that long arm of sea power which had throughout the war been the mainstay of the Allies.