

A SKIPPER'S LOVE FOR A SHIP:—A Story of a Sea Captain's Heroism

By Mordaunt Hall



His vessel was a haven for Captain W. H. Bullock, with his home in an English port to take his ship to sea one morning in 1917, in much the same manner as he had done for many years in peace days. The dangers which beset the merchant marine were not even mentioned by Mrs. Bullock, who, as usual on such occasions, watched him walk down the winding bearded road, nodding to a friend here and there. The parting words were few. The night before she knew that he was leaving, as he had left during the war. Still there was a job when they kissed each other, a woman's kiss which she had tried to suppress, but which it! One must have seen affection tapped once in a while, longer or shorter. Mrs. Bullock had no intention of mentioning anything of the kind to her husband, a grave soul to whom the war was a necessary retreat.

The ship was battered down and the Canadian was ready to take orders for foreign parts to be sent to the captain. Captain Bullock was the representative of the British and observed the stokers and the crew coming aboard. He mentioned something regarding the courage of those men, after the victims of the unseen danger which snuffs out their lives while they are at sea. He was the chief engineer, whose duty at war time is to stand the first man down below who makes for the boats before an order is given or before the water drenches the fires or is up to their necks.

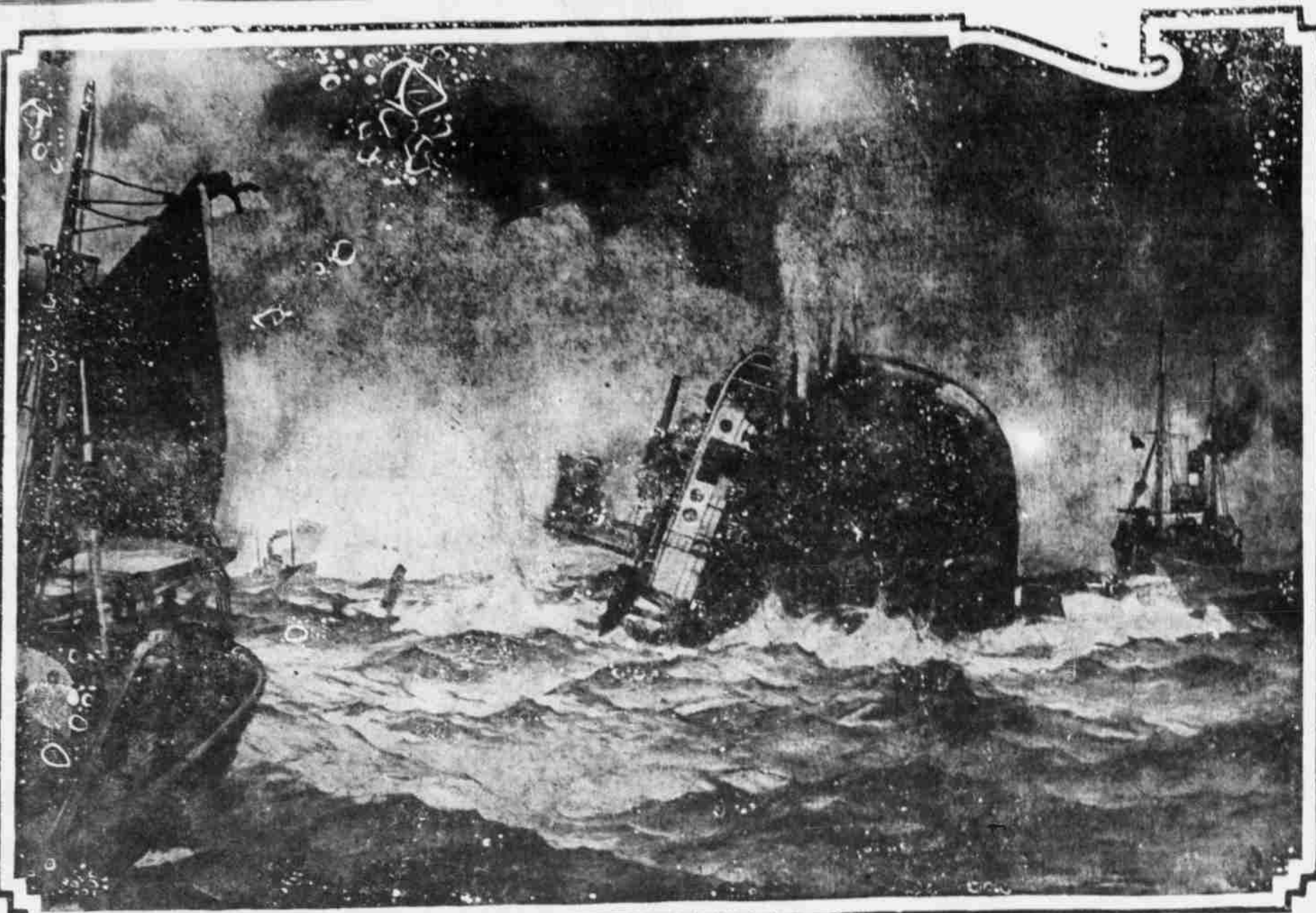
"Fine lot of chaps," he remarked. They were grimy and greasy, but thick-set, with faces on which one read determination. In war it was not the mere pleasure they received which made them so slow in the stove hole, but a desire to do their bit for their country.

Hate of the German.
Captain Bullock knew that no whisper had been heard from the men or the deck since Britain drew the sword, except perhaps when they struck at the sight of a German pacifist and refused to work with those creatures were aboard. These warring men do hate the German, and a growing hate which will last for years to come. Their pay ceases the moment the ship is sunk, and they find that when the owners' money at the time of going the men the time due to them is the day the vessel was the victim of a German U-boat. However, it is not to a certain extent by the course of the sailor men that it must be a heartbreaker to have a ship sent to Davy Jones' locker's whereabouts just at the time it was thought she was ploughing her way out to sea.

The Canadian was a splendidly constructed vessel, and none was more proud of her than her master, William Bullock. Recently Mr. Bullock had told Mrs. Bullock what he thought of that ship, and it was like him to feel that every man of his crew was just as proud of the Canadian as he was.

It was the day the vessel was the victim of a German U-boat. However, it is not to a certain extent by the course of the sailor men that it must be a heartbreaker to have a ship sent to Davy Jones' locker's whereabouts just at the time it was thought she was ploughing her way out to sea.

Out of Sight of Land.
Soon the Canadian distanced herself from the sight of England's coast line, creaking and groaning as she slipped to avoid being too much of a target of the giant nets of Germany. Captain Bullock stuck to his officers in the so-called danger zone. He was not a man to scoff at the danger, but at the same time he acted joyfully in speaking to any of those on the bridge with him. He was sorry to see the moon so clear—a moon beamed in the trenches on an moon. A cloudy sky and a squall sea will be galled in these days.



"The Ship Went Up Like a Huge Mine, the Stern Heaving Upward, and Then She Plunged to Her Grave."
(Drawn by Montague Dawson for The Sphere, London. Copyright, 1918, in the United States by the New York Herald Company.)

At ten o'clock came and all was well. Captain Bullock still clinging to his post. He steered a bit nearer the coast, and then at eleven o'clock calculated that the Canadian was nearly out of the submarine zone. It was about the same weather and time he had seen on other trips in war days.

He looked at his watch after parting the bridge. It was twenty minutes to midnight, and that blasted moon was showing his ship a well cut silhouette while it played on the inky water, below. Fighting up the sea near a vessel which carried not a single light.

Suddenly there was an explosion! The vessel trembled and turned and then heeled to starboard. Captain Bullock pulled heavily at the faithful pipe and ordered all the men to their stations. A few minutes later he pulled out the pipe from his teeth and shouted to the seaman at the engine room telegraph to pull down the tube to the chief engineer to "carry on." He uttered not a word beyond that, and his officers stood faithfully by. Once a little later he winked when he heard the engines still throbbing.

Ten minutes passed and there was a second explosion, this time before the figurehead on the port side. The old Canadian lumbered about with her engines killed. There was a shuffling sound, and now the vessel, crest fifteen minutes before, seemed dead, inasmuch as it lighted the way out of the ship and showed up the boats and davits. Men who have been on board a torpedoed vessel at night know what a comfort a light is when barbarians are awaiting you in some unknown place in the sea. The light was very bad, and men clung to the rails and ropes, but stuck to their posts. The shuffling sound was nearly the whole, slapping water, following the second explosion.

"It's not an a thousand gold so far," observed the Captain. He passed, pulled again on the pipe until the tobacco glowed red, and then quietly gave the order for the crew to abandon ship, an order which was yelled out by the first officer.

Every man aboard was as cool as if he intended merely changing from one bunk to another. Among the 184 souls aboard the ship 85 were Americans, true as steel to the nerve of such blood relations of the British. They cursed the German-Japanese-Hun, and meant it. The sea seemed as if it were dirty enough to capsize some of the boats.

One who remained on the boat was the chief officer. Below the water, with a line hanging from the floating vessel's side, was the boatman's seat in the skipper's boat, smoking his pipe. He was waiting for the captain, just as he might have waited to take his advice in some peer, except for the crested water. The ship pitched

up and down like a paper boat on a wind swept pond, and the other men in it used all their cunning as sailors to keep her close to the Canadian. None of the men uttered a word.

There was the moon, there were the forms of the skipper and his gallant and faithful first officer, there were the ugly, dashing waters, and there was the floating ship—a dreadful sight in day, but awful beyond words in night. There was a light, and another light with a red glare which tore through the moonlit sky—discreet signal rockets, such as brought life savers out on the coast in peace days.

Now it was war time and such signals come with all too great a frequency, and the ships are too, too far away. Another detonation was heard, and the men in the

captain's gig looked around for the periscope. It was the third torpedo, and eight minutes had elapsed since the second. One figure on the bridge was seen to leave.

The First Officer Leaves the Ship.
"Yes, go damn it, I'll follow," the Captain had told the first officer. By that time he knew that some miles distant was a British destroyer. The two of them had been sending up distress signals. The first officer slid down the rope and was caught by the men in the boat. "Till they waited, and with cupped hands after a while they rest their lungs shouting and shouting to "Bill" Bullock to come along. Their cries penetrated even the winds, but on the bridge there still stuck that form of a man. The men then became desperate and cursed in their fury, hoping to make their explosives overhead and perhaps bring the skipper to abandon his ship.

A fourth torpedo hit the ship. "Pull off!" shouted the chief officer, who hated to leave. He felt even then a desire to climb aboard, if it were possible, and get the skipper by force. Eight minutes had elapsed between the third and fourth torpedoes. This last explosion caused the boilers to burst, and it is surmised that Captain Bullock met his death at that moment. The ship went up like a large mine. The stern heaved upward and then she plunged to her grave.

"Christ, he was fine!" came from one of the throats in the boat as it pitched away from the ship which had been there at a half afterward in the rain how that "Bill" Bullock must be struggling somewhere in the sea, but as the wreck lay was not a sign of a human being.

"There's the water," said one of the men as a dripping craft in the moonlight appeared slowly above the waters. Men were on her ally deck in a little while and soon the submersible steered for the boat.

"We hoist, you was done ship?"
"Go to hell, you wanker!" was the English, uncultured answer.
"Yes?"
"Swine! Swine! Swine! Swine, you rats, you!"

The Admiralty Report.
But something told the submarine captain that it would have been foolhardy for him to remain on the surface. It would, for five minutes later a British destroyer appeared, and without awaiting word from the survivors dropped a depth charge. The instant the boats were far enough away. The surface of the water heaved even from the distance of nearly a mile. Quickly the men in the boats were taken aboard and a few more presents for the Hun captain were placed in the water. Whether she—a harbor of the sea—remained alive or not they could not tell, even in the wretched moonlight. It they sped back to a port and put the men of the dead Canadian ashore and then went out again on the hunt.

They always ask how the Captain behaved at the Admiralty in London. It was answered with one word in that place on the report—"Excellent!"

Lower down the chief officer wrote: "The master was splendid throughout. He sent all his crew to the boats regardless of his own personal safety, and was commanding to fire distress signal rockets by himself when the chief officer returned to him."

Admirals read that report, and the story was told in this detail. One high naval officer penned this on the (bottom): "He did his duty and died in carrying it out. Suggest that it be ascertained if he has any wife or children and that they be looked after."

Mrs. Bullock was told the ship had been sunk. They needed then to tell her no more, as she knew that if the Canadian went down her husband would go with it. And Mrs. Bullock is "carrying on" alone.

He Dropped His Skillet for a Rifle

ALEXANDER ABBATE is a versatile fellow. He has served Germans with choice cuts of beef and with hand grenades. He is equally adept at either, but prefers the latter method of service. He thinks the United States a very good place to live in and as chief at one of the hotels at "an Atlantic port" in August, 1914, was giving complete satisfaction to the management.

About this time France sent out calls for overseas reservists. Abbate heard and heeded. He gave up cooking for others and prepared to let the transport chief provide for him. He arrived in France in the early part of September. He was held a rank as sergeant before coming to America he was recognized in that grade in the army and was placed in the infantry regiment of Toul. He took an active part in the Battle of Champagne, which raged twelve days. He saw active service in the struggle of Le Pretil Woods. He is now in this country with several wounds which make him unfit for further duty. In tense and true soldierly fashion Abbate gives his war experiences:

"Le Pretil Woods is a thick forest on the side of a hill which, on account of the underbrush, is impassable except for the narrow trails which lead to the top of the hill. "At the top of the hill the Germans were entrenched, and their machine guns commanded the approaches. Our patrols had been sent out time after time; I had not returned. We later found them dead.

trench, placed mines and retired. The artillery consisted of ten inch field guns, which we placed about thirty yards apart and concealed with the intention of surprising the enemy.

Tricks in Warfare.
"At four o'clock in the morning our guns opened fire, and for one hour we shelled the enemy. They remained under cover. Our officers gave the command, 'En avant!' We understood the trick and remained in our position. The enemy heard the command and reinforcements rushed into the front trench prepared to meet our rush.

"After fifteen minutes our guns opened fire again, and for twenty minutes we shelled the Hun. "Again reinforcements hurried forward. The Hun thought a grand assault was coming. Our fire slackened. Once more comes the order, 'En avant!' Again we remained quiet. The German trenches are crowded with men awaiting our rush. "Bang! go our fourteen mines, one after the other. We charge through the wire fences and entanglements destroyed by our artillery. I run with my men into shell holes and out again. I fall. I jump into the first trench. It is a ruin. There was no trench. It is like a volcano.

or two days we fought until Nancy was safe.

The Men Were Nervous.
"At the end of that time we went back behind the lines to rest and get clean. The trench was nothing more than a hole in the ground, exposed to the weather and to the ground water. We were in water all the time when we were on guard.

"We stayed in the trench day and night. Of course the night is the hardest time, for then we must be on the watch all the time, in constant fear of an attack. We took our rest in the daytime. We had no hand grenades then, and all of the attacks had to be repelled hand to hand.

of the night we were still organized. "During the night we were rested and the trench on our right was reoccupied. We are allowed to retire to the village to clean ourselves.

"For this defense my company received a citation. "Our troops were very brave in battle. Three of our battery guns were blown up by German shells, but the fourth, the only one left, protected the regiment for a full day. Many of our rifles became clogged with mud and were useless.

"The Germans had made false trenches. When we rushed them we found that they had placed machine guns which enfiladed. In that charge nearly all the company were lost.

"At that time we were digging our trenches in short sections and straight lines, and our men, although very brave, were nervous and untrained in fighting. All night the shadows around the shell holes seemed to be moving and they would fire, sometimes at our own patrol.

"We rushed along into the next trench and the next. For my part, I am mad, as we all are. I want to go right through. A machine gun begins to sing from somewhere in front and we are ordered to retire into the last trench taken. We are told to hold what we have.

"We remain in that trench all night and the next day. During the next night we repel also counter attacks. I am not tired and neither are the men. We fire time after time and sometimes sleep soundly for two minutes and are refreshed as if we had had a night's rest.

THE LAST FALL OF JERUSALEM

Night in Jerusalem. The crescent moon drops low, and as her doubtful fire pales so pales the Crescent Empire! The streets untenanted, save for the sullen Turk muting his last profane nocturnal watch over a trembling city. But within a fearful dwelling kneels a woman praying, Her forehead hebes about her. Lo, the walls of modern Hagar! Hear H. Albeny! Thus art the Joshua of her supplication: "God of our fathers, Fountain of Mercy, Abraham's guide, Judah's protector, Forth on the stillness, over the mountains, Hope to Thy children, soundeth Thy voice: 'Cometh a new Joshua! A warrior for Israel!'"

The name of none shall live beyond thine awl Above the tumult rings for thee her prayer: "God of our fathers, Fountain of Mercy, Abraham's guide, Judah's protector, Forth on the stillness, over the mountains, Hope to Thy children, soundeth Thy voice: 'Cometh a new Joshua! A warrior for Israel!'"

—ROLAND KATHORNE