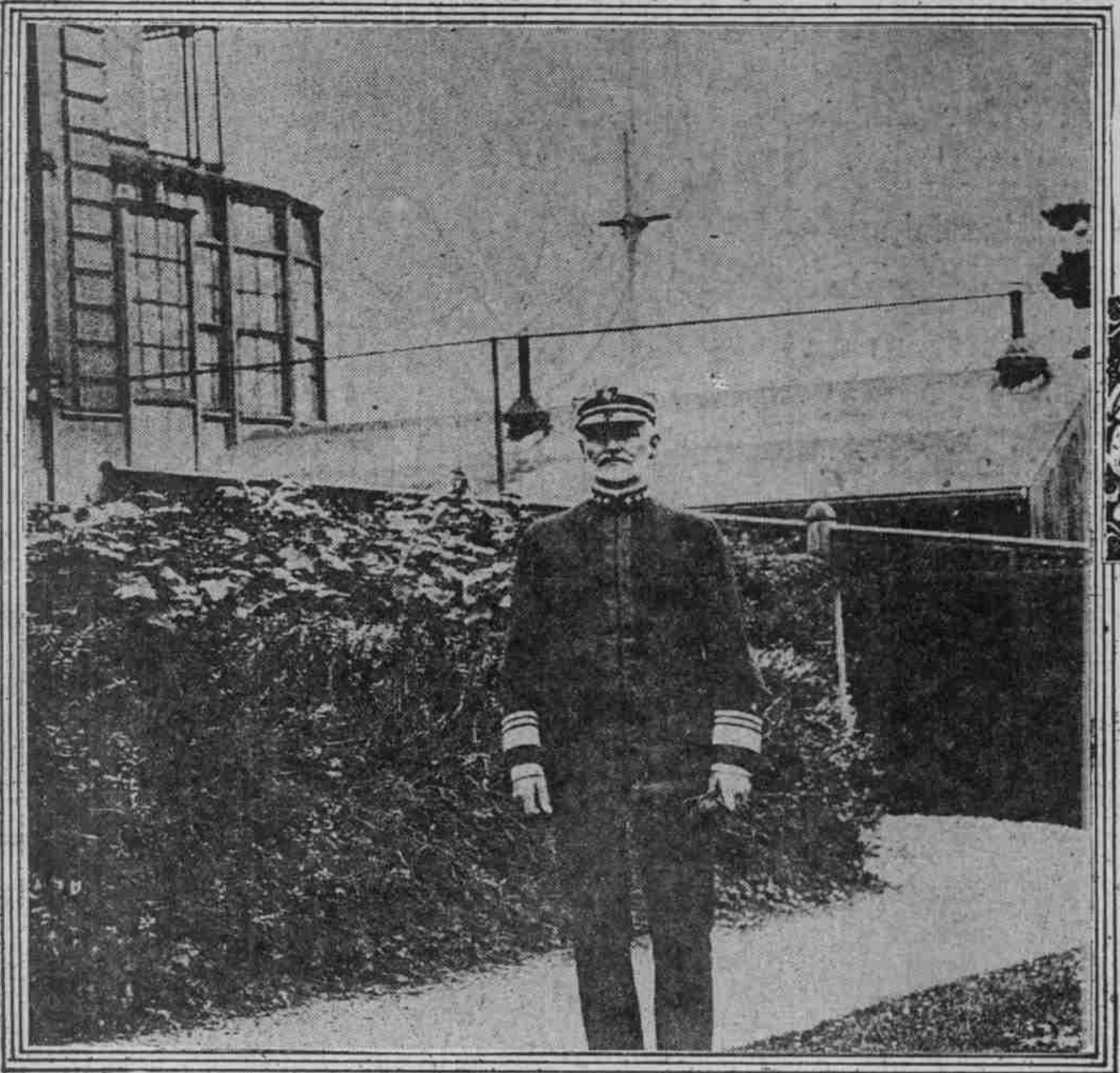
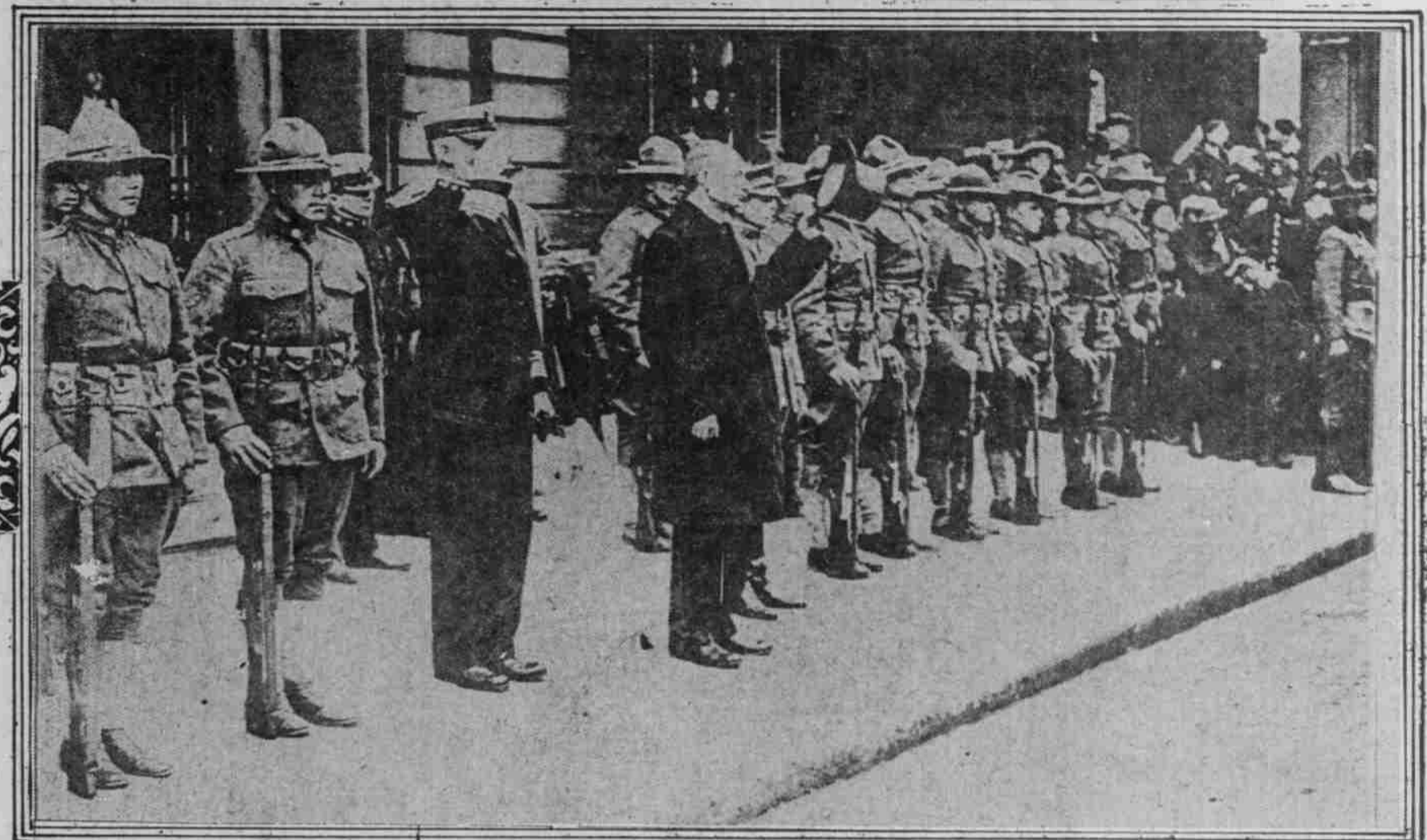


# THE VICTORY AT SEA BY ADMIRAL WILLIAM SNOWDEN'S MS FORMULATING AMERICA'S NAVAL POLICY



Admiral Sims At Admiralty House, Queenstown.



Ambassador Page With Admiral Sims.

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GERMANY attacked our hospital ships in order to make us escort them with destroyers, and thereby divert these destroyers from the anti-submarine campaign. And, of course, England had to do this. Had the Anglo-Saxon mind resembled the Germanic we should probably have accepted the logic of the situation, and have refused to be diverted from the great strategic purpose which meant winning the war—that is, protecting merchant shipping; we should, therefore, have left the hospital ships to their fate, justifying ourselves by the principle of the larger good. But the British and American mind does not work that way; it was impossible for us to leave sick and wounded men as prey to submarines. Therefore, after repeated warnings, backed up, as it was, by the actual destruction of unprotected hospital ships, we began providing them with destroyer escorts. This greatly embarrassed us in the anti-submarine campaign, for at times, especially during the big drives, we had a large number of hospital ships at bay, as soon as we adopted the policy. Germany, having attained her end, which was to keep the destroyers out of the submarine area, stopped attacking sick and wounded soldiers. Not only was the British navy at that time safeguarding the liberties of mankind at sea, but its army in France was capturing Paris, overrunning the whole of France, and ending the war, at least for the time being. In the course of four years Great Britain transported about 20,000,000 troops across the channel without the loss of a single man. She accomplished this only by constantly using fifty or sixty destroyers, and other light surface craft, based on Harwich, as escorts for the transports. But this was not the only responsibility of the kind that rested on the already overburdened British shoulders. There was another part of the sea in which, for practical purposes, the British destroyer fleet had to do protective duty. This was the Mediterranean. Here lay not only the trade routes to the east, but also the lines of supply to Italy, to Egypt, to Palestine and to Mesopotamia.

Cutting off Italy's food and materials would simply have meant that Italy would have to withdraw from the war. The German and Austrian submarines, escaping from Austria's Adriatic ports, were constantly assailing this commerce. Moreover, the success of the German submarine campaign in these waters would have meant that the allies would have to abandon the Salonika expedition, which would have left the central powers absolute masters of the Balkans and the Middle East. This created an additional strain upon the anti-submarine craft of the British navy.

Not Enough Destroyers.

For the British navy it was thus a matter of choice what areas she would attempt to protect with her destroyer forces; the one thing that was painfully apparent was that she could not satisfactorily safe-

guard all the danger zones. With the inadequate force at her disposal, certain areas must be left open to the U-boats, and to decide which ones was simply a matter of balancing the several conflicting interests. In April, 1917, the admiralty had decided to give the preference to the grand fleet, the hospital ships, the channel crossing and the Mediterranean, practically in the order mentioned.

It is evident, from the figures given, that all but about 10 or a dozen destroyers must have been used in these three areas. It was for this reason that the great zone of trans-Atlantic shipping, west and south of Ireland, was almost unprotected. Sometimes only four or five destroyers were operating in this great stretch of water; I do not think the number ever exceeded 15. Inasmuch as that represented about the number of German submarines in this same area, the situation was not particularly desperate. But, of course, any such basis of comparison is absurd. The destroyers were operating on the surface in full view of the U-boat, which was fundamentally wrong. The so-called submarine patrol, under the circumstances that prevailed at that time, could accomplish practically nothing. This pathetic little fleet of destroyers was based on Queenstown; from this port the ships patrolled in the English channel and the waters about Ireland in the hope that a German submarine would appear and be destroyed. The central idea of the destroyer patrol is the one of hunting; the destroyer could sink the submarine or force it to surface, but the submarine would only make its presence known, and the business of the destroyer was to scurry around in the form of a dog.

Now this idea is sound enough if

you can have enough destroyers. We figured that, to make the patrol system work with complete success, we should have to have one destroyer for every square mile. The area of the destroyer patrol off Queenstown comprised about 25,000 square miles. In the words, the complete protection of the trans-Atlantic trade routes would have taken about 25,000 destroyers! And the British, as I have said, had available anywhere from four to fifteen in this area!

This destroyer flotilla being so small, it is not surprising that the German submarines were making ducks and drakes of it. The map of April sinkings brings out an interesting fact: numerous as these sinkings were, very few merchantmen were torpedoed, in this month, at the entrance to the Irish sea or in the English channel. There were the narrow waters where shipping was massed and where the little destroyer patrol was intended to operate. The German submarines apparently avoided these waters, and made their attacks out in the open sea, sometimes two and three hundred miles west and south of Ireland.

Their purpose in doing this was to draw the destroyer patrol out into the open sea and in this way cause its dispersal. And these tactics succeeded. There were six separate steamship "lines" by which the merchantmen approached the English channel and the Irish sea. One day the submarines would attack along one of these lanes; then the little destroyer fleet would rush to this scene of operations. Immediately the Germans would depart and attack another route 200 or 300 miles away; then the destroyer would go pell-mell for that location. Just as they arrived, however, the U-boats would begin operating elsewhere; and so it went, game of hide and seek in which the advantages lay all on the side of the submarines, which possessed that insuperable quality, invisibility. It really was a case of blindman's buff; the destroyer could never see the enemy; the enemy could always see the destroyer.

To show how serious the situation

was, let me quote from my reports to Washington during this period. I find statements like these scattered everywhere in my dispatches of the spring of 1917:

"The military situation presented by the enemy submarine campaign is not only serious but critical."

"The outstanding fact which cannot be escaped is that we are not succeeding, or in other words, that the enemy's campaign is proving successful."

"The consequences of failure or partial failure of the allied cause which we have joined are of such far-reaching character that I am deeply concerned in insuring that the part played by our country shall stand every test of analysis before the bar of history. The situation at present is exceedingly grave. If sufficient United States naval forces cannot be thrown into the balance at the present critical time and place there is little doubt that early success will be impossible."

Briefly stated, I consider that at the present moment we are losing the war."

Deciding the American Naval Policy.

And now came another important question: what should the American naval policy be in this crisis? There were almost as many conflicting opinions as there were minds. Certain authorities believed that our whole North Atlantic fleet should be moved immediately into European waters. Such a maneuver was not only impossible, but it would have been strategically very unwise; indeed, such a disposition would have been playing directly into Germany's hands. What naval experts call the "logistics" of the situation immediately ruled out any idea of considering the simple fact is that we could not have supplied our dreadnoughts in European waters at that time. The German U-boats were making a particularly successful drive at tankers, with the result that England had the utmost difficulty in supplying her fleet with fuel. It was lucky for us that the destroyer would go pell-mell for that location. Just as they arrived, however, the U-boats would begin operating elsewhere; and so it went, game of hide and seek in which the advantages lay all on the side of the submarines, which possessed that insuperable quality, invisibility. It really was a case of blindman's buff; the destroyer could never see the enemy; the enemy could always see the destroyer.

To show how serious the situation

at sea and in this way they might have exhausted its oil supplies, possibly to threaten the actual command of the surface. Fortunately for the cause of civilization, there were certain important facts that the German secret service did not learn.

But this oil shortage made it impossible that the American North Atlantic fleet should move into European waters, at least at that time. Since most oil supplies were brought from America, we could not have fueled our super-dreadnoughts in Europe in the spring and summer of 1917.

Moreover, had we sent all our big ships to England we should have been obliged to keep our destroyers constantly stationed with them ready for a great sea action; this would have completely fallen in with German plans, for then these destroyers could not have been used against her submarines. The British did indeed have a reserve for the British fleet, but this reserve was not stationed on this side of the Atlantic, but at a European base. They provided a reserve for the British fleet, precisely as our armies in France provided a reserve for the allied armies; and meanwhile their destroyer escorts were much greater than ours; in the campaign in the anti-submarine campaign. In American waters these big ships could be kept in prime condition here they have an open sea for training, and here they could also be used to break in the thousands of new men needed for the new ships constructed during the war.

Our Fleet Has Reinforcements.

I early took the stand that our forces should be considered chiefly in the light of reinforcements to the allied navies, and that, ignoring all question of national pride and even what at first might superficially seem to be national interest, we should exert such offensive power as we possessed in the way that would best assist the allies in defeating the submarine. England's naval resources were not greater than ours; in the nature of the case, we could not expect to maintain overseas anywhere near the number of ships which England had assembled; it should be our policy, therefore, to use such avail-

able units as we possessed to strengthen the weak spots of the allied line. There were those who believed that national dignity required that we should build up an independent navy in European waters, and operate it as a distinct American unit. But that, I maintained, was not the way to win the war. Had we adopted this course, we should still have been constructing naval bases and perfecting an organization when the armistice was signed; indeed, the idea of operating independently of the allied fleet was not for a moment to be considered. There were others in America who thought that it was unwise to put any part of our fleet in European waters, in view of the dangers that might assail us on our own coast.

There was every expectation that Germany would send submarines to the western Atlantic where they could prey upon our shipping and possibly bombard our ports; she had plenty of submarines which could make this voyage, and the strategy of the situation, in April and May, 1917, demanded that a move of this kind be made. The predominant element in the submarine defense, as I have pointed out, was the destroyer. The only way in which the United States could immediately and effectively help the British navy was by sending our whole destroyer flotilla and all our light surface craft at once. It was Germany's part, therefore, to resort to every maneuver that would keep our destroyer force on this side of the Atlantic. Such a performance might be expected to startle our peaceful American population and start a public cry for protection that might force our government to keep all anti-submarine craft in our own waters. I expected Germany to do this immediately and with caution. Our naval authorities at Washington were not to be deceived. I pointed out that Germany could accomplish practically nothing by sporadic efforts on the American coast, and leave free the Irish sea and the English channel. The war would be practically won for the allies. Yet these facts were not apparent to the popular mind in 1917, and I shall always think that Germany made a great mistake in not attacking immediately on our American coast immediately on our declaration of war, instead of waiting until 1918. Such attacks, if made at that time, would have created a demand for protection which the Wash-

ington authorities might have had great difficulty in resisting, and which might have actually kept our destroyer fleet in American waters, to the great detriment of the allied cause. Germany evidently refrained from doing so for reasons which I have already indicated—a desire to play gently with the United States, and in that way to delay our military preparations and win the war without coming into bloody conflict with the American people.

There were others who thought it unwise to expose any part of our fleet to the dangers of the European coast; their fear was that, if the allies should be defeated, we would then need all our naval forces to protect the American coast. This point of view, of course, was short-sighted and absurd. Clearly our national policy demanded that we should exert all the force we could assemble to make certain a German defeat.

The best way to fight Germany was not to wait until she had vanquished the British navy, but to meet her in a combined effort to beat her down. The thing to do was vigorously to take the offensive; to make certain that Germany could not attack us at home by destroying her naval power in European waters.

The Vital Waters West and South of Ireland.

The fact is that no nation was ever placed in so tragical a position as Great Britain in the spring and early summer of 1917. And I think that history records few spectacles more heroic than that of the great British navy, fighting this hideous and cowardly form of warfare in half a dozen places with pitifully inadequate forces, but with an undaunted spirit that remained firm even against the fearful odds which I have described. What an opportunity for America! And it was perfectly apparent what we should do. We should immediately place all available anti-submarine craft in those waters west and south of Ireland, the headquarters of the shipping which meant life or death to the allied cause—the area which England, because of the almost endless demands on her navy in other fields, was unable to protect.

I spent my first four days in London collecting all possible data; I had no desire to alarm Washington unwarrantably, yet I also believed that I should be derelict did I not present the facts precisely as they were. I, therefore, consulted practically everyone who could give me essential data, and he worked unsparingly with me to get the facts before the Washington administration. A days after sending my dispatch it occurred to me that a message from our ambassador might give emphasis to my own. I therefore wrote such a message and took it down to Brighton, where the American ambassador was taking a little rest.

Ambassador Page Pleads.

"It isn't strong enough!" he said. "I think I can do better than this myself."

He immediately sat down and wrote a cablegram to Washington which is one of the great documents of the war.

But Mr. Page and I thought that we had not completely done our duty even then. We were determined that, whatever might happen, we could never be charged with mind-severe presentation of the allied situation in its absolutely true light. It seemed likely that an authoritative statement from the British government would give added assurance that our statements were not the result of panic and with this idea in mind, Mr. Page and I called upon Mr. Balfour, foreign secretary, who, in response to our request, sent a dispatch to Washington describing the seriousness of the situation.

All these messages made the same point: that the United States should immediately assemble all its destroyers and other light craft, and send them to the vital spot in the submarine campaign—Queenstown.

(Another article by Admiral Sims will be published next Sunday.)

## OSTENTATIOUS PROFITEERS IN ENGLAND MET WITH DISDAIN

Rich Munitions Manufacturers Strut About in Expensive Clothes and Are Cause of Caustic Comment by British Public.

BY EDITH E. LANYON.

INEHLEAD, Sept. 16.—With great reluctance I have just packed up Portland's last parcel. It is going out to a sailor in the Baltic. The few books and magazines it contains and the pocket game of chess just finish up the Portland fund. It is glorious to think that the need for these comforts is over, but I give up my role of fairy god-mother with real regret.

It has been a never-ending pleasure to act as Portland's shopping agent. I have always kept the expenses as light as possible by shamelessly begging paper and string whenever I could, and putting all my friends and relatives to work whenever I was too busy to attend to parcels myself. I may say that they were very willing victims. The dear boys to whom the parcels went never forgot to write and thank us.

Our woollies have nearly come to an end, too. A few days ago six pairs of white wool socks were sent to Sister M for her "leg cases."

This summer resort is still full of belated visitors. The whole place swarms with knitted woolen jumpers, either worn, exhibited in the shops, or in course of construction. Fat women certainly look outrageous in them, but wear them nevertheless. My long interest in hospital causes me to look upon fashions with an un-

sophisticated eye. It will take me a long time to catch up those lost four years. Everything is a novelty to me. It is funny how odd it seems to see evening dresses once more. The only evening dress our boys in hospital wore was pajamas. I saw plenty of those.

At the theater the other night I saw a man in evening dress and a trench coat. I liked it. He looked a real man. Admirable profits were made in ostentatious new clothes and everybody whispers snifflily:

"Um—munitions, I s'pose?"

Maybe. Or provisions.

My theater dress has been dyed twice and is standing the strain well. It began champagne colored, then became Saxe blue for a period, and now it is a sapphire. It has reached such a position of honorable age that my friends welcome it by saying: "I always did like that dress." I am repairing the holes in my motor veil, now that I have time, by embroidering butterflies or daisies over them.

One day lately I saw a woman in a hat just like a crumpled Yorkshire oat cake. It made me feel quite hungry.

I have always wanted to see a meet of the stag-hounds. Last week one was to take place at Dunster, so we walked over to see it. Also, it was a meet that never met, and we had our long dusty walk for nothing, but I daresay the stag was glad.

His majesty's works at Gretna are

for sale piecemeal. Every type of hat and hosiery, the women's police uniforms, the men's uniforms, etc., etc., are advertised and are probably sold by this time. We always heard that those bungalows, all alike, with ingenuously simple and entirely intended for Belgium, and pitted Belgium. They were of the dog-kennel style of architecture. If price were no object I might have bought my pet dressing station at Easttrigs for a souvenier.

I could sit inside it and feel quite sentimental thinking over the past. I remember what a shock it was to me one day when a girl came in to be treated for feline-looking scratches on her throat.

"Whatever did this?" said I, in alarm.

"Me pal," said she, "did it with her finger nails!"

They had quarreled and no doubt "me pal's" finger nails were poisoned with nitric acid, so I sent her to the doctor.

Quite a common request was for something to shift the wind, nurse. I generally handed out aqua menth pip, hot, for that. On fish days there was always a rush of girls to have bony, generally imaginary, taken out of their throats. Once I remember being greatly taken aback to discover that one of these girls "with a fishbone in her throat" really had diphtheria very badly. I promptly isolated her and telephoned for what I remember one appalling bump which shot my attaché case off my knee and burst it open. To the joy of one of the Australian chemists, who was sitting opposite, my powder puff jumped out and landed on his knee. There was also a "lapsesu lingerie" happily unobserved in the dim light of early dawn. The chemist, announced, as one making a discovery:

gor-grilled porterhouse steak and the like.

I shall never forget Gretna. The nurses' quarters were in quite a decent-looking red brick building and we each had a nice little bedroom with latched windows, all concrete finish inside and the whole place like a whispering gallery. A secret whispered never so silently in someone's ear resounded so that it was probably shrieked into matron's ear in another room. Every piece of household property was marked "G. R." (George, Recs.), with a crown over. But I could not admire G. R.'s taste in bedding. The sheets were all fuzzy and came off in wads in one's hair. The pillows were flock ones and very boney. I finally fell into a feather one bequeathed to me by the nurse-who-got-married. The mattresses were "Auntie's" stuffed with golf balls one side and cricket balls the other—intended for the duration of the war. We turned these mattresses once a week, on Sundays, and I was always glad myself when it was golf-ball side up. They made smaller dimples in my back. After the rainy season set in in good earnest we next turned our mattresses at all because they got so damp on the unused side that we couldn't sleep.

I wonder what has become of our jolly old motorbus? It was a kind friend to the nurses. It was very bumpy sometimes, as our driver believed in going along at a good speed. I remember one appalling bump which shot my attaché case off my knee and burst it open. To the joy of one of the Australian chemists, who was sitting opposite, my powder puff jumped out and landed on his knee. There was also a "lapsesu lingerie" happily unobserved in the dim light of early dawn. The chemist, announced, as one making a discovery:

"Now, I've often wondered what the nurses carried around with them in those little cases."

"We had an extra 'weather allowance' of two shillings (50 cents) a week, presumably to buy rubber boots and a rubber coat with. I saved mine and bought some warm nighties to keep the Scotch chill out whilst I slept among my golf balls."

BIRMINGHAM, Sept. 18.—Since writing the above I have traveled from Minehead to Birmingham, a distance of about 150 miles. It took me seven hours, including waits at junctions. "Junction," I believe, means "a joining," but trains nowadays never join, there is too big a gap between. They seem to be scheduled but for one purpose, to annoy passengers by missing connections.

A passenger is only allowed 100 pounds of baggage, and no one's trunk weighing over 100 pounds. Should he have one heavier he cannot pay overweight, but may be commanded to unpack the excess weight and send by freight. Traveling since the war is wearisome, indeed.

Many of the porters are demobilized soldiers, wounded in the war. I must say I should love to see some American express men juggling with trunks weighing 200 or 300 pounds. Such a Remembrance of the past!

A soldier I met a short time ago told me a good many little anecdotes about the war, and then said a German prisoner whom he captured once insisted on giving his opinion of Berlin, Paris and London. Here it is: "Berlin is the place to study, Paris for a gay time, but London is home." Pretty cool, wasn't it? My friend was not impressed. This man had been a waiter in London before the war.