

# RECALLING *the* BATTLE of JUTLAND

THE great sea-fight of May 31, 1916, is one of the mysteries of the war. For one thing, it was too vast to be grasped by any one mind in its entirety, its details and its relations, for it was fought by hundreds of ships of all classes over thousands of square leagues of sea. One of the mysteries is the "design" the German fleet confesses it had in mind when it came out of its entrenchments in the Kiel Canal. Some opine that it "designed" to cover the escape of three formidable raiders into the Atlantic, and that the design was defeated by a battle-cruiser which sank them all before she herself came to grief. Another mystery is the escape of the Germans in the night, for Jellicoe's aim was a Nelson victory, nothing less than the annihilation of the hostile force in a second Trafalgar. It escaped into port; and for twenty-four hours, the Empire mourned a British defeat. But suppose our fleet had been driven into harbor, as Monk and Rupert were driven in the Second Dutch war, or as the Channel Fleet was forced to take cover at the close of the Revolutionary War.

Except the admirals and their staffs, no man could see more of the great battle than his own immediate job. Take the case of the Marine Officer. He was asleep in his cabin on the fateful afternoon of the thirty-first of May, after long watching. When he awoke about four o'clock, he went into the ward-room for a cup of tea to clear his heavy head. "Quarters" was sounded in the usual way and he rushed to his station in the forward turret. Nobody was aware of anything unusual, it was part of the daily routine, until the order came to load with lyddite. There was no "England expects," and that sort of thing, but soon everyone realized the long awaited battle with the Huns had begun.

The turret of a battle-ship is what its name implies, a round tower, or tube of steel, built up from the very keelson to the upper deck. The visible portion is the round, low house, from which protrude the twenty-foot tubes of the fifteen-inch guns. The whole revolves smoothly, and the guns can be trained in a wide segment of a circle ahead or on either beam. Such is the perfection of the modern machinery that no more men are needed to serve one of these monsters than worked a thirty-two pounder in the days of Nelson. Two sight-setters to each gun; six marines to pull levers and turn wheels, a bandsman to pass orders and the Marine Officer boy in command, a dozen men in all, were sufficient to handle the twin guns that can each hurl a top-weight for twelve miles with the accuracy of a target rifle. Man-made machinery does the work of countless men. It hoists the ammunition from far below the waterline, loads and rams home the charge, trains the gun, fires it and takes the recoil. There is very little noise in the turret. All the force of the explosion spends itself outwards upon the air. Inside, all one hears is a faint "woof." The aiming is directed from the fire-control, a steel perch high up on the military mast, where the observing officer peers through his binoculars at flying smudges on the skyline that are hostile battleships. He swings giddily with the roll of the ship; the enemy shells burst alongside throwing up columns of water mast-high, drenching and blinding him; but no discomfort or danger must hinder him from his accurate reading of his instruments and his calculations.

So the great battle was fought in a hundred ships. In the turret, all the gun-crews knew was loading and firing, as the telephone orders came through. Now they know that as part of the Fifth Battle Squadron, they were "hard at it with von Hepper." What was happening in the other steel-walled pens even of their own ship was unknown to them. They could feel

SIR JOHN JELlicoe as Viscount goes to the House of Lords and out of the Admiralty. The great naval machine will go on without him under Rear-Admiral Wemyss — pronounced Weems. When thinking over how easily a war machine shuffles off some men and pushes up others, remember the Battle of Jutland, the one big sea battle in which Jellicoe was actively concerned. There was a day's work in the Jutland fight—but Sir John Jellicoe's part in it was less than somebody else's. Maritime's reminiscence of Jutland, got from one who was in that fight, is a good side-light on the work of the navy as it was under Sir John Jellicoe.

## By MARITIME

the whole mighty fabric vibrating from stem to stern, as the carefully nursed engines drove her faster than she had ever gone before; and they accommodated themselves unconsciously to the long graceful roll from side to side. Once she rolled to one side and did not recover, but remained tilted over at an angle of five degrees. Two shots in close succession had struck her between wind and water, making a hole you could drive a cart through and flooding four or five compartments; but so strongly is a modern battleship built that this injury did not prevent her keeping her place in the line.

Another lucky shot struck the midmost gun of her secondary six-inch starboard battery. It blew the crew to atoms, only a few blood-flecks on the steel showed where living men had been, a second before. In each gun emplacement were heaped up charges of cordite; they must be ready, if the guns are to be fired with swiftness required in modern battle. The bursting shell fired the cordite. It flared up like the flame of alcohol and ran along the whole battery from emplacement to emplacement. The Hun observing officer must have thought the ship was on fire. In a moment all the gun-crews were "casualties," dead or severely burned in the dreadful flame. One quick-witted sailor saw the flash running down the ship's side, threw himself on the deck, wrapped himself in a mat, and so escaped. The flame ran down the ammunition hoist to the magazine; but "nothing was uncorked," or this particular ship would have shared the fate of the "Queen Mary." Swiftly the wounded were carried below to a clean, sanitary, well-appointed sick-bay, where every expedient of modern medical science was available for the relief of the sufferers. What a contrast to the horrors of the old cockpit! New crews were at once improvised from the port battery; for there are no reserves to be ordered up in a battleship. The human parts of the naval machinery would seem to be interchangeable, for the new crews "carried on," each man doing two men's work, and doing it well. The guns were undamaged, and ten minutes after the disabling of a hundred men the starboard guns repelled a German torpedo-boat attack. The faint smudges on the horizon were so bombarded that they swerved from their appointed path, and the British battleship sped on, none the worse for their deadly menace.

Soon the gun-crews in the turret had troubles of their own. Down below the protective steel deck, there had been hot work in the stokehold and the engine-room; and the ship raced as she had not on her trials. The desired result was obtained of "a knot to veer and haul on, in the old way"; but it also brought a disadvantage. The tremendous vibration put some of the gear out of commission. In the turret

the loading-tray went wrong and the guns had to be loaded by hand. It was pully-hauling on a wire "whip," and swaying up two thousand pounds of metal by sheer man power. With the roll of the ship, the huge, unwieldy thing depending from its crane would come against the side of the turret with a tremendous clang. There had to be swift ducking, dodging and crouching down, if men were to escape being crushed to pulp. It was like the loose caronade in the Claymore. Once the shell was in the breech, the hydraulic rammer pushed it home. Handling the explosive was a simpler matter. The five hundred pounds of cordite in two packages of equal weight was easy to deal with. The loading gear went wrong after the first hour of action, and from that time on there was no harder worked gang of men in the ship. They peeled to it, as in Nelson's day; and they labored with those shell till every muscle ached and the sweat dripped from them; they worked to the actual point of sheer exhaustion.

Suddenly there came a tremendous burst of sound as if a hundred Thor's hammers had smitten the turret at once. The Marine Officer thought the gun-shield had gone; he looked to see, but it was still intact. Soon he realized what had happened. A German shell eleven inches in diameter, travelling with inconceivable velocity from an enemy ship ten or twelve miles on the beam had struck the dome of the turret. It had not exploded—a common fault of German shell that day—else there would have been no story for the Marine Officer to tell.

The impact was terrific. It drove particles of steel like rifle bullets from the roof of the dome into the deck, just missing one man and another. Outside it drove fine dust into the face of the observing officer in his little steel cupola; but the brass flap was down and no harm was done beyond making him look like a sweep. It smashed down that dome of special four-inch steel as you smash in a tin can with your fist. From being a dome, it became a bath-tub; but it kept out the shell. If the dome had been of the ordinary make, the projectile would have wrecked the turret. The energy was converted into heat, according to physical law, and sent the temperature up ten degrees. The smash on the top also cracked open the walls of the turret and let in the light.

The English are a much abused race, but they know how to build ships. A handbreadth's thickness of special process steel was sufficient that day to save two big guns and the lives of the crew that fought them.

From time to time, "Still" was sounded throughout the great ship. All noise, all movement ceases on the instant; the men stand like statues, till the signal comes to "carry on." After all the turmoil and uproar, and all the back-breaking work, the sudden peace in the very heart of the desperate battle was eerie. It was more impressive than the awful tumult. The Marine Officer will never forget in one such period of calm, the colors of the sunset showing through the cracked sides of the turret, as the tall ship sped swiftly on.

When he did get a chance to come out of the turret, he looked about for the wreckage. He expected to see the superstructure shot away, according to the books, and the decks cumbered with twisted masses of top-hammer, but there was hardly a sign anywhere of the fiery furnace she had passed through. She had her list to starboard, her hundred dead and wounded, her smashed-in cupola of the forward turret. She was hit eight times altogether; but the damage was unimportant. In the night she passed a destroyer red-hot from stem to stern like a live coal, and other strange sights, but when his relief came, he dropped on the deck and slept as if on a feather bed.