

TRAVEL BY TROOPSHIP

ACCOUNT OF THE SOLDIER'S LIFE AT SEA.

When the Great Troopships Carry Him From England to Foreign Service.

Between the end of September and the commencement of the following April, which is the period known to his Majesty's forces as the "trooping" season, the hired transport ply between Southampton and many ports overseas, carrying thousands of our soldiers to take their turns of foreign and Colonial service. To the majority of them life on a troopship comes as a decided novelty, and not by any means an unpleasant one, says London Answers.

Of course, nobody enjoys the pangs of mal-de-mer, but once they have survived, the days pass pleasantly enough. The only thing there is to complain about is the overcrowding. There are usually some fifteen hundred souls aboard, and the room is decidedly limited. But, although Tommy may "grone" a little, it takes more than a little inconvenience really to upset him, and it is a happy crowd that jostles its neighbors on the rolling decks.

"REVEILLE."

"Reveille" goes early. We are out of bed—represented, of course, by a hammock—in time to see the sun rise. The skirmishing commences at once. Every hammock must be rolled and stowed away in the shortest possible time, and the sight of a few hundred men rolling and lashing up their bedding, pushing and falling over one another, laughing and shouting at the top of their voices in the semi-darkness of the mess-deck, is one to be remembered.

While we are filling our lungs with ozone the deck we have just left is undergoing a transformation. Mess-tables are fixed in position, the forms are secured on either side of them and long before the citizen ashore is awake breakfast is being brought from the galleys.

Meanwhile, the decks have been swabbed. The merry hose-pipe distributes its stream impartially over them, and any luckless wight who may happen to get in the way; the fatigue-party of barefooted swabbers swarm gaily along the decks, and soon everything is very clean and remarkably wet.

"BURGOO."

The messing on the boats has improved a great deal during the last few years, and the breakfast is not to be despised. The inevitable "burgoo"—otherwise porridge—is almost sure to form the first course and is followed by bread, butter, and brown, or something equally appetizing. Appetites were lousy by the time we were a few days at sea, but there is enough to go round.

Breakfast over, we are bundled unceremoniously on to the upper decks, while the mess orderlies and their assistants remove the remains of the feast, if there are any, and clean up.

At about 9 a.m. the only real general parade of the day is held. The troops, in clean attire, and, as a rule, with bare feet, fall in at the posts allotted to them, and there is a muster roll-call, generally followed by gymnastics. The latter, on the uneven deck, fully deserve the term, and evolutions are performed that are not to be found laid down in any of the text-books on the subject. This is particularly the case if the instructor be gifted with the priceless gift of humor. To see a squad of men raise themselves on their toes, place their hands on hips, and, after endeavoring to sit down slowly on their heels, roll solemnly in the direction of the cuipers, is a new experience to the tyro in.

MARITIME GYMNASTICS.

At frequent intervals there are surprise fire alarms. The fire-calls go, there is a furious dashing, hither and thither of soldiers and sailors; and out of apparent chaos comes perfect order in considerably less time than it takes to tell it. Sentries are at their posts, properly armed, troops at their quarters; the orderlies of the Royal Army Medical Corps are in attendance on the invalids in the sick bay, and the officers responsible for the safety of the floating town have gone to their rounds, and found all correct, or otherwise. If otherwise, somebody is in for a very bad quarter of an hour.

Unless we happen to be detailed for guard, or some similar duty, the rest of the day is our own. There is dinner—and by no means a bad dinner—at noon. The mess orderlies parade at the cook's galley, and in turn, as the numbers of the different messes are called out, they receive the delicacies apportioned to them, and convey them to their appointed messes—that is to say, they do their best to do so. To carry a dish of steaming meat along a swaying deck, with both hands employed, and through a crowd of men, is not easy.

SITTING IN THE DINNER.

A groan of anguish ascends from No. 27 mess, and a howl of delight from all the other tables on the deck. A mess orderly has descended with more haste and vigor than dignity, and is to be seen sitting in the remains of what was intended to be a dinner for sixteen of his comrades. However, he is not hurt, and another repast is produced from somewhere, and a fresh start made. Suddenly, there is a fearful crash, a wild inrush of water and men and plates and establish are floating across the deck in confusion. Somebody has forgotten to close the ports.

Hammocks are drawn at five in the evening, and by half-past eight everybody not on duty has turned in. The decks are visited frequently during the night by the orderly officers, and a number of sentries are constantly on duty night and day, in case of fire or any unusual occurrence, as the orders put it. Needless to say, smoking between decks is prohibited, though the rule is not invariably observed; but it is short shrift for the Tommy caught breaking it.

SPORTS ON DECK.

Sports, boxing competitions, and concerts are the rule on all troopships. The former comprise obstacle races of a most complicated description, so far as the obstacles are concerned. Pillow-fights, in which the competitors sit astride a pole lashed above a tank filled with water, mop-fights, and so on; and the boxing bouts are always full of interest. The chaplains, and both military and ship's officers, take part in promoting the concerts; and, of course, the ladies are to the fore; while there is always plenty of talent amongst the troops themselves.

From time to time a "trooper" returning from India is fitted as a hospital-ship. The mess-tables and other paraphernalia are removed from the decks, and in their places are fitted up swinging-beds, for the reception of the poor fellows who, from one cause and another, are being invalided home. It is a sight to make one think profoundly to see the embarkation taking place. Some can walk on board without assistance, some must have a helping shoulder; but too many lie prone on their stretchers, and are likely to remain recumbent until they are carried ashore to the famous hospital at Netley.

THE OIL WELL SHOOTER.

Sometimes Blown Into Eternity With His Own Ammunition.

In certain of the petroleum producing districts it becomes necessary sometimes in opening an oil well—sometimes when the well has become clogged or apparently exhausted—to begin or renew the flow by exploding nitroglycerin at the bottom of the well. This explosive is employed because it is exploded readily by the dropping of a weight upon it. A man who carries nitroglycerin from well to well for this purpose is known in the oil regions as a "shooter."

The shooter has a wagon in which to carry his explosive. A square box under the seat is carefully padded, and when it has been solidly filled with cans of nitroglycerin, which is a molasses-like fluid, he fastens down the cover and drives slowly away to the well that he is to shoot. Usually he makes the trip very early in the morning to avoid the customary travel and so diminish the chance of danger.

For the most part the roads are bad, and the wagon jolts along in a way to make any one but an old shooter decidedly nervous. If it is dark there is great danger that a wheel may drop into a hole with force enough to detonate the explosive. Several wagons bearing shooters and their loads have been blown up, but no one ever lived to tell what sort of jar caused the explosion.

In such a case little is ever found except the great hole in the ground which the explosion has dug, with possibly a wheel of the wagon, a quarter of a mile away in one direction and another in the opposite direction.

The shooter generally takes from 80 to 240 quarts of nitroglycerin in his wagon. The smaller amount is quite enough if it should explode to leave no trace of the driver of the vehicle.

When the shooter reaches the well which is to be treated long torpedo tubes are placed within the casing of the well, and the nitroglycerin is poured carefully into them. The well may be 1,500 feet deep and is seldom less than a thousand. When one of the tubes is filled it is lowered with the utmost care to the bottom of the well. This operation is repeated until the shooter is satisfied that the load is heavy enough to accomplish the purpose. When all is ready a bar of iron, known as a "go-devil," is dropped into the well. The instant it leaves his hand the shooter takes to his heels, seeking a place of safety.

Suddenly the earth trembles; there is a crash, followed by a snap; a muffled sound arises and becomes louder and louder until a column of oil and water shoots from 75 to 100 feet into the air. The country for hundreds of feet around is filled with clouds of grey floating to leeward. When this subsides the well is in operation and the shooter receives his fee and drives away.—Harper's Weekly.

When he blows his own horn many a man strikes a bum note.

BENGAL STORM CENTRE

MUTINY IS THREATENED IN BRITISH INDIA.

Partition of the Province Ordered by Lord Curzon Has Proved Unpopular.

Anxiety over the trend of affairs in India is deepening in London. It is reflected in the newspapers and in daily discussions in official circles. Unless conditions improve soon the public is warned to look out for a second mutiny. The reported widespread political conspiracy in Eastern Bengal is the culmination of a long series of events of

A LIKE CHARACTER.

Bengal is the storm centre of the anti-British movement in India. Lord Curzon divided Bengal into two provinces on the theory that the population of the old province had increased out of all proportion to the general increase in India and that the division was necessary for efficient government.

This partition was intensely unpopular. The babu, or English-speaking, agitators attacked it vehemently and it became a highly effective battle cry. Southem and Western India apparently are standing aloof from the crusade, but Bengal controls and the extremists there are creating a situation that is driving Secretary Morley and his colleagues to their wits' end. The babus in Eastern Bengal, which is the new province, are themselves in a political minority compared with the Mohammedans, and they assert that this is a condition which cannot be endured.

MEN OF ABILITY PRISONERS.

The Earl of Minto has convinced Viscount Morley that rigorous action is necessary, hence the arrest of thirty-seven persons in connection with a plot at Khulna. What makes the arrests peculiarly significant is the fact that the men arrested are superior to the former agitators in ability and come from various widely scattered centres. The charge against them is that of making war against the Emperor.

Now, as always, the assertion is made that an Indian scare is unwarranted. H. N. Mahtta, editor of Hitaabadi, a vernacular paper with a large circulation, has just arrived in London from Bengal. He alleges that his country is, on the whole, contented and that there is not the slightest danger of a mutiny. He says that police spies are at the bottom of the information which reaches the Government.

FROM AFFLUENCE TO PENURY

Man Who Retired With Fortune Becomes Organ Grinder.

Another pathetic instance of a fall from affluence to penury came to light at the Westminster (London, England) Court recently, when Alfred Richard Lampson, of Grosvenor road, Pimlico, was charged, with begging and with causing his eleven-year old daughter Ellen to gather alms.

For twelve months or more he has gone out with a street organ, on which was a placard stating that he was a professional and who, until recently held a good position, but that through a series of misfortunes had been reduced to acute poverty, and, therefore, much against his will, was compelled to resort to organ grinding.

When warned against taking his child with him, he was said to have replied that to leave her at home meant a loss of 30s. a week to him.

A solicitor, Mr. Thomas Hall, said he had known the defendant personally for twenty-five years. At a comparatively early period in life he and his sister retired with an ample fortune from an excellent West End butchery business but the bulk of the fortune the defendant lost in Stock Exchange speculations. Then he took a boarding house at Brighton, and managed to get rid of the rest.

Friends, who had no idea of his fall to poverty, were said to be ready to help him, and he was bound over.

Needs to Match Walk.

"In every theater audience there are critical persons who are prolific with suggestions for making the play more realistic," said a stage manager.

"Some of these hints are worth considering too. In one play that was staged not long ago the biggest hit was made by a character actress who had to wear down-at-the-heel shoes. On the third day of a shoe-maker, who called my attention to the fact that the woman's gait and her shoes did not match. Her heels were run down on the outside, whereas the walk she assumed on the stage must inevitably cause her shoes to run over on the inside. That was a point that had escaped the notice of everybody in the company. Upon looking into the matter we found plenty of evidence to uphold our critic, and we secured a pair of property shoes with heels worn away on the inside."—New York Press.

KING REVIEWS ARMADA

BRITISH FLEET ASSEMBLED AT TORBAY.

Blue and Red Squadrons—Realistic Battle Exercises on a Grand Scale.

A description of the mighty armada reviewed off Torbay by King George is given in The London Daily Express.

Once more the weather cleared up for the benefit of the King. When the morning gun boomed from the Dreadnought at 8 o'clock the spit of flame found lurid reflection in a dense sea fog, through which the royal yacht loomed like a shadow.

People ashore murmured disappointment at the pitiful weather. On Monday wind and rain caused the abandonment of the royal programme. To-day fog and drizzle promised to bring about a like result.

But as the morning wore on there came an improvement. What sailors expressly term the "dirt" that was obscuring the bay began to thin and roll up. One after another the forms of the warships stole out, shrinking to their proper proportions as they stood forth in clear-cut shape.

The land stealthily unfolded its panorama, and presently the sun gleamed down on the waters.

SIGNALLED BY SEARCHLIGHT

The overnight arrangements had been that at 4 o'clock in the morning the "Blue" force of the late manoeuvres, commanded by Admiral Sir Edmund Poe, and comprising the Atlantic and Mediterranean fleets, should put to sea, and that six hours later the "Red" force, commanded by Admiral Sir William May, and comprising the Home fleet and cruiser squadrons, should leave in search of the "Blue" enemy and bring him to action.

The whole fleet unmoored ship at dawn and remained riding to single anchor, but not a vessel had stirred from her berth at gunfire.

As the fog cleared away two or three cruisers moved out of the lines and went off, grey and smoking, seawards. Signalling was carried on by searchlights, for bunting and semaphore were scarcely distinguishable.

BETWEEN THE LINES.

Then several destroyers came from Dartmouth, having on board nearly all the cadets from the Royal Naval College there. Among them was the Prince of Wales, who was transhipped with a batch to the Dreadnought, but shortly afterwards went in a steam pinnace to the Royal yacht, at the top of the gangway steps of which the Queen was waiting to receive him. The weather clouds which had been laced around the Royal yacht's decks to meet Monday's gale had not yet been removed.

On the battleships and cruisers, bluejackets in No. 1 rig and marines in scarlet tunics clustered along the sides in readiness for some coming event. About half-past ten Admiral May went alongside the Royal yacht in his steam barge, and the King, in the undress uniform of the admiral of the fleet, stepped aboard the tiny craft, which flew the Royal Standard from its diminutive mast.

The little craft passed across the head of the great armada, and made a leisurely progress between all the lines.

THE ENSIGN DIPPED.

As she passed each ship in succession the side was manned and the ensign lowered to the dip. His Majesty, who seldom had his hand removed from his brow in acknowledging the running salutes, frequently interrogated Sir William May. The weather steadily mended during this long tour of inspection. The Atlantic and Mediterranean battleships steamed away seawards, led by Admiral Sir Edmund Poe in the Exmouth. Shortly afterwards the Home fleet, led by the Dreadnought, steamed eastward in column of divisions.

Out in the offing a series of tactical evolutions was carried out, first by squadrons and finally by the entire fleet collectively.

Battle exercises of a realistic character, and on a scale of grandeur owing to the number of ships engaged, were gone through.

Seven Dreadnoughts, two Lord Nelsons, three Invincibles, eight King Edwards, six Queens, four Duncans, two Triumphs, and five Majestics formed the colossal battle fleet, not to mention a whole host of cruisers.

The King followed all the exercises with the keenest attention, and expressed deep satisfaction at the smart tactical work which he witnessed.

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A DEFIANT ENGLISHMAN.

He Refuses to Hand Over a Spanish Beauty.

An Englishman and his wife, living outside Tangier, are resisting in a spirit reminiscent of the days of chivalry the demands of the Spanish and British authorities that they shall hand over a Spanish girl who has taken refuge with them and refuses to return to her parents. The episode, states the Tangier correspondent of The London Daily Mail, seems to belong to the operatic stage rather than to life in the twentieth century. The girl is the daughter of the doctor of the Spanish Legation here, and is considered a great beauty.

Some time ago she made friends with Mr. and Mrs. Levison, whose estate is situated outside the town.

Mr. Levison is part-owner of some mines at Bilbao, and married a Spanish marchioness. He was formerly a well-known gentleman jockey, and once rode in the Grand National. At Madrid he had a serious racing accident, and then came to Tangier for the sake of his health. A great friendship sprang up between the Legation doctor's daughter and Mrs. Levison. The girl eventually went to live with the Levisons. Her parents did not approve of this, and tried to remove their daughter. But when pressure was brought on her to return home she tried to commit suicide and wounded herself slightly. She was nevertheless taken home, but a fortnight later she escaped and went back to Mrs. Levison. The doctor again tried to recover his daughter, but Mr. Levison refused to give her up.

The doctor complained through the Spanish Legation, and the British Minister wrote to Mr. Levison requesting him to send the girl home. No notice was taken of this communication. The Spanish Minister went in person to the British Legation and arranged that a Spanish official and a police representative should go to the Levisons, accompanied by a representative of the British Legation, and take charge of the girl. When the party arrived at the confines of the estate Mr. Levison threatened to open fire on them if the police entered. Eventually the British official was admitted alone to parley with Mr. Levison. On approaching the house he noticed Mr. Levison and the servants standing armed, and the two ladies were also provided with revolvers. Mr. Levison informed the official that if the police entered to seize the girl he would fire on them. The girl added that she would shoot herself rather than be taken away. The police thereupon returned to the town, and Mr. Levison is up to now master of the situation.

BIRMINGHAM'S BREAD.

Much of It Made Under Unsanitary Conditions.

The Birmingham (England) Trades Council recently set about an inquiry into the condition of bakehouses in the city, as regards sanitation and the work and wages of the bakers employed. The result of the inquiry, says Engineer, is set forth thus:—"1. The work of the baker is, of necessity, associated with more than ordinary injury to health. 2. The hours worked are excessive, often exceeding ninety per week, while the wages are low. 3. In some bakehouses men are required to work amid the odors of adjacent stables and other outhouses. 4. Lavatory accommodation in the sweating dens is of the most primitive kind, or entirely lacking, a bucket in a yard frequently constituting the sole provision for washing. 5. Reformers are made exceedingly difficult, even for well-disposed employers, by the unscrupulous competition of the sweaters." The Operative Bakers' Association propose to seek to be scheduled under the Trade Boards Act until other measures have been thoroughly tried. The Lord Mayor deprecates this, believing that the workers can accomplish the object by organization. Professor Muirhead endorses the report, and describes its contents as "a national scandal."

JUST HAD IT.

He (at breakfast next morning)—They say we are going to have an early fall this year, my dear.—She (frigidly)—Judging from the noise downstairs when you came in at 9 this morning, I should say you had had a late fall.

A woman may be able to do her own housework, but she always has to get some other woman to help her keep a secret.

SAILORS SORELY TRIED

WERE AT THE MERCY OF THE SEA FOR DAYS.

Captain and His Bride of a Few Days Went Down, She in His Arms.

A thrilling tragedy of the sea was described by twelve survivors of the crew of the sailing ship, Swanilda, who reached Liverpool recently from South America. The Swanilda, a vessel of 3,000 tons sailed from Cardiff, on March 15. Capt. Fyne, who had been married two days before, was accompanied by his wife, and the voyage was to be their honeymoon trip. Fair winds carried the ship under full spread of canvas through the tropics. Then, on the morning of May 14, the officer in charge noticed breakers ahead. Almost at the moment when he called the Captain, the vessel struck rock and began to fill rapidly. She had gone ashore on a small island off Staten Island, which lies near the South American coast.

VESSEL SETTLED QUICKLY.

So quickly did the Swanilda settle down that the port and starboard lifeboats were launched simultaneously. But the former boat, which contained the Captain and his wife, had scarcely touched the water when it was capsized by a great breaker.

The men in the starboard boat were unable to render any help, and they saw Captain Fyne, holding his bride in his arms, disappear beneath the waves. When the thirteen sailors surviving out of a crew of twenty-five tried to land on the island they found the sea too rough and were compelled to put out again. Their boat was at the mercy of the sea for some days, and they lived on a little rain which they collected. One man went mad and struggled to leap overboard, and although he was restrained he died later from exhaustion.

SIGHTED A LIGHT HOUSE.

When they had almost abandoned hope they sighted a lighthouse off the Argentine coast. A wireless message was sent to the mainland and they were taken ashore by an Argentine gun boat.

The gunboat afterwards went to Staten Island to search for any men who might have swum ashore when the port lifeboat was capsized. It discovered the bodies of four men who had died from starvation, and a survivor who had been driven insane by the terror of his experience was found in a cave. Eventually the man recovered. He said that he and his comrades lived for some time on tins of grease and ate shellfish when no more grass remained.

Apparently he had lost his reason when he found the body of Captain Fyne and his bride looked in one another's arms washed to and fro by the waves.

Beginning at the Foundation.

The progressive people of the parish were anxious to reconstruct and adorn the ancient church, and the rector, warden wrote to the bishop about it. "There are but two things to be done in St. Gregory's," wrote the bishop in reply. "Let the sexton keep it clean and the parson keep it full."—Youth's Companion.

When France Washed in Holland.

In the sixteenth century clothes were sent from all parts of France to be washed in Holland, where the water of the canals was supposed to have special cleansing properties. The cost of transport was about ten times greater in those days than at present.