

NAVAL ENGINEERS

Obscure Heroes of the Warships
When a Battle Rages.

BOTTLED UP BELOW DECKS.

They Get None of the Glory and the Fine Thrill of Combat, but Just a Little Harder Work Than Usual. Perils of the Officers and Stokers.

There is a man in the navy who is too often forgotten, even by the authorities, when they are "dishing out" rewards and praise for successful operations at sea, and that man is the man who makes the wheels go round inside the ship.

If the wheels stop then the modern warship lies on the water like an armed tin can, waiting for some one to sail round it, plug it full of holes and sink it.

A fighting ship, to put up any sort of battle at all, must be able to get on with it at the rate of knots, as the sailors say when they mean at high speed, and the men who make that possible are the engineers and the stokers. The engineer officers are highly skilled scientists, with no use for the fear of death.

The stoker, far below the waterline, shovels coal, and he gathers there is a battle on, when there is, by the fact that he has to work twice as hard as he thought he could, and by the infernal racket made by the guns, and by the projectiles of the enemy, which have found a new home aboard the ship.

He has none of the glory and the fine thrill of battle—only an increase in his ordinary work.

He works by lamplight to keep steam up, and he knows there has been a victory when some one tells him, unless he happens to be working in his "spare" time at the ammunition hoists near the roaring guns.

Even now in many ships and once in all the engineer officers and their men are shut down in their working places, and they cannot get out, for it is necessary for them to be closed up. It is not, of course, necessary to keep them there to make them do their work, but because the ships' engines run under forced draft, and the only way to get that is to batten down the stokeholds.

They become, in fact, part of the pipe, if one can call it that, along which the air is pumped to the fires to make them burn more fiercely, just as one bucks up the kitchen range with the bellows. If the hatches leading to the upper decks were open the air would be pumped out through them and would not pass through the white hot furnaces.

If she is torpedoed and sinks suddenly down go the engineers and the stokers without the chance of swimming for it as the others have when the order "Each man for himself" is given by the executive officer in charge of the vessel.

In the case of the oil driven warships there is not, it need hardly be said, that added risk for the engine room staff. There is no need to shut them down, and in case of sinking they have no further risk than that entailed by the time taken for the order to get down to them and for them to get up on deck. They are, however, the people most likely to go to fragments when a torpedo comes knocking on the ship's side, or, rather, down among her foundations.

And there are steam pipes filled with scalding and sudden death, flooding the engine room in an instant with biting, blinding, searing fog, somewhere above boiling point, for high pressure steam is hotter stuff than comes out of the spout of a kettle. A shell through the main steam pipes, and goodbye to those who are near the damage.

The engineer officer knows all this and often has seen some of the things that can happen taking place on a small but significant scale. While the gunners get the glory he watches the wheels go round, listens not to the scream of the shells or the hammer strokes of projectiles on armor plate, but to the telltale songs of the complex mechanisms over which he presides with the coolness of a naval officer, the skill of a man of science and the tenderness of a Red Cross nurse.

Every moment may be the last moment the life in his bowels, but he must not think of that.

Down there in the bowels of the fighting ship he must keep his mind clear to think of a thousand details, and he must do it without any of the exhilaration that comes from watching the effect of the guns on the enemy's ships.

He never sees a shot go home; he never sees an enemy's flag pulled down in defeat.

He sees only his engines and the men tending them.

If all goes well and the enemy runs or strikes the engineer commander hears all about it at mess. If things go wrong he feels it quite unmistakably in his person.

Get one unlucky shot into the engine room and it is up to him, so long as volition is left to him, to put that thing right, and he must not draw fires until there is not another thing he can do first. In battle so long as there is a dog's chance to do so he must keep steam up, for steam is the breath of life to the ship, and he must take risks when he is making repairs that would give the landman spasms.—London Answers.

Charity begins at home, but don't let selfishness start there too.—Detroit Free Press.

IT BLANKETS THE FLAMES.

Sawdust in Certain Cases is a Splendid Fire Extinguisher.

We are not accustomed to regard sawdust in the light of a fire extinguisher. On the contrary, most of us look upon it as fuel for the flames and would never dream of throwing it upon a fire which we were anxious to put out.

Nevertheless it is very valuable indeed in certain fire emergencies, especially in cases where little volumes of gasoline or other inflammable liquids have become ignited. The motorist in particular will be glad to know that there is perhaps nothing within reach more effective in such cases.

The principle upon which sawdust works is obvious. Combustion ceases as soon as there is not enough oxygen to support it. That is the reason that one may extinguish a small fire by simply covering it with a cloth. The sawdust, indeed, works precisely in this manner. Its particles adhere so closely together that they effectually blanket the burning body upon which they are thrown, thus robbing the fire of the oxygen necessary for its support.

It will readily appear that while sawdust may extinguish the flames of gasoline or other volatile liquids upon a floor or flat surface, it is likely to fail when the liquid is in a receptacle which gives it some depth. In such cases the sawdust naturally sinks below the surface very quickly, thus admitting oxygen to the liquid and permitting the flames to break out anew.

But with such liquids as heavy oils, lacquers, japsans, melted wax and the like, sawdust very effectually blankets the entire surface and so extinguishes the flames speedily and satisfactorily.

The character and condition of the sawdust do not matter. Wet or dry, of hard wood or soft wood, if it is applied to the conflagration quickly and so applied as to blanket the entire surface of the flames, it will be entirely effective.

The success will be even more striking if common baking soda is added to the sawdust in the proportion of ten pounds to the bushel. When heated this chemical gives off carbon dioxide gas, which is very potent in excluding oxygen and in combination with sawdust forms an extremely efficient fire extinguisher.—Baltimore American.

The Salted Thread.

Soak a piece of thread in strong salt water, dry it and repeat two or three times. When thoroughly dry tie one end to a chandelier and on the other or lower end tie a ring or some small but not too heavy article. It is now ready for the experiment. Set fire to the thread, and behold the ring does not fall to the floor, nor does the thread break.

The explanation is: The thread has in reality been burned, but the salt with which the thread was saturated forms a solid column, and that supports the ring. Varied experiments can be made, using several threads for one article and, in fact, many others which may suggest themselves to the readers.

The People of Iceland.

Writing of Iceland, a traveler says: "The people are as a class extremely well educated, and many a young fellow you may see haymaking has been through the Latin school at Reykjavik and is studying law, medicine or divinity in the winter. He finds the means for his winter studies by working on the land during summer. Iceland is essentially a democratic country and every one has an equal chance of coming to the front. It is singularly unspoiled by the vices of an older civilization, and its people are marked for their simplicity of life and manners. I should unhesitatingly describe Iceland as morally the purest country in the world."

An Exchange of Courtesies.

A couple of men got into a warm argument and finally came to blows. After the fracas a spectator remarked:

"A soft answer turneth away wrath, and vice versa. We should all keep polite tongues in our heads. Only last night I heard a very fat man say with a loud laugh to a bowlegged friend:

"Jim, old man, you look as if you'd been riding a barrel!"

"And you," snapped Jim sourly, "look as if you'd swallowed one."

The Magnet.

The word "magnet" is believed by many people to be derived from the name of the city of Magnesia in Asia Minor, where the properties of the lodestone are said to have been discovered. It has, however, been asserted that the word comes from Magnes, the name of a shepherd who discovered magnetic power by being held on Mount Ida, in Greece, by its attraction for the nails in his shoes.

SIZE OF A RAINDROP.

It Varies Greatly, but May Easily Be Measured in Flour.

Raindrops vary in diameter all the way from one-fiftieth of an inch to one-third of an inch.

No wonder that a single big raindrop on occasions makes such a splash on one's face, if it is a quarter of an inch or more in diameter!

Anybody can measure the size of raindrops for himself when once the simple method is explained. All that is necessary is to take a small tin pan and spread smoothly in it some well sifted flour to a depth of an inch. Expose it then to a shower for three or four seconds—long enough, that is to say, to allow a few drops to fall upon the flour. As a result a number of little holes will be made in the flour, and at the bottom of each hole will be found a pellet of dough.

The dough pellets must not be disturbed until they have had time to become dry and hard. Then they may be taken out and will represent with a fair degree of exactness the sizes of the drops by which they were made.

This may be proved by allowing artificial raindrops (suspended from the end of a broom straw or glass pipette and carefully measured) to fall into a pan of flour from a height of two or three feet. When the resulting pellets are examined they will be found to correspond closely in size to the drops.

Commonly a big drop in falling will split into many little ones, which may account for the fact that there are plenty of microscopic raindrops less than a hundredth of an inch in diameter, which are so minute as to make no visible impression on flour. The ordinary, medium sized drop is from a sixteenth to an eighth of an inch in diameter.

A raindrop is contained in a skin. True, the latter is only a sort of molecular arrangement, but it serves the purpose, its form being retained by this skin. A drop of water may roll across a piece of clean glass or any smooth, dry surface without wetting the latter—thanks again to the skin. It is the same sort of skin covering a pond that enables the "skating bugs" to promenade over it without getting their feet wet.—Boston Herald.

The Same Dimensions.

The bride to be had the air of one who is unreconciled to the existing state of affairs. "Can't we take a wedding trip, as we planned?" she asked plaintively.

"Not just now," said the young man, "on account of my partner's illness."

"I thought it would be such fun, taking that six days' journey in the cars!" she sighed.

"Well, now, see here," said the young man: "If we take the flat I looked at yesterday it'll be just the same as living in the parlor car stateroom, except that the scenery won't change."—Youth's Companion.

Helping a Friend.

"I am not going to buy any stock in your company because I like you and want you to succeed."

"Don't you think it is a good thing?"

"I don't know anything about that. I am declining to buy on the simple basis of friendship for you. I want you to get rich, and I hope this venture will be a big success."

"Then why not come in and help to make it so?"

"That's just the point. I am staying out to help you. If I bought stock the company would go broke tomorrow."—Detroit Free Press.

Given Away.

A minister in Cornwall who was making a call upon a member of his flock who was a backslider asked:

"What's come over you that I don't see you at church at all now?"

"Heavens, man, you can't have seen me because I sit behind the pillar!"

"The pillar, John? Good gracious, the pillar! Why, it's two years since it was removed from the front of your seat!"—Exchange.

The Bad Feature.

"Guess I'll have to get rid of my cashier. She is entirely too beautiful for the lunchroom business."

"Seems a queer complaint. I should think a pretty cashier would draw customers."

"But they all fall in love with her and lose their appetites."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

His Business.

"Who's that portly man with the prominent stomach?"

"Dat am Colonel Soandso, sah," answered the courtly colored gentleman addressed.

"And what is his business?"

"Just being a colonel, sah."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

ARABIAN HORSES.

Ancient Stories of Their Care and Training Are Mere Fables.

So far as we know, the Arabian breeders have no patented system of training their horses different from those prevailing among peoples of a similar degree of civilization. Naturally the lack of pasture results in young Arabian horses being fed a considerable quantity of barley and, so the story goes at least, a not inconsiderable quantity of the fruit of the date palm, fresh and dried, by way of succulence.

The colts are broken, usually bare-backed, at two or three years old. Their subsequent handling is much like that of all other horses, with perhaps the difference that as early in life as possible the young animals are accustomed to doing without water for increasing periods of time in order to accustom them later on to the scarcity of liquids in desert journeys.

The ancient stories about the Arab steed being kissed and bawled over by the sheik's whole family, kept in the living tent and fished on the best silk rugs are picturesque fables containing about the same measure of truth as the one which dates the pedigree of Arabian horses back to the mares owned in Biblical times by King Solomon.—Breeder's Gazette.

THEY SAW THE GHOST.

Easy to Recognize the Woman Who Had Haunted the Place.

"A certain lady and her family," says Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff in his "Diary," "lived a place in Scotland which was haunted by the ghost of a woman, who was to be seen constantly at night wandering through the rooms and passages. When the family arrived the lady was much struck with the place and said, 'I must have been here before, for I know this place so well, only there ought to be two rooms here, and there is only one.'"

"The agent replied that within a few weeks the owner had caused a partition to be taken down and made the two rooms into one. Still the lady was puzzled at her knowledge of the place till she remembered that it was a house she used to go to in her dreams."

"Well, some time passed, and the agent was up at the house again, when the lady complained that one part of the contract had not been fulfilled. They had hired a house and a ghost for the summer, and no ghost had she seen."

"The agent replied: 'Of course not, because you, madam, are the ghost. We recognized you the moment we saw you.'"

The Fate of the Onaida.

One of the most extraordinary catastrophes that have befallen vessels of the United States destroyed the sloop of war Onaida in 1890. She was bound homeward with a jolly ship's company eager to see wives and sweethearts and native land once more, when far out of port she was struck by the British steamer Bombay coming in. The stem of the Onaida, the ship was sinking rapidly, and guns of distress were immediately fired, but the Bombay steamed on her way and left the vessel to her doom. She went down, and all but one or two of her crew were drowned. The captain of the Bombay gave no other reason for his conduct than that he had Lady Eyre, the wife of a distinguished British satrap, on board and did not wish to disturb her nerves with scenes of shipwreck. He was mobbed when he reached Yokohama, dismissed from the service, socially tabooed from that time on and died in disgrace a year or two later.

The Obstacles to Evil.

In the constitution of our nature a limit has been fixed to the triumph of evil. Falsity in theory is everywhere confronted by the facts which present themselves to every man's observation. A lie has no power to change the ordinances of God. Every day discloses its utter worthlessness until it fades away from our recollection and is numbered among the things that were. The indissoluble connection which our Creator has established between vice and misery tends also continually to arrest the progress of evil and to render odious whatever would fender evil attractive.—Francis Wayland.

Friggs.

Friggs from whom Friday is derived, was either a god or a goddess, according to time and country. As a man he was a great hunter and warrior, always represented with a drawn sword in one hand and a bow in the other. In the Scandinavian countries Friggs was called the "Venus of the North," and the sixth day of the week was consecrated to her worship.—London Mail.

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Unfortunate.

"Dublin is a singularly unfortunate man."

"What makes you think so?"

"He's the sort of person who is always caught with his mouth open when a photographer takes a group picture."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

It Might Be Worse.

Foot—I fear I haven't written anything that will live. Friend—Look on the bright side of it. Be thankful that you are alive in spite of what you have written.—London Opinion.

Fixing the Blame.

The Parson—To whom am I indebted for this visit? The Bridegroom—To Mamie's mother; she thought I'd been courting her long enough, and she said so.—Philadelphia Ledger.

An Exception.

"Nothing can be short and long at the same time."

"What's the matter with a dachshund?"—Baltimore American.

Our past lives build the present, which must mold the lives to be.—Sir Edwin Arnold.

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