

PATROLS

business may be through all the long night, and to help or hinder accordingly. Dawn sees them pitch-poling insanely between head-seas, or hanging on to bridges that sweep like scythes from one forlorn horizon to the other. A homeward-bound submarine chooses this hour to rise, very ostentatiously, and signals by hand to a lieutenant in command. (They were the same term at Dartmouth, and same first ship.)

'What's he sayin' ? Secure that gun, will you ? 'Can't hear oneself speak.' The gun is a bit noisy on its cone, but that isn't the reason for the destroyer-lieutenant's short temper.

'Says he's goin' down, sir,' the signaller replies. What the submarine had spelt out, and everybody knows it, was : 'Cannot approve of this extremely frightful weather. Am going to bye-bye.'

'Well !' snaps the lieutenant to his signaller, 'what are you grinning at ?' The submarine has hung on to ask if the destroyer will 'kiss her and whisper good-night.' A breaking sea smacks her tower in the middle of the insult. She closes like an oyster, but—just too late. *Habet !* There must be a quarter of a ton of water somewhere down below, on its way to her ticklish batteries.

'What a wag !' says the signaller, dreamily. 'Well, 'e can't say 'e didn't get 'is little kiss.'

The lieutenant in command smiles. The sea is a beast, but a just beast.