

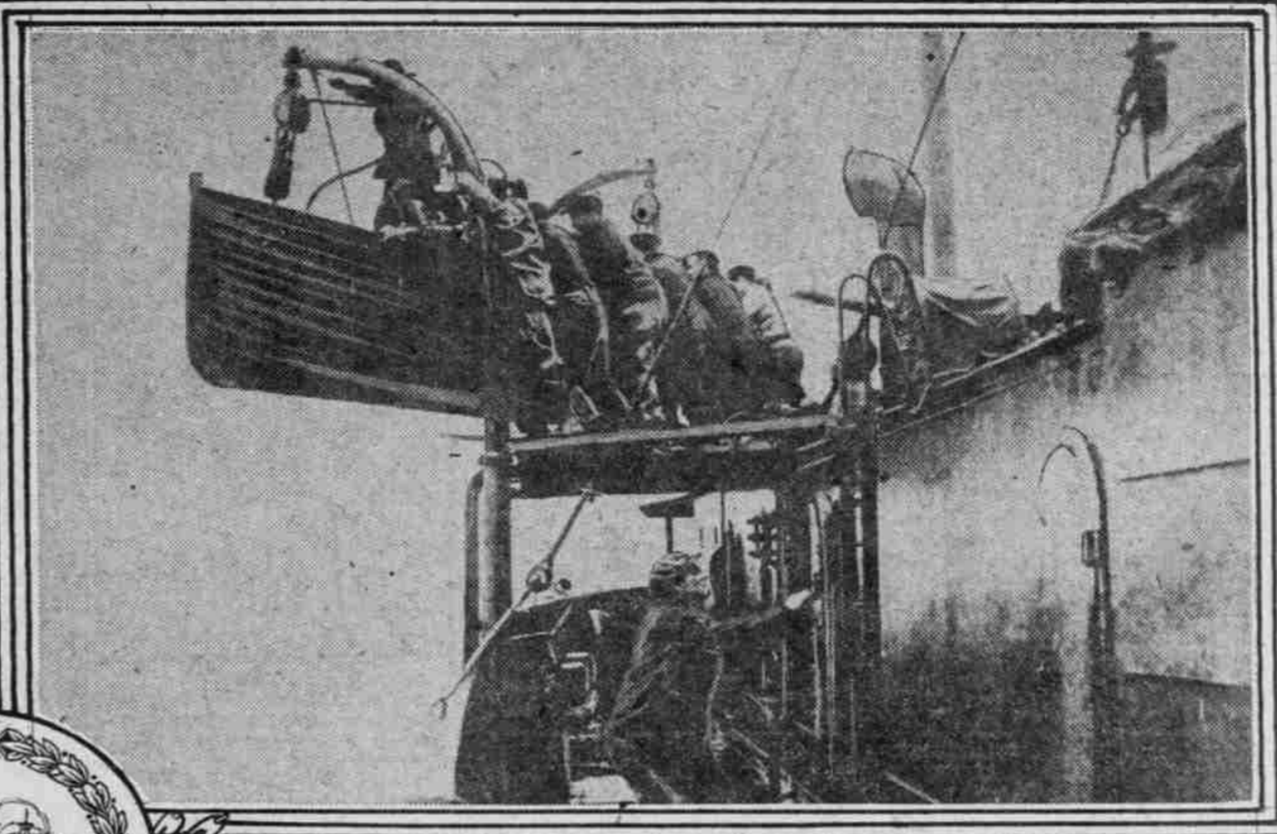
THE VICTORY AT SEA

By Admiral William Sowden Sims

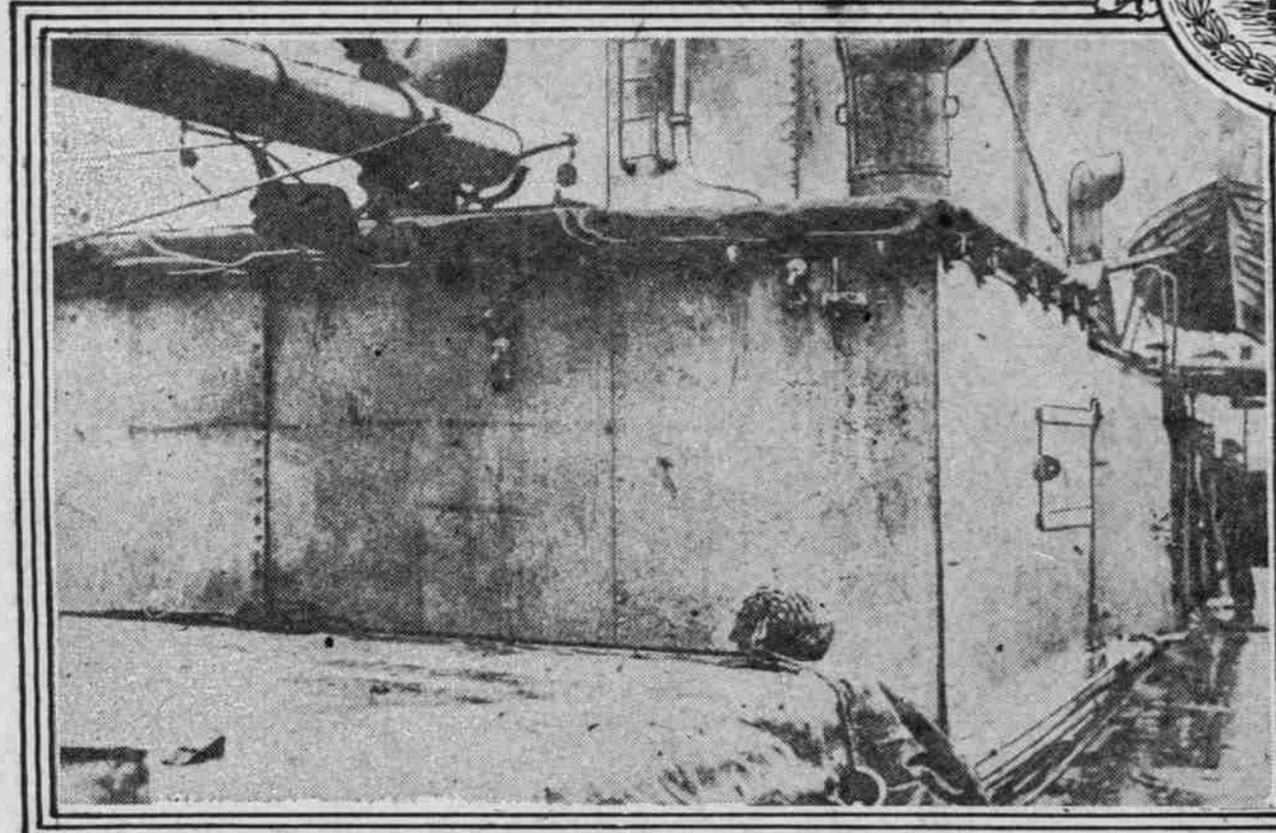
MYSTERY SHIPS VERSUS U-BOATS



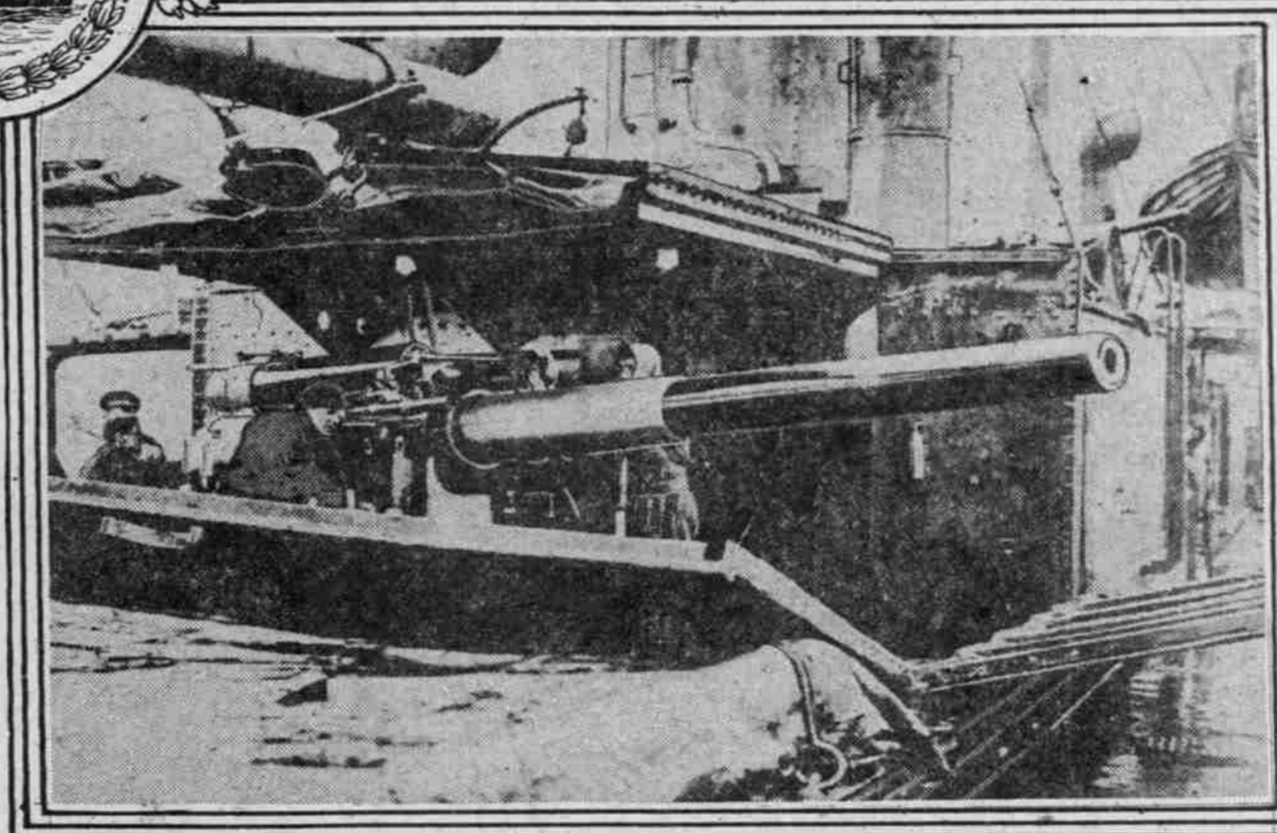
LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER HAROLD AUTEN, V. C. R. N.



A PART OF THE GAME TO FOOL THE HUN.



HOW THE GUNS WERE BROUGHT INTO ACTION.



ONE OF THE FAVORITE METHODS OF CONCEALING GUNS ON MYSTERY SHIPS WAS TO CONSTRUCT A DECKHOUSE WITH ITS SIDES HINGED TO THE DECK. A PULL ON A LEVER RELEASED THE SIDES, WHICH FELL AWAY FROM THE GUN, AT WHICH THE CREW WAS AWAITING AN OPPORTUNITY TO FIRE.

MY CHIEF purpose in writing these articles is to describe the activities during the European war of the United States naval forces operating in Europe. Yet it is my intention also to make clear the several ways in which the war against the submarine was won; and, in order to do this, it will be necessary occasionally to depart from the main subject and to describe certain naval operations of our allies. The most important agency in frustrating the submarine was the convoy system. An examination of the tonnage losses in 1917 and in 1918, however, discloses that this did not entirely prevent the loss of merchant ships. From April, 1917, to November, 1918, the monthly losses dropped from 575,000 to 101,168 tons. This decrease in sinkings enabled the allies to preserve their communications and so win the war; however, it is evident that these losses, while not necessarily fatal to the allied cause, still offered a serious impediment to success. It was therefore necessary to supplement the convoy system in all possible ways. Every submarine that could be destroyed, whatever the method of destruction, represented just that much gain to the allied cause. Every submarine that was sent to the bottom, it was estimated, amounted in 1917 to a saving of about 40,000 tons per year of merchant shipping; that was the amount of shipping, in other words, which the average U-boat would sink, if left unhindered to pursue its course.

Besides escorting merchant ships, therefore, the allied navies developed several methods of hunting individual submarines; and these methods not only sunk a considerable number of U-boats, but played an important part in breaking down the German submarine morale. For the greater part of the war the utmost secrecy was observed regarding these expeditions; it was not until the early part of 1918, indeed, that the public heard anything of the "special service vessels" that came to be known as the "mystery" or "Q-ships"—which represented one of the most successful devices for hunting submarines—although these had been operating for nearly three years. It is true that the public knew that there was something in the wind, as it were, when it was announced that certain naval officers had received the Victoria Cross, but as there was no citation explaining why these coveted rewards were given, they were known as "mystery V. C.'s."

On one of my visits to Queenstown, Admiral Bayly showed me a wireless message which he had recently received from the commanding officer of a certain mystery ship operating from Queenstown, one of the most successful of these vessels. It was brief but sufficiently eloquent.

"Am slowly sinking," it read. "Good-bye, I did my best."

Though the man who had sent that message was apparently facing death at the time when it was written, Admiral Bayly told me that he had survived the ordeal, and that, in fact, he would dine at Admiralty house that very night. Another fact about this man lifted him above the commonplace; he was the first Q-boat commander to receive the Victoria Cross, and one of the very few who wore both the Victoria Cross and the distinguished service order, and he subsequently won bars for each, not to mention the croix de guerre and the legion of honor. When Captain Gordon Campbell arrived, I found that he was a Britisher of quite the accepted type. His appearance suggested nothing extraordinary. He was a short, rather thick-set, phlegmatic Englishman, somewhat non-committal in his bearing; until he knew a man well, his conversation consisted of a few monosyllables, and even on closer acquaintance his stolidity and reticence, especially in the matter of his own exploits, did not entirely disappear. Yet there was something about the captain which suggested the traits that had already made it possible for him to sink three submarines, and which afterward added other trophies to his record.

It needed no elaborate story of his performances to inform me that Captain Campbell was about as cool and determined a man as was to be found in the British navy. His associates declared that his physical system absolutely lacked nerves; that, when it came to pursuing a German submarine, his patience and his persistence knew no bounds; and that the extent to which his mind concentrated upon the task in hand amounted to little less than genius. When the war began, Captain Campbell, then about 39 years old, was merely one of several thousand junior officers in the British navy. He had not distinguished himself in any way above his associates, and probably none of his superiors had ever regarded him as in any sense an unusual man. Had the naval war taken the course of most naval wars,

Campbell would probably have served well, but perhaps not brilliantly. This conflict, however, demanded a new type of warfare and at the same time demanded a new type of naval fighter. To go hunting for the submarine required not only courage of a high order, but analytical intelligence, patience, and a talent for preparation and detail. Captain Campbell seemed to have been created for this particular task. That evening at Queenstown he finally gave way to much urging, and entertained us for hours with his adventures; though he told the stories of his battles with submarines so quietly, so simply and, indeed, so impersonally, that at first they impressed his hearers as not particularly unusual.

Yet, after the recital was finished, we realized that the mystery ship performances represented some of the most admirable achievements in the whole history of naval warfare. We have laid great emphasis upon the brutalizing aspects of the European war; it is well, therefore, that we do not forget that it had its more exalted phases. Human nature may at times have manifested itself in its most cowardly traits, though it also reached a level of courage which I am confident, it has seldom attained in any other conflict. It was reserved for this devastating struggle to teach us how brave modern men could really be. And when the record is complete, it seems unlikely that it will furnish any finer illustration of the heroic than that presented by Captain Campbell and his compatriots of the mystery ships.

What the Q-Boat Was.

This type of vessel was a regular ship of its master's navy, yet there was little about it that suggested warfare. To the outward eye it was merely one of those several thousand freighters or tramps which in normal times sailed sluggishly from port to port, carrying the larger part of the world's commerce. It looked like a particularly dirty and uninviting specimen of the breed. Just who invented this grimy enemy of the submarine is, like the origin of many other devices developed by the war, unknown. It was, however, the natural outcome of a close study of German naval methods. The man who first had the idea well understood the peculiar mentality of the U-boat commanders.

The Germans had a fairly easy time in the early days of submarine warfare on merchant shipping. They sank as many ships as possible with gunfire and bombs. The prevailing method was to break surface, and by

gun shelling the defenseless enemy. In case the merchant ship was faster than the submarine it would take to its heels; if, as was usually the case, however, it was slower, the passengers and crews lowered the boats and left the vessel to its fate. In such instances the procedure of the submarine was invariably the same. It ceased shelling, approached the life boats filled with survivors, and ordered them to take a party of Germans to the ship. This party then searched the vessel for all kinds of valuables, and, after depositing time bombs in the hold, rowed back to the submarine. This procedure was popular with the Germans, because it was the least expensive form of destroying merchant ships. It was not necessary to use torpedoes or even a large number of shells; an inexpensive bomb, properly placed, did the whole job.

Even when the arming of merchant ships interfered with this simple programme, and compelled the Germans to use long-range gunfire or torpedoes, the submarine commanders still persisted in rising to the surface near the sinking ship. Torpedoes were so expensive that the admiralty at Berlin insisted on having every one accounted for. The word of the commander that he had destroyed a merchant ship was not accepted at its face value; in order to have the exploit officially placed to his credit, and so qualify the commander and crew for the rewards that came to the successful, it was necessary to prove that the ship had actually gone to the bottom. A prisoner or two furnished unimpeachable evidence, and, in default of such trophies, the ship's papers would be accepted. In order to obtain such proofs of success, the submarine had to rise to the surface and approach its victim. The search for food, especially alcoholic liquor, was another motive that led to such a maneuver; and sometimes mere curiosity, the desire to come to close quarters and inspect the consequences of his handiwork, also impelled the Hun commander to take what was, as events soon demonstrated, a particularly hazardous risk.

This simple fact that the submarine, even when the danger had been realized, insisted on rising to the surface and approaching the vessel which it had torpedoed offered the allies an opportunity which they were not slow in seizing. There is hardly anything in warfare which is more vulnerable than a submarine on the surface within a few hundred yards of a four-inch gun. A single well-aimed shot will frequently send it to

the bottom. Indeed, a U-boat caught in such a predicament has only one chance of escaping; that is represented by the number of seconds which it takes to get under the water. But, before that time has expired, rapidly firing guns can put a dozen shots in its hull; with modern well-trained gun crews, therefore, a submarine which exposes itself in this way stands practically no chance of getting away. Clearly, the obvious thing for the allies to do was to send merchant ships, armed with hidden guns, along the great highways of commerce. The crews of these ships should be naval officers and men disguised as merchant masters and sailors. They should duplicate in all details the manners and the "technique" of a freighter's crew, and, when shelled or torpedoed by a submarine, they should behave precisely like the passengers and crews of merchantmen in such a crisis; a part—the only part visible to the submarine—should leave the vessel in boats, while the remainder should lie concealed until the submarine rose to the surface and approached the vessel. When the enemy had come within two or three hundred yards, the bulwarks should fall down, disclosing the armament, the white battle ensign should go up, and the guns should open fire on the practically helpless enemy.

When the Bulwarks Dropped.

Such was the mystery ship idea in its simplest form. In the early days it worked according to this programme. The trustful submarine commander who approached a mystery ship in the manner which I have described promptly found his resting place on the bottom of the sea. I have frequently wondered what must have been the emotions of this first submarine crew, when, standing on the deck of their boat steaming confidently toward their victim, they suddenly saw its bulwarks drop, and beheld the ship, which, to all outward appearances, was a helpless, foundering hulk, become a mass of belching fire and smoke and shot. The picture of that first submarine standing upright in the water, reeling like a drunken man, while the apparently innocent merchant ship kept pouring volley after volley into its sides, is one that will not quickly fade from the memory of British naval men.

It is evident that the allies could not play a game like this indefinitely. They could do so just as long as the Germans insisted on delivering themselves into their hands. The complete success of the idea depended at

first upon the fact that the very existence of mystery ships was unknown to the German navy. All the Germans knew, in these early days, was that certain U-boats had sailed from Germany and had not returned. But it was inevitable that the time should come when a mystery ship attack would fail; the German submarine would return and report that this new terror of the seas was at large. And that is precisely what happened. A certain submarine received a battering which it seemed hardly likely that any U-boat could survive; yet, almost by a miracle, it crept back to its German base and reported the manner of its undoing. Clearly the mystery ships in future were not to have as plain sailing as in the past; the game, if it was to continue, would become more a battle of wits; henceforth every liner and merchantman, in German eyes, was a possible enemy in disguise, and it was to be expected that the U-boat commanders would resort to all means of protecting their craft against them.

The Only Alternatives.

That the Germans knew all about these vessels became apparent when one of their naval publications fell into our hands, giving complete descriptions and containing directions to U-boat commanders how to meet this new menace. The German newspapers and illustrated magazines also began to devote much space to this kind of anti-submarine fighting, denouncing it in true Germanic fashion as "barbarous" and contrary to the rules of civilized warfare. The great significance of this knowledge is at once apparent. The mere fact that a number of Q-ships were at sea, even if they did not succeed in sinking many submarines, forced the Germans to make a radical change in their submarine tactics. As they could no longer bring to board, and loot merchant ships, and sink them inexpensively and without danger by the use of bombs, they were obliged not only to use their precious torpedoes, but also to torpedo without warning. This was the only alternative except to abandon the submarine campaign altogether.

Berlin accordingly instructed the submarine commanders not to approach on the surface any merchant or passenger vessel closely enough to get within range of its guns, but to keep at a distance and shell it. Had the commanders always observed these instructions the success of the mystery ship in sinking submarines would have ended then and there, though the influence of their presence upon tactics would have remained in force. The allied navies

now made elaborate preparations, all for the purpose of persuading Fritz to approach in the face of a tremendous risk concerning which he had been accurately informed. Every submarine commander, after torpedoing his victim, now clearly understood that it might be a decoy dispatched for the particular purpose of entrapping him; and he knew that an attempt to approach within a short distance of the foundering vessel might spell his own immediate destruction. The expert in German mentality must explain why, under these circumstances, he should have persisted in walking into the jaws of death. The skill with which the mystery ships and their crews were disguised perhaps explains this in part. Any one who might have happened in the open sea upon Captain Campbell and his slow moving freighter could not have believed that they were part and parcel of the royal navy. Our own destroyers were sometimes deceived by them. The Cushing one day hailed Captain Campbell in the Targust, having mistaken him for a defenseless tramp. The conversation between the two ships was brief but to the point:

Cushing: What ship?
Fargust: Gordon Campbell! Please keep out of my sight.
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Restoration of Youth Is a Simple Operation

French Doctor Says Glands Can Be Inserted With Little Trouble and Only Local Anesthetic Is Necessary.

PARIS.—Restoration of youth to aged bodies is no longer an uncertainty, but is as sure as the rules of chemistry, Dr. L. H. Voronoff said recently.

Dr. Voronoff recently startled Paris with his announcement of success in the rejuvenation of animals and humans by the grafting of interstitial glands. Dr. Voronoff is the director of the physiological laboratory of the College of France. He has a high reputation as a surgeon as well as an investigator.

In addition to the success the doctor alleges in his operations for the restoration of youth, he explained that the operations are extremely simple.

"A local anaesthetic is all that is necessary," said Dr. Voronoff. "It is merely a task of opening the skin, inserting the new tissue, sewing up the slight wound and nature does the rest."

"Seven months ago," continued Dr. Voronoff, "I operated on a widely-known Parisian man of affairs, who at the age of 66 was in a decrepit state. The experiment was a complete success, although his hair remains white and his face is wrinkled, he walks erect, his mind is as active and his appetite is as good as that of a young man."

"Three months ago I performed a similar grafting operation on another aged man. Everything in his case indicates the result will be the same, but it is too early to make a statement as to his renewed vitality."

"The secret of my method is based on the following general knowledge: In various parts of the body nature has provided glands which secrete fluids having vital functions in human organism. For instance, if I remove the thyroid gland from a human's neck he will become a idiot within six months. Also, when the interstitial glands, which manufacture fluid which is absorbed by the blood, and thus give to the whole body its vitality, become worn out or are removed, the whole body falls into decay."

"I have proved by numerous experiments that it is possible with safety to replace the worn-out interstitial glands of aged animals by those of young animals of the same breed, thus restoring youth to the aged body. This method, which have thus been introduced into a worn-out system, are nourished by the blood circulation of the body which is the new home for the tissues. In turn the tissues manufacture a vital fluid, which, circulating through the body, restores its youthful vigor."

"Some of my most productive experiments were carried out on an aged ram. The ram at 14 years corresponded in age of a human at 75, insofar as the exhaustion of organisms is concerned. Taking the aged, decrepit ram in May, 1918, I put into his body interstitial glands taken from a young ram. Within two months he had regained his youthful vigor and activities."

"Then, in order to prove it was not merely a matter of good care that had caused the change, I removed the grafted glands. I found them in a perfect state, as they had not been completely assimilated by the renewed organism."

"The ram immediately aged and became even more decrepit than before. I once more introduced the glands from a young goat, which again produced youth and vigor."

"There will not be the slightest danger to human beings because of the monkey tissues which I use in treating humans. A monkey's blood very closely resembles that of humans. Hence the tissues of the ape are perfectly adapted for grafting in humans."

"There is no danger of thereby brutalizing human beings. So far my experiments in this direction are confined largely to rejuvenating worn-out organisms. I am convinced the idea is practicable. I do not guarantee I have found the solution for senile decay. My works are of an experimental nature and I am continuing my investigations."