YARNS OF A SHIP'S SURGEON. THE "WASP" AGAIN.

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As it is not always possible to appreciate one’s own writing or composition, I thought I would ascertain a friend’s opinion on my diary of “Around the World” which appeared in the Journal some time back. So I gave him an excerpt to read, and after he had read it I asked him what he thought of it. He replied: “You relate a very interesting incident about the Christian Scientists.” And he added with a gleam in his eye: “Did you follow up the case?—such cases should always be followed up.”

For those who have not read the diary perhaps I may repeat the part to which he referred. It reads: “To-day we heard of an interesting case that occurred recently in the district. The child of wealthy parents was badly afflicted with bandy or bow legs. The best surgeons and physicians having failed to effect a cure, it was decided to give the Christian Scientists a trial. They undertook to try; and so, three of the leading exponents, together with the child, were closeted in a room. For three hours the Christian Scientists exercised the most intense mental concentration, without a moment’s relaxation. At the end of this time the blinds were pulled up, and the child examined—he was found to be suffering from knock-knee. Apparently the concentration had been overdone.”

On the whole I was much disappointed with my friend’s remarks, as nothing else in the diary appeared to have interested him—and indeed he seemed so absorbed over the psycho business, I was somewhat nonplussed, and had not the courage to ask him more.

But I had a different experience in connexion with the account of “Yachting at Gibraltar” which I wrote and which appeared in the Journal of May, 1914. I was surprised at the interest this little article evoked. Officers wrote to me, even officers I had not the pleasure of knowing. One old retired Colonel gave a most interesting account of the sport at Gibraltar in by-gone days. Another officer wrote asking advice about a boat he had, and which he thought of “converting” as I had done.

Another communication was in the form of a post card (bearing the London post-mark). It read: “Yachting article good, but just a line to inform you, you are wrong in attributing your quotation to Byron.” I was rather amused at this; and though not quite prepared to swear to it, I am almost sure my anonymous communicant is wrong, and the lines I quoted are from “The Traveller,” by Byron. They begin:

The patriot boasts, where’er he roam,
His first, best country ever is at home;
And yet perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share, etc.
Perhaps then it may be interesting if I bring the history of the yacht I had at Gibraltar up to date—the "Wasp."

Recently when loading cargo at Yokohama, I noticed some bales of silk lying on the wharf with "Gibraltar" marked on them, and on making inquiries I found we were going to call at Gibraltar on the way home. This was welcome news for me, as I had not been there for eight years, and I was anxious to look the place up again, and, if possible, find out what had become of the "Wasp." In due course we arrived at Gibraltar—but I must here make a digression in order to bring the history of the "Wasp" up to date, as far as I am concerned.

Shortly after the war broke out in 1914 I got orders to leave Gibraltar.

The "Wasp" was then in excellent condition, and fully found in every respect, including a set of almost new racing sails by Lapthorn, and a fine set of cruising sails, very kindly given me by Captain W. G. Wright (now Major, D.S.O.) of the Corps. She had also moorings, and a sturdy punt. I valued her, all told, at about £90. But owing to the then uncertain outlook, I knew there was little prospect of getting this amount; so I put an advertisement in the Gibraltar Chronicle offering her for £40. To this advertisement I did not get a single reply; I then got permission to tie her to the Flag Ship "Cormorant," and a petty-officer on board undertook to look after her. In a few days I left Gibraltar.

On the troopship going home, some of the young officers almost mutinied—their grievance was that our ship stopped whilst our naval escort was busy sinking an Austrian merchant ship. They thought we ought to push on at all cost, as even a few hours might make a big difference, and the chance of active service be lost owing to the Germans throwing up the sponge. By the way, on this occasion, one of the minor "lessons of the war" was learnt—that is, if the sea is quite calm, it is practically impossible to sink by gun-fire a cargo ship light in ballast. At least our escort found it so.

Very few people seem to keep a diary. Some say it is too much "flag" to-keep; others say it is tell-tale—perhaps occasionally it may be so. I have kept one now for a good many years, and from time to time I find it very useful to look up a name, or the date of an event, etc.

When I commenced to write about this "minor lesson of the war," I wanted the names of the ships concerned and the date of the incident; but I suddenly remembered I had lost my diary. This was rather a severe blow, indeed so much so that I could not possibly have given these particulars were it not that a friend, to whom I had at the time written a long letter, had fortunately kept it, and came to my assistance. But whilst awaiting this information, perhaps I might mention it was somewhat misleading to say I "lost" my diary. I did not lose it in the ordinary sense of the word. One frosty night as I lay asleep in my bell-tent in France, I fancied I heard a noise. You know the confused way you get when disturbed at night; half conscious, half unconscious, with the result that by the time you are fully awake you cannot be quite sure whether you were
really disturbed, or merely dreaming. That was how I felt. But next morning I noticed the fly of the tent was unrope, though I had closed it as usual from the inside before going to bed. My suspicions were immediately aroused and on looking around I saw my suit-case was gone. I called my servant and the hue and cry was raised, but without result.

Some time afterwards the suit-case was found on a piece of waste ground ruthlessly cut open with a knife, and everything gone. I thought it particularly mean taking the diary, as it could be of no use to anybody. One or two little incidents subsequently occurred which clearly showed me one of the Mess-servants was the culprit, but evidence sufficient for a conviction could not be got. However, he was sent back to his depot; and curiously enough, he shortly afterwards got a heavy sentence for stealing from a comrade.

I had asked my friend merely for the name of the cruiser and the Austrian ship and the date of the incident; but he sent me the whole letter, so perhaps I might give an extract from it. The letter is headed, "Union Castle Line, R.M.S. 'Edinburgh Castle,' off the coast of Spain, September 1, 1914," and reads: "We have had such uncertainty about the date of starting. On August 15 I got orders to sail on 20th—but later on that day the order was cancelled. Then I had orders for 'about the end of August.' On the 28th we were told we would not go until September 15 and next day we were told we would go next day, i.e., 30th. By wireless they stopped this steamer on its way home from South Africa. She arrived in Gibraltar on last Sunday and all that day there was a crowd of workmen on board fitting her up suitable for troops. She is a very fine ship of 13,326 tons, quite new and beautifully fitted. I had all my things on board by 1 o'clock except a few hat boxes and other light articles, and after lunch on board I went back to my quarters for these, but when I returned, to my surprise, I found the ship had left for the 'detached-mole.' However a naval pinnace soon had me on board. We were told we would be moored to the 'Mole' for four days—but, much to our surprise, we pushed off next morning at 7 a.m. Even the O.C. of the Regiment was not 'in the know' about the starting; of course all this trickery was to guard against any possibility of information getting to the German cruisers, which were known to be scouring about in the Atlantic. We were accompanied by torpedo-boats part of the way, and then a battleship met us off Cape St. Vincent. She has now left and a cruiser has taken her place.

"Last night I had the novel experience of sailing in a ship with all lights out. Of course in the saloon, etc., lights were on. But the port-holes were all curtained, and long strips of canvas and matting were used where necessary. No mast-head, port, or starboard lights were carried—still we did not seem to bump into anything. There are about forty first-class civilian passengers on board, and also a fair number of second class. They consist of English, French and Belgian—any other nationalities had
been refused. There are about forty French and Belgian Reservists returning. The ship was making her usual passenger trip from South Africa home when she was commandeered by wireless from Gibraltar. (I stopped writing at lunch time, and am now [8:30], after dinner, continuing.) After lunch, H.M.S. Cruiser 'Albion' came close and signalled, 'If pursued make a wide sweep to clear the enemy.' She then told us to follow half a mile behind, in her wake, as there were two ships in sight she did not know. Of course this caused great excitement on board, but after watching for some time, all interest died away as there was nothing to be seen. At 5 o'clock a 'tramp' very high out of water passed across our bow about two miles ahead of us. I happened to be looking over the

rail and I thought it curious a ship in her condition (so light) should be heading as she was straight from America. Suddenly the cruiser turned towards the 'tramp'; immediately the tramp stopped her engines (this could be plainly seen, as she was so light in the water her propeller was throwing a cloud of spray). After a few minutes she began to go ahead again, whereupon the cruiser put a shot across her bow. She stopped immediately and reversed her engines.

'I was one of the few who saw these preliminary incidents, but the shot, of course, brought everybody to the side, and the excitement was tremendous. A boat boarded her, and then another; we were standing by
quite close. Quickly the crew and all their personal belongings were bundled into the boats and brought to us. As the boats approached the soldiers cheered loudly, and to my surprise, the prisoners were looking up and laughing, and even the captain and some others waved their caps. She was the 'Bathori' of Fiume. But now a splendid and awe-inspiring sight began. Flash, bang, from the cruiser, and instantly a cloud of smoke and flame burst from the 'tramp' and she quivered with a life-like shudder from stem to stern. However, the effect was very transient, and quickly she was apparently none the worse.

"The second shot had just the same effect, but this time it was followed by a terrible and magnificent explosion, debris being thrown to a great height, with clouds of steam and smoke. Her bottom must have been blown clean out, and we expected she would sink like a stone. But there was no such result. Except for hissing of steam and some smoke, she seemed to recover and showed no signs of settling down.

"Shells now banged and zizzed at her and the grim tragedy went on, and she was soon burning furiously; still she stood at bay, she had not budged; she trembled and shook, but she had not settled down a single inch. We were so close to her it was easy to see this with glasses. I wonder why? What were the shells doing inside? I should have thought 6-inch shells would go through and through the thin plates of a merchant ship. Some of course may have been deflected upwards when they struck—but surely not all; and all were of course fired in a slightly downward direction, so one would expect them to emerge below the water-line at the opposite side.

"A gunner officer tried to explain to me why the gunfire did not sink her—but I was not altogether convinced by his explanation. Anyway, a party had eventually to board her and blow her up; she then rapidly settled down. The charge had to be put right in the bow, as it was the only place where she could be boarded owing to the flames. The explosion was terrific; still she showed no ghastly wound, let alone being rent in twain, as well she should have been.

"The end, I think, must have been a good deal like the 'Titanic' disaster; she first heeled over to port, then her bow went down, and finally her stern and screw stood perpendicular out of the water, and as they disappeared there was a great explosion (evidently due to imprisoned air) and the water was lashed into great commotion."

The foregoing, though fairly lengthy, is only an extract from the letter; there are yet several pages. I think it may be described as some letter.

Before I left "Gib" a very thorough search of ships was being made for Germans. Not only was every ship which entered the harbour searched from truck to keel, but even ships passing through the Straits were brought into the harbour and searched, with the result that in a short time over 500 prisoners were under lock and key.

Of all these there was scarcely one who had not been trying to get to
Germany under one disguise or another. Some, posing as allies or neutrals, were indignant when it was proposed to search their baggage; others were dug out hidden away in most inaccessible parts of ships.

But probably the great majority were trying to get through by posing as deck-hands, or working in the engine rooms. Needless to say the bag was a very mixed one; it included the German tennis players who were in America when war broke out, representing Germany in the Davis Cup tennis contests. It also included one Major von Ritter; the major was regarded as an important capture as he was on the German General Staff, and had been in South America buying up horses and arranging other little trifles.

He was taken out of a stokehole covered with grime and soot, where he had been innocently working his passage home. As soon as he had washed off the soot he "assumed command" in the internment camp on the Rock, and was the cause of much trouble to the authorities, organizing complaints, demanding privileges, etc.; so the first opportunity to ship him to England was taken, and he was put on board our ship.

Even allowing for the destruction to which men became accustomed in the course of the war, I think the sight of a powerful cruiser pouring shells into a ship at short range would never be classed as an everyday sight; it certainly was not in those early days of the war; and so, when the bombardment began, every possible vantage point on our ship was crowded with troops in tense excitement to see the grim sight; in the ship's boats, the rigging, everywhere were men. Officers were packed on the fore part of the hurricane deck, and behind them was standing Major von Ritter, his great height enabling him to see easily over the heads of those in front.

Shortly after the bombardment had begun he said in a loud voice, evidently intended for those around to hear: "Oh, shame! Do you call that war?"

Considering how strong passions were running at the time, it was a very risky remark to make, but one needed only to glance at his mail-fisted face to appreciate the word "fear" had no meaning for him. Anyway he spoke with firmness, loudness, and a sardonic snarl. But except for a few scowls by junior officers no notice was taken.

(I may here mention the first intention was that the captured ship should accompany us to England, and it was only decided to sink her when it was found she had not sufficient coal in her bunkers to steam the journey. She had been supplying the German warships at sea with coal.)

Major von Ritter was allowed to move about the ship freely, except that there was a sentry always close by his side; this was a source of much irritation to him, and he tried to get such close supervision discontinued, but unsuccessfully.

I had one or two conversations with him, but he was difficult to converse with, as he seemed to have war on the brain. He told me he had never
played any game in his life, he had no time, as even from his earliest youth almost all his time was taken up with military training.

On one occasion I asked him which side would win the war. He replied: "Ah, it is impossible to say now." Two things in his reply struck me, one was the alacrity with which he made it, and the other the way he laid stress on the word "now." He evidently had some special consideration in his mind, and I was about to ask him what he meant when unfortunately I was called away, and I think I did not speak to him again until, curiously enough, I met him some years afterwards when I was E.M.O. at Havre.

He was then one of a large batch of prisoners on their way from England to Switzerland for internment there under the agreement. I met him on the quay as they disembarked and entrained. He told me he had recently been promoted Lieutenant-Colonel. He said that during the first couple of months in England he had been very badly treated, but after that he was well treated, and had no cause for complaint. I suppose the truth was that he tried to make things hum in the internment camp in England as he had done at Gibraltar.

At Havre he looked well and fit, and resplendent in his full uniform, at least to me it appeared to be "full," as did that of the other officers. Nearly all wore smart showy uniforms, with nothing of the "service dress" appearance about them. Several wore the ribbon of the Iron Cross. Some were minus an arm or leg, but there were only three stretcher cases.

The crew of the Austrian merchantman were a motley crowd as they came on board our ship. But they were all smiles, and evidently in good spirits, which seemed strange as we were about to sink their ship. We found out afterwards their elation was due to their being taken off the ship, as they were certain they were about to be sent to the bottom with her. Not only were they rescued, but they were given time to collect their personal effects, and they did not forget to bring the cat and two canaries.

One of the crew was the most puny hunchback I have ever seen. What use the poor fellow could be on a ship, I cannot understand. Some one said he was the pantry boy. It's a curious thing, but these sort of people have often the largest amount of luggage—however, he was the exception proving the rule, as the only luggage he brought on board was a large umbrella. Old "sea-dogs" never go to sea without an umbrella—it keeps the wet from the oilskins.

Going ashore from the trooper I was depressed and pessimistic over the war outlook; however, a course of the home newspapers soon bucked me up with their hopeful and cheery confidence.

But the pessimism set in again about six months afterwards. One could not help feeling pessimistic at the way the opposing forces were dug in; so I consulted a "dug-out," and he said, yes, the war would last a long time.

I then wrote to the hon. secretary, the Gibraltar Yacht Club, and
Chinese Junks in Hong Kong harbour.

The Inland Sea of Japan. Scenery of endless variety and charming effect.

asked him to get £20 for the "Wasp." He wrote back and said, if I would accept half this sum, he still could not get it for her, as the harbour, as far as yachting was concerned, was completely closed down, and nobody was allowed on the water, except by special permit, and then only if accompanied by a constable at 5s. an hour. In short there "was nothing doing"; or, as the French would euphemistically express it "na poo."

So time went by, and I had almost forgotten the "Wasp," when one fine morning I got a letter from the hon. secretary to say a possible buyer was looking at her, and would I be willing to accept any offer he might make.

If this meant anything, it meant a proposal to sell her for a £10 note—or less. But the times and everything considered, I thought I had no alternative but to agree; and so, in due course I got a cheque for £8.

That was the end of the "Wasp" as far as I am concerned. £8! and at the time lead in England was selling at £44 a ton; and she had just a ton of it on her keel!

But I must now get on with her subsequent history and bring it up to date. As I said on the opening page, on our return from Japan, in due course we came to anchor at Gibraltar.

However, before I complete her history, perhaps I may be allowed a slight digression here in order to mention the extraordinary good luck we had out East.

We sailed the Eastern seas, that is, those of China and Japan, during August and September—months noted for typhoons. But day after day we went through a sea of glass, whilst never more than an occasional zephyr stirred the soft stillness of the tropical air around. Yet it is scarcely an exaggeration to say, wherever we went, we had a typhoon sweeping destruction, either immediately before or just behind us.

When we were off Hong-Kong on the outward journey, only a short day's run ahead of us, Swatow was being wiped out. The casualties of that typhoon will never be known. Some estimates put them as high as 100,000. The fine British India Company's ship "Gondia" disappeared in it with all hands—never a trace was found.

We were due to leave Shanghai in the early morning of Saturday, August 19, and as luck would have it, that morning the storm signals were hoisted for an approaching typhoon.

The one redeeming feature about typhoons—if the word "redeeming" may be applied to them!—is, that their course can be told with fair accuracy as they sweep along—a good deal more so than the course of "home" storms. And so, it was calculated on the "Novara" that if we got out quickly we would just miss the typhoon.

As we steamed down the river we saw crowds of junks and sampans making their way up the numerous small creeks; in some of these creeks craft were already crowded solid. This is the usual "cover" the floating population takes when storm warnings are hoisted. And these primitive people look out for and can read the warnings as well as any mariner.
Yarns of a Ship's Surgeon. The “Wasp” again

Down the river we had a large German cargo ship following close in our wake. Near the mouth were several steamers anchored and made snug, awaiting the worst. The German ship now manoeuvred into position with the other ships, and was about to let go her anchors, but she evidently noticed we were not going to do so, and after some hesitation she changed her mind, turned round, and again followed in our wake; but as we travelled faster we gradually dropped her.

Though the actual typhoon comes on with great suddenness, often a “preliminary canter,” so to speak, ushers it in; and this was just what we experienced when we left the river and put to sea. The glass was at 99.30, and dirty black ragged clouds with mist were scudding across the sky, with half a gale blowing from the S.S.E. The gale continued and even increased for an hour or two; but before we turned in for the night there were welcome signs of an improvement.

Next day was an ideal day. But en passant I would remark the typhoon did much damage in and around Shanghai.

The reference to the native boats scudding up the creeks reminds me how interested I was to watch native life on these craft. I have seen nothing anywhere like that at Hong-Kong and Shanghai. On the Hugli at Calcutta one sees great crowds of craft, on the larger of which families live—but only men live on the smaller ones. Whereas at Hong Kong and Shanghai on every small sampan or boat (and there are many thousands of these measuring about six feet beam by twenty-three feet over all) lives a family consisting of parents and four or five small children.

Some of the larger junks look almost like nurseries, such crowds of children appear scampering about on them. Though these junks are only about the size of our deep-sea fishing trawlers, four or five, or more, families live on each. It is said the men live in perfect harmony; I only hope it is true of the women too—the space is very confined.

In the Far East life is so crowded nobody takes notice of anybody else; and so, from the quays, or merely by looking over the side of the ship, one can watch life undisturbed in these floating homes. Looking down one day this is what I saw: The sampan or boat was one of the small kind, that is, six feet beam by about twenty-three feet over all. She was solidly built, and in good condition; varnished, not painted. This summary gives a fair description of most of the boats of her size, and one is struck by the comparative cleanliness and smartness of the craft, which is all the more creditable as they truly represent "multum in parvo."

Near the bow of the boat was seated an infant, it looked about 1½ to 2 years old. It was tending a pot boiling over a brazier, and every now and then dropped bits of charcoal on the brazier. As it was not yet big enough to walk—at all events on the wobbly boat, its job was evidently to sit tight and tend the pot; whilst a child about a year older, which had already got its "sea-legs," was doing waitress on her brother and sister, who appeared to be about 10 or 11 years old, and were having breakfast.
under the canopy aft. A couple of times this child emerged from under the canopy with a bowl in its hand; going up to the brazier it took up a ladle and put some of the contents of the pot into the bowl and returned to the dining saloon. The children inside appeared to be having quite a square meal. Right in the bow of the boat was lying a youth, with a fishing line in his hand, and he was evidently supposed to be "feeling for a bite." But he was fast asleep.

In the centre of the boat was a large hencoop packed with chickens (every boat has got one). The wife near by was rummaging her hands through a pot of boiled rice, and every now and again picked out (apparently) a piece of dirt, and threw it amongst the chickens. The chickens were no strangers to this performance, as could be seen from the way they were standing on tip-toe, ready to receive the delicacies.

In the stern of the boat was the husband holding a rope which went straight down into the sea; suddenly he started to pull it for dear life, and continued to do so until a basket came to the surface. Across the top of the basket were stretched some pieces of twine to which were attached pieces of bait. Apparently the idea was, that fish came to the bait, and then being over the basket when it was suddenly pulled on, they got sucked and pressed into the bottom; that the scheme was successful was shown by the fact that he took out three or four small fish from the bottom of the basket, which he immediately transferred to another basket close by, and hanging just submerged in the sea. In this way a continuous supply of fresh fish was ensured.

The foregoing is a little picture of life, typical on many thousands of these small floating homes. I merely record what I saw, while you wait, so to speak; but in watching many points occur to one. How for instance they sleep is inconceivable, as I could never detect a clear space sufficient for even one person to stretch on. Poles, ropes, oars, bits of loose planks, household utensils, all lying about in profuse and tangled confusion. In vain one tries to discover what they do when it rains—true, there is a canopy situated aft of amidships; but it is open at both ends. And at most is no more than five feet long. Apparently there is no cabin. Considering the size of the boats, the space occupied by the hencoop is very large, and it is usually cramfull of chicks.

The Chinese seem to live on and for chickens; it is said that with the exception of the bill, toe-nails, and feathers, there is not a stitch of chicken they do not eat—and I can well believe this judging by the awful concoctions one sees on the street stalls. Doubtless appetizing morsels to them!

What they do with their children over 10 or 12 years I do not know, as one never sees a child over this age on board.

Neither do I know how they earn money to pay for the rice, chickens, etc. A little is picked up by ferrying people to ships, or across the harbour, but there can hardly be enough in this traffic to support the crowds. The larger boats and junks, of course, carry cargo.
Altogether the life of these people is interesting and fascinating to watch, but it is around one in such profusion, few—I mean Europeans—seem to take any notice.

It is said sailors take off their hats to junks, such wonderful sea-boats they are. Personally, I intend to do nothing of the sort; for with all due respect to sailors, I feel pretty sure they are anything but sea-boats. I don't say they cannot stand any sea, but what I say is, compare a junk of say sixty tons with a "home" ketch or fishing boat of the same size—I say the crazy, rickety junk would lee-away, flounder, and founder in a breeze and sea in which the ketch would revel. No, but I don't mind taking off my hat to the men, women and children, who put to sea in such crazy craft—only too often they pay the price, poor people!

(To be continued.)

**Syphilis.**—Van den Heuvel has compared the results of different methods of treatment in syphilis. Of 577 cases, 184 were treated by mercury only, 190 by mercury followed by neosalvarsan, 203 by mercury and neosalvarsan administered conjointly. As regards the effect on the Wassermann reaction, there was no great difference between the three methods; 52 per cent of cases became negative after the first method, 60 per cent after the second, and 63.5 per cent after the third. Tertiary or parasyphilitic affections developed in 4 per cent after the first method, 5 per cent after the second, and 0.5 per cent after the third; but in the last group two cases of iritis and three of choroido-retinitis developed during treatment. The author concludes that although the modern treatment of syphilis by mercury and neosalvarsan gives better results than treatment by mercury alone the difference is not so great as is generally believed, and the present treatment is far from satisfactory.

Pontoppidan insists that, though the injection of calomel is apt to provoke pain and severe mercurial poisoning, this method of giving mercury is of such high therapeutic value that every effort should be made to minimize these two drawbacks. As for the pain, it can largely be avoided by the administration of a twenty per cent calomel emulsion, as in this strength only 0.25 cubic centimetre of the emulsion need be injected. But it is difficult to be as accurate in dosage when such a small quantity as 0.25 cubic centimetre is injected instead of the 0.5 cubic centimetre of the formerly much-used ten per cent emulsion. By the use of the finely pulverized calomel vapore paratum, the pain of an injection can also be reduced. There remains the serious objection to the twenty per cent emulsion that it does not hold all the calomel in suspension. So, however conscientiously