

And, besides all this, there is another supply of food in the ship—that collected by the canteen, to be retailed at fair prices to those men who require delicacies of any kind to tempt the appetite—if it needs any tempting after four hours spent in drill, or in facing the bleak winds that make the North Sea their especial abiding-place. Nor, in the canteen, is there any less variety than in the paymaster's stores—only the food is of a more perishable kind. Butter and beans, kidneys in tins, veal and ham pies, eggs, cigarettes—half a million packets a month are none too many for a big battleship—matches, dried herrings, kippers, haddocks, sardines, bloater-paste, and many other mysterious concoctions in tins; sides of bacon and cases of eggs, dozens of round cheeses, and boxes of bloaters; tons of "German" sausage—why does the sailor call this "Ordinary Seaman's Delight"?—tinned fruits, boxes of chocolates, and caramels for Jack's sweet tooth; great slabs of cake, mountains of macaroni; shoals of sago and tapioca; chutney, sauces, spice, candied fruits, lemonade-powders, and hosts of other things may be purchased from the canteen, either for ready money, or by a credit system which debits the man's mess with the price of the goods, leaving it to collect the cash from him at the month's end, when accounts are rendered.

The system by which the sailor can augment his rations by purchasing from the paymaster those things which cannot be obtained from the canteen is worth mentioning here. Each man is allowed the sum of 4d. per day above the value of the rations which he must take up from the paymaster, and with this 4d. he must buy all extras, such as a second vegetable for dinner, butter for his bread. Such things as bread, meat, potatoes, salt and condiments, sugar and tea and milk and jam are compulsory issues; but suppose the sailor desires a pie for his dinner, with beans to supplement the potatoes, and a tapioca pudding for a sweet. The flour for the pie-crust he can get from the paymaster, its value being debited from the 4d. per day per man; the beans, tapioca, and so on, he buys from the canteen on the monthly credit system. At the end of each month the paymaster calculates the total messing allowance of each mess, deducts therefrom the value of the provisions that mess has drawn from him on "repayment," and hands the difference over to the senior hand. The senior hand, with this money, pays the month's canteen bill, and it is exceedingly seldom that he has not to ask his messmates to put their hands into their own pockets and contribute equal shares to the amount necessary to clear the canteen account. But even if a ship had a full canteen and provision-holds stacked to overflowing, all these provisions would be useless