

The RECRUIT EMBARKS

PREPARATIONS for a voyage overseas in war-time may seem simple—till you try it. A chauffeur who is to don uniforms soon after she arrives at the other side of the water has no need of fine raiment, but all purchases must be made judiciously, selected with regard to their weight and durability. Crepe de Chine must make way for flannel, fine kid for the heaviest of leather, chiffon for wool. Even the process of elimination takes time; and though I find a place for everything that is necessary, I now realize that a fresh elimination must take place in London, where space must be cleared for my chauffeur outfit. The heavy, knee-high rubber boots are the most unaccommodating things to pack; and farewell gifts, such as a Tommy's cooker and a large electric torch, refuse to be shoved into a corner at the last moment; they demand a definite number of cubic inches. And then, when the final adjustments are made, I find that I have packed most of those things that are needful for the two days' journey to St. John and left unpacked those that are quite superfluous in a sleeping-car!

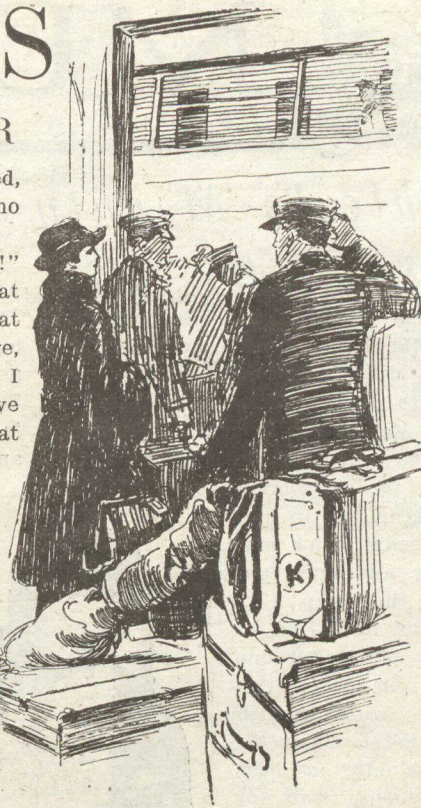
By ESTELLE M. KERR

of black, circles of green squares of dark red, triangles of blue running this way and that, with no apparent motive or plan.

"Why, it only makes them more conspicuous!" was our first thought, and then we discovered that right before us lay a number of ocean liners that we had not noticed, for, owing to the camouflage, they seemed to disappear into the background. I tried to draw one of the ships, with its deceptive painting, and found this very difficult, for the great bands of color running up the side, across a life-boat, and finishing at a tangent on a smoke-stack, made it difficult to delineate the true form. My opinion is that the camouflage artists have used too much black paint, that blues, greens and grays would be less conspicuous when seen at a distance, even at night, but when the ships put out to sea with their convoy of converted cruisers we shall be better able to observe the effect.

Our own ship is uniformly gray, but the six or eight ocean liners in the harbor have all been branded by the camouflage. All were busy loading cargoes of beef, bacon, canned goods, lumber, etc., but the departure of many of them is delayed owing to the shortage of coal, while others are waiting for their cargoes to arrive by rail. The seagulls circling overhead, looked like distant airplanes till they dove greedily for the refuse from the boats. We made a tour of the big boat and admired the charming drawing-room, the cosy library and my own comfortable state-room, then, having deposited my hand-luggage, we crossed the river once more and discovered an attractive little tea-room opposite a church with a tall steeple which Time had painted a lovely soft green. After tea followed more violets and roses, another good-bye and I felt deserted and lonely.

It was quite dark when I returned to the docks and my ticket was carefully inspected by a sentry before I was allowed to pass. The gang-plank, formerly on a level with the dock, was now a steep hill to climb, as the tide had risen about thirty feet. The electric lights were dim, the boat chilly, and I had a melancholy dinner in the great dining-room at an almost empty table. After dinner a few of the passengers straggled into the drawing-room and some attempted to be sociable. The chaplain invited those present to join him in—no, not a hymn—a game of "500"! but was unable to get a quartette. Now, I am writing while the chaplain's daughter, seated at the piano, is entertaining the young aviator from the West with a group of melancholy songs: "Just a wearyin' for you," "Somewhere a voice is calling," and other well-known melodies. The young aviator listens with wrapt attention and between each song he assures her: (1) That he does not know one tune from another. (2) That he likes that one. (3) That he never heard it before. And in each intermission she assures him that she has



lots more in her trunk. Already she has sung at least a dozen. The lights are lowered and the music ceases, but this is only a signal for conversation to begin. They seat themselves symmetrically opposite each other at a writing table and knees crossed, chin in hand, talk far into the night.

Thursday.

THIS morning they are at it again, only this time it is in the library. All night long the winches rumbled, pulleys squeaked, men shouted as they

loaded the cargo. They are still at it and no one knows when we shall sail. We may remain here a week, yet the officers warn us against going on shore, for the boat, they say, may sail at any moment. The stewards and my pretty little blonde stewardess are very kind and attentive, and already I feel that the boat is quite homelike. I have been placed at a table over which the ship's doctor presides—a handsome and dignified elderly man, another doctor who has fought in France and cared for the wounded in Macedonia, sits beside me. He entered the army in August, 1914, and is now returning overseas after his first leave. He says he feels so fit, having breathed good Canadian zero ozone once more, that he feels ready to go into the trenches once more. The man in civies at my other side says, pessimistically, that the benefit of a leave soon wears off—his did!

HAVING had such difficulty in obtaining my passport, I am naturally curious to know how the other woman passengers got theirs. As far as I can discover, there are no nurses on board, but there are a number of women with young children—some are crossing with their soldier husbands; one pretty young thing is taking with her the bonniest of babies to a father he has never seen. My room-mate says hers is a case of sickness and death—she must return to England to settle the affairs of her mother, recently dead.

"But won't you have trouble in getting a return passage?" I ask, and she says, no, for she is a farmer, doing a man's work these days with her husband and son. The red-cheeked blonde is probably going to marry a soldier, the girl with glasses is probably a war-worker of some sort, but the women are few and there are only 100 passengers altogether, besides those who travel in the steerage. We are still waiting for them to arrive before we proceed to Halifax. In any case I must be on the safe side and make sure of posting this in Canada.

Not Post-Cured

A COLORED man entered the general store and complained to the merchant that a ham he had purchased had proved not to be good.

"The ham is all right, Joe," insisted the merchant.

"No, it ain't, boss," insisted the other. "Dat ham's sure bad."

"How can that be," continued the proprietor, "when it was cured only last week?"

"Maybe it's done had a relapse."—Everybody's.



A NUMBER of my friends gathered to wish me "bon voyage," and when the train whisked me past the last waving figure, I found that I had collected a new assortment of luggage—flowers, candy, dried fruits, books and magazines. It was like Christmas morning! The last two packages I opened contained articles that formed a sharp contrast to one another. In one was a dainty net boudoir cap, ornamented with pink silk roses, in the other a heavy pair of brown woolen stockings. The boudoir cap represents the luxuries I am leaving behind; the woolen stockings stand for the stern necessities to which I must limit myself overseas. That thought gave the flowers, sweets and other luxuries an added charm, and the boudoir cap will serve its turn during the voyage. I shall probably put it on each morning when the steward knocks at my door and says: "You're bath is ready, Madam!"

"THAT was quite a send-off you had, Miss!" said the conductor, and when he inspected my ticket he added, "Well, you're going overseas—I don't blame them! Not a very propitious time to be crossing, though, I should say!"

In the seclusion of my sleeping compartment I did not have much chance to observe my fellow-passengers, but after leaving Montreal I was most interested in the numerous officers who gathered in the dining-car. The majority of them were returning after sick leave and no two of them wear the same badges. There is an aviator in khaki with his crossed tunic and embroidered wings, a naval aviator in blue, an officer of the naval reserve, a bombing officer with a red badge on his sleeve, a chaplain with a black shoulder strap, a dental surgeon, a veterinary surgeon. The men inside the uniforms differed still more: several spoke with the unmistakable voices of English gentlemen; another was English, too, but of a different class—he referred to the radiator as "the eater," and I overheard him telling someone that his wife had six brothers, three brothers-in-law and himself, all in khaki. The majority were Canadians, looking very fit after their holiday. There was the western youth, whose father owns a salmon-canning factory in British Columbia; the son of the grain merchant in Alberta, the rancher in Manitoba, the railway magnate in Montreal—all travelling to the old port of St. John.

One of my friends came with me to the boat and, as I had never before been in St. John, I was fascinated by the steep, snowy streets, the funny low sleighs and the general dinginess of the buildings; but most of all I liked the wide river and the shipping in the harbor. It was evidently low-tide when we drove down a steep incline to the ferry between high, green piles, to which black seaweed clung. In the centre of the river two grey ships were anchored, painted grotesquely with wide stripes