

Warfare Under Water.

(By RUDYARD KIPLING.)

They bear, in place of classic names Letters and numbers on their skin. They play their grisly blindfold games

In little boxes made of tin. Sometimes they talk the Zeppelin. Sometimes they learn where mines are laid

Or where the Baltic ice is thin. That is the custom of "The Trade."

No one knows how the title of "The Trade" came to be applied to the Submarine Service. Some say the cruisers invented it because they pretend that submarine officers look like unwashed chauffeurs. Others think it sprang forth by itself, which means that it was coined by the Lower Deck, where they always have the proper names for things. Whatever the truth, the Submarine Service is now "the Trade"; and if you ask them why, they will answer: "What else could you call it? The Trade's 'the trade,' of course."

It is a close corporation; yet it recruits its men and officers from every class that uses the sea and engines, as well as from many classes that never expected to deal with either. It takes them; they disappear for a while and return changed to their very souls, for the Trade lives in a world without precedents, of which no generation has had any previous experience—a world still being made and enlarged daily. It creates and settles its own problems as it goes along, and if it cannot help itself no one else can. So the Trade lives in the dark and thinks out inconceivable and impossible things, which it afterwards puts into practice.

Four Nightmares.

Who, a few months ago, could have invented, or having invented, would have dared to print such a nightmare as this: There was a boat in the North Sea who ran into a net and was caught by the nose. She rose, still entangled, meaning to cut the thing away on the surface. But a Zeppelin in waiting saw and bombed her, and she had to go down again at once, but not too wildly or she would get herself more wrapped up than ever. She went down, and by slow working and waving and wriggling, guided only by guesses at the meaning of each scrape and grind of the net on her blind forehead, at last she drew clear. Then she sat on the bottom and thought. The question was whether she should go back at once and warn her confederates against the trap, or wait till the destroyers, which she knew the Zeppelin would have signalled for, should come out to finish her still entangled, as they would suppose, in the net. It was a simple calculation of comparative speeds and positions, and when it was worked out she decided to try for the double event. Within a few minutes of the time she had allowed for them, she heard the twitter of four destroyers' screws quartering above her;



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rose; got her shot in; saw one destroy crumple; hung round 'ill another took the wreck in tow; said good-bye to the spare brace (she was at the end of her supplies), and reach-

ed the rendezvous in time to turn her friends.

And since we are dealing in nightmares here are two more—one genuine, the other, mercifully, false. There was a boat not only at, but in the mouth of a river—well home in German territory. She was spotted, and went under, her commander perfectly aware that there was not more than five feet of water over her conning-tower, so that even a torpedo-boat, let alone a destroyer, would hit it if she came over. But nothing hit anything. The search was conducted on scientific principles while they sat on the silt and suffered. Then the commander heard the rasp of a wire trawl sweeping over his hull. It was not a nice sound, but there happened to be a couple of gramophones aboard, and he turned them both on to drown it. And in due time the boat got home with everybody's hair just the same color as when they had started!

The other nightmare arose out of silence and imagination. A boat had gone to bed on the bottom in a spot where she might reasonably expect to be looked for, but it was a convenient jumping-off or up, place for the work on hand. About the bad hour of 2.30 a.m. the commander was wakened by one of his men, who whispered to him: "They've got the chains on 'ah, sir!' Whether it was pure nightmare, an hallucination of long wakefulness, something relaxing and releasing in that packed box of machinery, or the disgusting reality, the commander could not tell, but it had all the makings of panic in it. So the Lord and long training put it into his head to reply: "Have they? Well, we shan't be coming up till nine o'clock this morning. We'll see about it then. Turn out that light, please."

He did not sleep, but the dreamer and the others did, and when morning came and he gave the order to rise, and she rose unhampered, and he saw the grey, smeared seas from above once again, he said it was a very refreshing sight. Lastly, which is on all fours with the gamble of the chase, a man was coming home rather bored after an uneventful trip. It was necessary for him to sit on the bottom for a while, and there he played patience. Of a sudden it struck him, as a vow and an omen, that if he worked out the next game correctly he could go up and strafe something. The cards fell all in order. He went up at once and found himself alongside a German, who, as he had promised and prophesied to himself, he destroyed. She was a mine-layer, and needed only a jar to dissipate like a cracked electric-light bulb. He, was some impressed by the contrast between the ascent, the attack, the amazing result, and when he descended again, found his cards just as he had left them.

The Exploit of E 11.

E 11 "proceeded" in the usual way, to the usual accompaniments of hostile destroyers, up the Straits, and meets the usual difficulties about charging-up when she gets through. Her wireless naturally takes 'his opportunity to give trouble, and E 11 is left, deaf and dumb, somewhere in the middle of the Sea of Marmora, diving to avoid hostile destroyers in the intervals of trying to come at the fault in her aerial. (Yet it is noteworthy that the language of the Trade though technical, is no more emphatic or incandescent than that of top-side ships.)

Then she goes towards Constantinople, finds a Turkish torpedo-gun-boat off the port, sinks her, has her periscope, smashed by a six-pounder, retires, fits a new top on the periscope, and at 10.30 a.m.—they must have needed it—pipes "All hands to bathe." Much refreshed, she gets her wireless linked up at last, and is able to tell the authorities where she is and what she is after.

Back to the Base.

In due time E 11 went back to her base. She had discovered a way of using unspent torpedoes twice over, which surprised the enemy, and she had as nearly as possible been cut down by a ship which she thought was running away from her. Instead of which (she made the discovery at 3,000 yards, both craft all out) the stranger steamed straight at her. "The enemy then witnessed a somewhat spectacular dive at full speed from the surface to 20 feet in as many seconds. He then really did turn tail and was seen no more." Going through the Straits she observed an empty troopship at anchor, but reserved her torpedoes in the hope of picking up some battleships lower down. Not finding these in the Narrows, she nosed her way back and sunk the troopship, "afterwards continuing journey down the Straits." Off Kilit Bahr something happened; she got out of trim and had to be fully flooded before she could be brought to her required depth. It might have been whirlpools under water, or other things. (They tell a story of a boat which once went mad in these very waters, and, for no reason ascertainable from within, plunged to depths that contractors do not allow for; roched up again like a swordfish, and would doubtless have so continued till she died, had not something she had fouled dropped off and let her recover her composure.)

An hour later: "Heard a noise similar to grounding. Knowing this to be impossible in the water in which the boat then was, I came up to 20 feet to investigate, and observed a large

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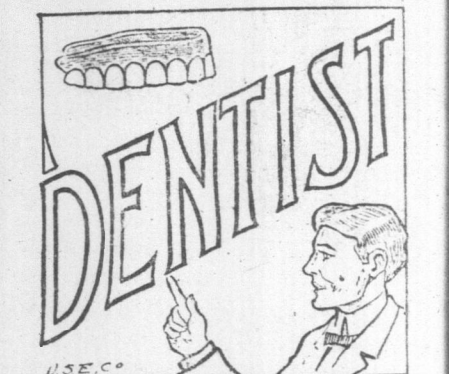
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