

GREEN JACKETS

covered in the presence of these men who were about to die.

Suddenly the power-boat broke out a flag at her masthead—a bright green flag bearing a golden harp.

Again the small gun flashed from her after-deck; another gun spoke with a splitting report from the starboard bow; both the shells exploded close to the patrol cruiser, showering her superstructure with steel fragments.

And, as the concussions subsided, and the landward echoes of the shots died away, far and clear from the power-boat's decks, across the water, came the defiant chorus:

"I saw the Shannon's purple tide
Roll by the Irish town,
As I stood in the breach by Donal's side
When England's flag went down!—"

They were singing "Green Jackets," these doomed men. Barres could hear them cheering, too, for a moment only—then every gun aboard the flimsy little craft spat flame at the big Canadian, and the bursting shells splashed the water all around her with their pigmy fragments.

Now, from the cruiser, a single gun bellowed. Instantly a red glare wrapped the launch; there was a heavy report, a fountain of rushing smoke and debris.

Against the infernal flare of light Skeel's tall figure showed in silhouette, standing there with hat lifted as though cheering. Again, from the cruiser, a gun crashed. Where the burning launch had been a horrible flare shot up; and the shocking detonation rocked land and sky. On the water a vast black cloud rested, almost motionless; and all around rained charred