

The British Bluejacket and His Pets

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"He who loves animals may walk with angels,
Who knows!"
A saying of the Estremadura.

IN the British Navy there is a great liking for pets of all kinds. It is the happy ship that has a pet, for Jack must have something on board with him on which he can bestow kindness and care, and, because, too, he has a very great fondness for animals. So, as often as not, a British warship, whether it is a little vessel of two hundred tons or a great battleship of twenty thousand tons has a special pet of her own, which her men look after, each one, as if the animal is his very own.

Sometimes folk may think that the British Bluejacket is cruel, after having seen a party of "liberty" men, that is men on leave ashore, having a rumpus with the donkeys and their drivers along the beach of some watering-place. But these folks are wholly wrong. British Jack is the very opposite of being cruel, though he is very high-spirited, especially when ashore on leave for a few hours. He dotes on pets, from a parrot to a monkey, or a tabby cat, down to a cat, a sheep or even the hideous puff-adder.

Dogs and cats, however, are among the most popular pets of the British Bluejacket. Among the dogs perhaps the best known is the bulldog that belongs to H.M.S. Tiger, for he was in the great battle off Jutland, May 31, 1916, that ended in a victory for Admiral Jellicoe. Though, by all accounts, Jumbo, the bulldog, did not win renown in the fight.

Before the engagement began the men of the Tiger were greatly troubled as to how the ship's pet would take the terrible crashing and quivering when the enemy's projectiles hit their huge warship; and their commander came to the rescue. He ordered Jumbo's ears to be filled with cotton wadding, and his head wrapped round and round in thick shawls, just as if the bulldog was suffering from a very nasty cold and toothache into the bargain. Then two young seamen, who were not very well, were directed to take "Bullie" to a room deep down in the hull of the vessel, which was the quietest place in all the ship.

"Jumbo," however, had no fancy to be treated like a sick thing, and growled and struggled ferociously, till the great guns began to thunder. Then, when the enemy's shells and other projectiles fell in deafening thuds against the thick steel decks and sides of the warship, he became, all of a sudden, as quiet as could be, and began whining and licking the hands of the two seamen who were sitting on each side of him, holding him by the paws and the neck.

Master "Jumbo" was not so brave as the tabby cat of another warship that was in that great fight. When the battle was raging, and the warship was firing as fast as she could, and was being hit, too, by the German shot and shell, Mistress "Tabitha" made off sedately to her own particular place, carrying her kitten in her mouth. Here in her own little bed-place she was found fast asleep, long before the engagement was at an end. It was in a box on a lower shelf in the pantry of the wardroom, where the officers live. And not only the wardroom but part of the pantry, too, was already torn to bits by a heavy shot passing through the warship's hull.

Monkeys and parrots also are often found among the pets of the British naval seamen, for both of them are very amusing and make laughter, and so help Jack to pass the long weary hours of monotony on board his ship. Often in the men-of-war leaving their station, or part of the ocean where they have been sent to, in the warm climates, the mess deck where the bluejackets live and eat and sleep, is like a small menagerie with parrots and monkeys. For on such an occasion, the commander or senior executive officer as he is often called, whose permission has to be got for pets to be brought on board, seldom holds back his consent.

Occasionally there are pets in the British Navy that are adopted by a crew in strange circumstances. When H.M.S. Iron Duke was on her trial runs, she rescued off a steamship, Scotsdyke, that

had gone on fire, all the officers and men, and a dog named "Spot," that belonged to the master of the steamer. Afterward he offered "Spot" to the Iron Duke as the battleship's pet, and the dog was at once accepted, to live very happily on board with the officers and stokers and bluejackets.

Again bantam cocks and hens are sometimes made pets of, and a very funny story is told of a "banty" that was and is the favorite of a warship which engaged in one of the fights against the enemy.

This "banty" was the cheekiest and cockiest little "banty" ever seen, and is so to this day. But the time came when he suddenly lost all his "swank" and pride and boastfulness, all his swagger and self-conceit.

When the British warship began to fight, and shot and shell struck her, "banty" forgot all about his make-

believe bravery, and took to his wings in real fright. He flew into the very first hole that he could find, and this was the mouth of one of the ventilator leading fresh air to the deck below. When after the battle strange noises were heard coming from this ventilator, and "banty" was hauled out of it, he presented a very humble and bedraggled appearance, for the sea water had been splashing down it. He was full of misery, and his tail feathers drooped. But now, because he hears no more guns thundering and no more shells bursting in deafening shrieks, "banty" struts around and makes all merry with his old brag and boastfulness.

Yet, perhaps, among the queerest pets to take to sea are the opossum of H.M.S. Superb and the Arctic fox which was presented by the ex-Czar of Russia, to one of the British battleships that visited the Baltic before the war.

After all, there is the queerest of all, Dennis the pig. For a pig was for a long time one of the pets of a certain British man-of-war.

About two hours after the German cruiser, the Dresden, was sunk at Robinson Crusoe's island, Juan Fernandez in the Pacific Ocean, off Chile, a signalman of the British cruiser, the Glasgow, saw a pig from the German ship was still swimming about in the water, though very feebly now, and close to the cruiser. A strong current was running, and the seas were tumbling about, yet one of the bluejackets dived overboard into the water and helped the exhausted animal; a boat was lowered at once, and both the seaman and the pig were quickly rescued.

The men of the Cruiser in high glee took the pig to be their pet, and after much talking it was named Dennis, for Ireland is a land of pigs, and Dennis is a favorite name in Ireland. Dennis was well fed by the cook in the galleys, and the bluejackets' messes on the lower deck always collected all that was left of their meals, the scraps and so on, that are put in the refuse or ullage bins, and the pig thrived well and got fat. It was also wonderfully fond of eating bits of coal



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