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NEW ZEALANDERS IN SAMOA

BY

L. P. LEARY
M.C., R.F.A. (LATE N.Z.E.)

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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TO

E. R. L.

MY PLAYMATE IN BOYHOOD

MY COMRADE IN ARMS

MY PROUDEST MEMORY

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

VOLUNTEERING

AROUND the name of "Samoa" there has always clung a certain element of romance. Very few Englishmen, it is true, know where the island is; fewer still know that it is not an island at all, but a group. And Samoa has traded on the national ignorance and laid by a store of poetry and mystery on which she could have lived for generations without doing a hand's turn. The magic pen of Robert Louis Stevenson has so etherealized the name that it floats about the mind, a languorously elusive concept, giving at most an indefinite suggestion of sunshine, tropical verdure, and beauteous dusky maidens.

It must therefore have been a rude shock to learn at the beginning of the Great War that some few hundred New Zealanders had blundered right into this national fairyland, had planted the Union Jack on its semi-mythical shores, and had actually set up a *de facto* government in the very place where "The Vailima Letters" were written. Samoa was the first enemy territory occupied by the British in the war. Two of the islands had been German possessions for some time before that momentous week in August when a certain European potentate shuffled a pack of ultimatums and dealt a hand to half Europe. And possibly the first trick he lost in the ensuing game was when it was

declared in the Reichstag that "the Pearl of the Pacific was in the hands of the vile invader."

The "vile invader" consisted of thirteen hundred New Zealand Territorials and Volunteers. The "Pearl of the Pacific" was Samoa. Of how the New Zealanders started out, took, and held the pearl, of how beautiful the pearl was and how sick they became of its beauties, these pages shall tell.

There were many men in Samoa well qualified to write a book. There were many things in Samoa well worth writing a book about. But as we think over the young journalists on the staff of the regimental paper or con again the list of university men in the ranks, we find name after name marked down with a heavy black cross. The men suited by education and calling to the task of unofficial historian—and it were a pity if all the strength and humour of that expedition should go unrecorded—have dropped the pen even as they have let fall the sword from nerveless fingers. This indeed is our only justification in writing.

And so it may well happen that both the manner of service and the actual ingredients of the repast within these covers may not appeal to the literary epicure. Quite apart from the errors in grammar and the wholesale violation of all rules of style which will without doubt occur, there will probably be a considerable amount of matter which should not find its way into a carefully written book at all. This is not a carefully written book. We have neither the time nor the talent for such efforts. A child of chance, conceived at random of an ill-chosen parent, born prematurely, and misshapen in its growth, it is sent out upon the world immature and apologetic. Such as it is, it may help to put on record, before their piquancy escapes the

memory, a few of the recollections of a man who served in the ranks in Samoa, who fraternized with the natives, wrangled with the cooks, stole from the quartermaster, and lied to the Colonel along with hundreds of better men than he—men of whom to-day there is nothing to show save a name on a roll of honour.

At 3 P.M. on August 4, 1914, one of the asphalt tennis courts of Victoria University College was occupied by two students, Poulter and Podger. They had been strongly disinclined to work all day owing to the general unrest that pervaded the air. A man could not read dispassionately of the tangent of *theta* while the cables were ticking out the destinies of nations. By common consent the two students had gravitated to the courts and were now trying to work off a little of their excitement in a game. But Poulter was off his serve and Podger would lob balls over the wire netting down into the gorse-covered gulley below. Russia and Germany were at war and England had sent in her ultimatum. The players could not help feeling that in a very short time it would be rifles and not racquets they would handle, and the balls would be of a different calibre.

"I can't play this game to-day," came from one side of the net.

"Why emphasize the *to-day*? That remark is of general application."

"Are you ready?" snapped Poulter.

"Yep."

"Well, stand up to this." The serve shot over like a flash, scarcely rose, and Podger caught the ball as it rebounded from the back netting. "Like shelling peas," remarked Poulter. So they played on, spasmodically talking and then silent, whilst the tension

grew. One of the committee of the Students' Association passed over the courts.

"Well, heard the news?" from the President.

"Yes, do be dramatic," said Poulter; "it's really Podger's monopoly, but he isn't sparking well to-day."

"Well, war is declared."

"Between whom?"

"England and Germany."

"Liar," remarked Podger in general principles. "Your serve, Poulter." He tossed across a ball.

The committeeman moved on to retail the news to more excitable ears.

"That rotten swine is telling the truth," said Poulter.

"Possibly—for once," said Podger. "Your serve."

They played a while and then Podger remarked, "I'm afraid he is."

Just then a band of students rushed across the courts on their way to the city. The tennis-players drove balls viciously into the crowd, who went on unheeding.

Podger sniffed. "Intellectual equipment of a wombat," he remarked, indicating the retreating crowd.

"Quite right," said Poulter. "With the lower forms of organism mental stress always produces physical activity of a particularly purposeless character. Collect the balls, Podger."

They played on out of sheer bravado. Soon, however, the hurrying crowds thronged across the court again.

"I suppose they're going to get more news," said Podger. "As if they hadn't enough to be their death-warrant already."

A sudden thought struck Poulter. "I wonder if that push has gone off to the drill hall," he remarked.

Podger pondered. "To enlist?"

"Um. Yes. No. Yes. I've had enough tennis. Let's join the wombats."

The drill hall consisted of a huge covered-in court surrounded by two floors of regimental offices. For some years previous to the war, New Zealand had had in vogue a compulsory territorial system. The law required every man between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five to devote a certain number of hours in the evening and two Saturday afternoons in each month to military exercises, and to spend annually a month in camp. The system had been running sufficiently long to be in good working order, and, excepting those men who lived too far out in the country or were exempted on grounds of ill-health, every boy and man between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five had, either as a school cadet or a Territorial, become a more or less trained infantryman. There had been the usual mealy-mouthed wailing by a few politicians when the Bill was introduced giving the Government power to inaugurate the system; there had been a few—a very few—conscientious objectors who took their cue from the M.P.'s; but for the most part the young New Zealander is a healthy-minded animal, and while he hated the night parades and the Saturday afternoon field-days, he regarded the month in camp as time very well spent indeed. During the day-time under ordinary circumstances the drill hall was a bleak enough spot. It was uninhabited save for a few staff sergeants, who for the consideration of £150 per annum spent long hours every day groping for absentees from parade and filling in those pithy little blue forms that every Territorial of sporting instinct has received more than once in his military career—to wit, a notice to attend the magistrate's court for absence from parade. The offices were run on those good old

military lines known to the English-speaking world as "red tape." If you asked a simple New Zealand Territorial exactly what he meant by red tape he would reply unhesitatingly, "A fat staff sergeant." It may be considered one of the greatest blessings of the red-tape system that the officials always get fat. They may be safely presumed from their figures alone never to hurry. A man who tries to bustle a red-tape official is quietly and firmly referred to another department with another paper pinned on to the already formidable pile he carries as his talisman. Adiposity, delay, ever-increasing piles of paper, and long echoing corridors are all part of the system. Red tape manifests itself in other ways too. Its votaries frequently summon to attend parade, under the direst penalty of the law, a man who was married or buried or left the country or obtained a commission the week before or did anything else that renders such a little attention unnecessary. It is even on record that in the early part of 1915 a man was prosecuted before the magistrate's court for absence from parade, and he proved that during the entire time he was alleged to have been absent he had been doing guard duty over the German prisoners interned in New Zealand! It made very sweet reading in the papers to many an indignant citizen-soldier did that little incident. Defending solicitor was very biting in his comment, and there was some scratching of heads in the defence department to explain the mistake away.

For the most part, however, life in the drill hall pursued a very even tenor, undisturbed by many such exposures. It is the benign result of a red-tape officialdom that the man who made the blunder in the office can never be found; he is always in another department. The public has its laugh and forgets, and officialdom goes

to sleep again, not a whit disturbed in its blissful slumber by the resounding echoes of its own heavy-footed minions as they clamber through the empty corridors.

Any one approaching the drill hall during the day would be convinced from its bleak appearance that, save for the condition of the sergeants, the Territorial system was a failure. Let him come, however, at night and he would change his opinion. From town and from country, by tram and on foot, khaki-clad men come hurrying into those wide-open doors. Yes, they were conscripts. They were the men who, according to what we read in England in the anti-Conscription campaign, should have been unwilling and ill-kempt, laggardly in their movements, and indifferent to their work. Now it is not our intention to represent the New Zealand Territorials as a Bo-Peep flock of lambs who bleated in chorus, and if they strayed at all were to be left alone and they would come home of their own accord. An officer of Bo-Peep's *laissez-faire* methods would have been hard put to it to hold a squad of independent-spirited Colonials. But if the officer had the additional merit of being a man as well as an officer—an advantage enjoyed, be it said, by the great majority—and treated his men with understanding, he found them punctual on parade, clean in their dress, and keen in their work. There were shirkers—of course there were shirkers. There were fools, too, and knaves. These were the men who gave Red Tape something to do. Generally speaking, however, if the Voluntarist party of the House of Commons had been transported bodily to the Wellington Drill Hall on a drill night, they would have seen their most cherished controversial weapons crumble in their hands. The sharp word of command, the quick movement of obedience, the fine physique, the rosy,

eager faces, would have done more in five minutes by way of silencing those M.P.'s than a certain peer's Press did in a year.

As the late winter evening grew dark, two youths clad in overcoats, with flannels peeping out underneath, elbowed their way through the motley crowd that thronged the main entrance of the drill hall.

"You look disgustingly as if you were in pyjamas and had put on a coat to hide your shame, Podger," remarked one of the apparitions to the other.

"What a frightful crowd," said Podger. "They can't all be here to enlist. Look, there's Bell, the Red Federationist."

"Surely he isn't going to volunteer. His last performance of note, as far as I can gather, was spitting on the Union Jack and then tearing it up and burning it."

"I didn't hear he did that," said Podger. "When was it?"

"You remember the general strike last year when the wharf labourer, who is the beginning, middle, and end of the universe in his own opinion, called out all the other unions over some rubbishing, penny-a-day tram fare to work?"

"Remember it!" said Podger feelingly. "Wasn't I a special constable at the time and got all my front teeth knocked out with a bottle?"

"Look not on the wine," chanted Poulter.

"I wasn't drinking it, you fool; a striker threw it at me. It was when we formed the cordon round the wharves to protect the blacklegs who were getting the meat and butter away. There was a free fight. The only things the strikers would let get through to the cordon were race-horses for the Christchurch races. But we got the rest of the stuff through; and as the

stokers were on strike too, half the college boys stoked the ships over to Australia and back. You were up north at the time."

"Yes, I was: but my original thesis was true for all your side-tracking. Bell did burn the flag, didn't he?"

"Oh, there was a lot of that at the time. Bell wasn't in it any more than the others. There was a fair amount of stone-throwing and shooting all round. But we fixed 'em all right. Labour has been very docile since."

"Yes, I think Bill Massey deserves at least a peerage for that little piece of work. On the analogy of a certain baronet of recent creation——"

"Just be quiet a moment," interrupted Podger, "if you can. I'm thinking."

"*Tempora* indeed *mutantur*," sneered Poulter. "And what may it please your rotund majesty to be thinking?"

"I'm thinking they won't have me. I'm on the rolls as unfit."

"Unfit! You! Podger, dear heart, joke not with me at this grave crisis."

"Damn you, I tell yon I'm down as unfit," said Podger with some irritation. "You remember when they blistered me with that bluey last year to attend parade?"

"If you are referring in your rude way to the summons you received to attend the magistrate's court for continued absence from parades, I do remember."

"Well, I got a medical book in the College library and swatted up the symptoms of heart disease. Applied for a medical examination, smoked cigarettes all the mornin', ran up Aurora Terrace—which you know is as steep as h——"

"The *descensus Averni*," suggested Poulter.

"Yes, I suppose hell by any other name would be as hot—and then dropped in to see the sawbones. He was very busy, and a firm conviction settled down on my soul that my palpitations would not last out the interlude—he kept me waitin' such a long time. I was just contemplatin' doing a few calisthenics, and was meditatin' the extreme measure of smokin' a cigar to keep up the flutter within, when I was called into the limelight. I was in such a blue funk by that time over the whole uncertainty, I thought I had better say there was nothing the matter with me. But the doctor had me down as a heart case and grew suspicious. He thought was keen to get in and hidin' somethin'. I twigged this pretty quick, and so when he asked me about the dizziness and palpitations and breathlessness, I looked as innocent as a vestal virgin and dealt him, in little bits at a time, all the hot air I'd mugged up from the encyclopædia. Then out came the inevitable stethoscope, and as I have some slight valvular trouble, though it's really nothin', and I was pretty excited with the prospect of being found out, my old pump gave some fancy kicks on the spur of the moment and the body-snatcher bunged me off as unfit."

"Podger," said Poulter, "this is serious. Why hast thou kept this thing from me?"

"Well—hang it!—really I was beginning to believe I've got a bad heart in actual fact. I suppose that's why."

They had worked their way by this time through the crowded court up to their area office, and went in to see the staff sergeant in charge of the records.

Poulter spoke. "Are you calling for recruits, sergeant."

"Not yet; no orders through."

"Well, if there's any fun doing you can stick my name down. Let me know by 'phone if N.Z. is going to war."

"Name?"

"Poulter."

"Service?"

"Six years junior cadets, three years senior cadets, four years Territorial."

"Passed out efficient?"

"Of course not. I saw to that. Do you think I wanted to be a corporal?"

While it was a rule that all officers of the Territorials should be commissioned from the ranks after a due period as N.C.O.'s, still it was a process that the average Territorial viewed with some suspicion. He considered non-commissioned rank as but a step in the down grade towards the despicable lot of a platoon commander. The charm of the month's camp was the freedom from responsibility; life is worth while only inasmuch as there is fun to be got out of it. It would ill become a platoon commander to let down another subaltern's tent and douche him with icy water as he emerged spluttering and cursing from the debris. Then to the second lieutenant was barred the undiluted bliss of going before the C.O. at orderly-room time and so fantastically garlanding the truth with the priceless flowers of falsehood that the good-natured major would laugh and the prosecuting N.C.O. look sick. No, the responsibility of a stripe might some day increase into the burden of a star, and your Territorial would have none of it.

"Well, I'll look you up and let you know," said the sergeant. "We will be very particular who we take. Telephone number?"

Poulter told him. "Better put down Podger too."

"Service?"

"None," from Podger, "except a junior cadet."

"Um!" The sergeant smiled grimly. "Why?"

"They thought I was ill and forgot me."

"Um!" said the sergeant. Podger was the sort of man the sergeant earned his pay looking for.

"Yes, um!" said Podger irreverently, knowing full well the sergeant's thoughts.

"Heart it was."

"How's the heart now?" said the staff sergeant ironically.

"It's a little better, thank you," said Podger courteously. "Still too bad for real soldierin'—peace soldierin' by a long chalk. Soldierin' in earnest would give me palpitations. But I don't mind playin' at it while there's a war on. I will say for the time bein', 'Heart o' mine, cease fluttering,' and so she ceases to flutter. Put me down, sergeant."

"No chance."

At this point the sergeant was called to the telephone. The two young men stood eyeing his desk, searching for inspiration. It was the usual red-tape desk. Dirty ink, poor pens, blotty blotting-paper, a date stamp and three other stamps marked "Confidential," "Urgent," and "Absolutely final." Podger's eye lit up. What a chance to take that "Absolutely final" stamp, surcharge a number of typewritten documents, and send them to all the notabilities of the town! How would the Chief Justice or the biggest talker of the College Council like a notice to attend parade signed in an undecipherable script and, as a crowning insult, "Absolutely final" across the corner.

The sergeant returns to his desk. Podger covertly replaces the stamp on the table.

"Just had word to enlist eight hundred men for overseas by to-morrow."

"Will you take me?" says Podger plaintively.

"Yes; come round in the morning and swear in."

"Where are the eight hundred going?" said Poulter.

"Don't know. There's five hundred for Auckland, and the whole force includes gunners and sappers. D Battery will be going. Send along the boys. We must get this job done quick. See what you can do."

"Do!" said Poulter quickly. "See what I can do! I'll guarantee you a thousand recruits by twelve to-night!"

The sergeant looked up. "You! How will you do it?"

"To-morrow it shall be. Come on, Podger." Outside it was dark. Podger looked slyly at Poulter and after a while remarked, "Pretty hot about that thousand recruits, aren't you? One would almost think you were a mediæval baron, the way you talked to the sergeant."

"Podger, my boy, I am not a mediæval baron, I am something more!" said Poulter.

"Though you says it as shouldn't——"

"I am a student of psychology. There is excitement in the air; Podger, you know that. People are talking—moving—restless. At another time the elements would be ripe for emotional work of a different kind: revivalistic movements—evangelism—anti-drink campaign. At times like this, my boy, the individual, the fool of a man in the street, is not himself. Put him in a crowd and his passions are magnified. He loses his entity in the mass. He thinks and moves as part of one big brain, of one big body. The psychologist is the man who knows how to handle the mob. He understands the laws that every orator presumes. Only let him

get the crowd— Podger, what is the quickest way to draw a crowd ? "

"A dog-fight ! " said Podger promptly.

"Perhaps you're right. We haven't the dogs. A brass band is better."

"Personally, I haven't such a thing as a brass band about my person just at present. I might have a piccolo and a cornet somewhere in an odd corner—but a big drum——"

"Podger, my boy, don't joke : can't you see I'm in earnest. I'll wager that in ten minutes the Salvation Army band will be out. A little tussle with the adjutant of that noble body and we'll get what we want. Make the crowd sing 'God Save' a few times and I bet we have three thousand round before the police can interfere. The Queen's Statue is the place. I shall make the speech, and you and the boys can smuggle me off before the police get at me for a disturbance likely to cause a breach of the peace."

"What will you say to the mob ? "

"I haven't decided. I am chewing it over now. Meanwhile we get the band. Oh, I'll talk of the history of England as a peacemaker."

"With special emphasis on the Chinese Opium War," said Podger sarcastically, "and that financiers' harvest generally called the Boer War."

"No, I'll gloss that over ! But you must admit, taken all round, we have stood for peace."

"Admit it ! " exclaimed Podger. "I maintain it most stoutly. I was only warning you of the pitfalls the young demagogue will be likely to fall into."

"I won't dish out any controversial stuff. The band's the thing. Get it there, and if it don't nail the men my science is awry somewhere."

The loyal citizens of Wellington utilized some more or less appropriate occasion to let off superfluous civic energy in erecting a monument at the land entrance to the principal dock of the city. This monument rejoices in the name of the Queen's Statue, possibly from the fact that a very formidable sculpture of Queen Victoria is the apex to which all its lines converge. From the feminine—emphatically feminine—lines of the figure it would take no Sherlock Holmes to deduce that the monument was erected towards the close of her reign. In fact the rotund contours of the statue may be said to be amply symbolic of the majesty of Britain and the immensity of her empire. As a likeness of the Queen it may be good ; as a pulpit for declamation it is certainly excellent. Situated in a roomy square formed by converging roads at the wharf-head, it has a tier of steps by way of base, so providing both platform and auditorium. At any time out of working hours, and often during them, the passer-by is attracted by Her Majesty the Queen, erect, solemn, sceptre in hand, seemingly pronouncing, like some oracle of old, words of wisdom on any topic from politics to pantheism. Closer inspection of this phenomenon will reveal, however, as perhaps it might have done in the days of old, a perspiring human mouthpiece busy working the oracle in the most brazen manner. Frequently two men speak at the same time. In more ardent moments it is recorded that everybody speaks simultaneously. There you will find them—Socialists, Red Federationists, Prohibitionists, Labourites, Idealists, hypocrites, and combinations of the aforementioned of all shades of opinion (very shady, some of them)—vapouring their theories to the working man. The Gospel has been preached there, pledges have been signed there, elections have

been won there, strikes have been engineered there, sedition has been taught there—aye, and heads have been broken there before to-day; and Her Majesty looks on grave and unperturbed through it all. Be your leaning to Labour or to Conservative, to ribald jest or to sacred teaching, you will be fully catered for at the Queen's Statue, Wellington, New Zealand.

On the night that war was declared by Britain against Germany the Salvation Army or some other band—Wellington is not sure now which—took up a stand for some unearthly reason in front of the Queen's Wharf at a short distance from the Statue. They played a considerable number of patriotic airs, and a big crowd rapidly gathered. It was almost a relief, after the tension of the last few days, to know that war, with all its romance, with all its horrors, had come in awful fact. What would be Britain's next move? What would be New Zealand's next move? Men and women hurried out from a hastily eaten evening meal to ask each other these questions in nervous, jerky tones, neither waiting nor expecting an answer. The streets were crowded and a very real sense of expectancy quivered in every brain. Men followed the crowd. The crowd gravitated to the band at the Statue, hoping to find, if not an answer to their queries, at least a little counter-excitement to the unrest within. The crowd was singing. Could there be any mistaking that air? Bare-headed, single-throated, they were giving voice with the band to the National Anthem and the "Marseillaise." Big flaring torches added tenfold to the effect, and men felt in the touch of comradeship of the ever-increasing crowd a certain fierce exultation. In all her varied experiences of crowds and audiences, never had Her Britannic Majesty looked down from her stone pedestal on a

concourse so vast, so varied, so animated. The crowd had no idea how far its outskirts stretched, nor did it trouble with such things. All ears were turned, all eyes were strained, to catch what was going on. Would there be a speech? Would there be any pronouncement of the Government policy? They heard a voice in the centre calling for cheers, and they responded vigorously, with no idea of what they were cheering. There came hoots, and they hooted. Then the band played, and they uncovered and sang.

While thus the general din was on the increase, two individuals in tennis flannels, who seemed to be in league with the bandmaster, were having a hurried consultation.

"The louts have about as good an idea of time as a Dutchman's clock, and as for their sense of tune—well, you are a king to them, Podger."

"Yes, they do drag a bit. But you have noise and excitement, and that's the psychological element you have been babbling about half the night."

"Oh, they're excited enough," said Poulter. "A little music as well would be no harm thrown in. The sooner we lure some of the brutes to the cannon's mouth the better. They'll get plenty of din and very little music there, and they ought to be in their element."

"Well, this crowd of yours will soon be out of hand. There is a good deal of hooting and shoving going on now. Some one must have called for hoots for Germany."

"Yes, it's about time we got under way. Get Turnips and some of these boys to hoist me up. There's no hope of reaching the Statue now; the crowd's too dense. We should have put the band over there to begin with."

Podger quickly had the human platform ready. Then he proceeded to call over the torch-bearers to shed limelight. 'Varsity theatricals had given Podger a due sense of effect.

During a lull in the yelling a small figure was hoisted high above the shoulders of the crowd. He was the centre of a brightly illuminated circle, and he forthwith took upon himself to speak. The silence of universal curiosity fell upon the crowd and, in a powerful voice that rang through the square and reached the outermost skirts of the assembly, the speaker slowly and deliberately rolled forth his sonorous periods.

"Men of New Zealand! You have come here to-night to cheer your King and your Flag. I have heard you cheering. You cheer well, but not well enough. I want more noise. Three cheers for the King."

"Hip, hip, hooray!" echoed in a long-drawn roar through the crowd. The cheers were given and the crowd waited in expectancy.

"Yes," thundered the speaker, "as the first chirrup of a new-fledged chick it was a success; as a cheer, no! I want the cheers of men. Three cheers for the King."

Again the full-throated roar rose up, doubly, trebly reinforced. Cheering was the order, was it? Then cheer they would, leaving after-events to shape themselves.

As the cheers subsided the speaker went on. "Much better, decidedly better. I should say quite one in ten of you must have spoken above a whisper that time, and one in twenty may have shouted out. I want your best—your loudest. For the last time: Three cheers for the King."

The crowd caught the spirit of the thing. All the

noise they had ever made before in their lives was but a prelude to the work in hand. The clamour rose and swelled. Men's breath came hard and their throats rasped in the desperate effort to out-yell their loudest. Hundreds and thousands of them there were; and they sent up a vast rolling roar that, carried in the still evening air, men heard in the city, men heard in the hills above, men heard in the plain beyond—fifteen, twenty miles away—and marvelled as they heard.

The time was ripe. At a gesture from the figure swaying aloft, the band struck up that grandest and simplest of airs, that pæan which brings every true Briton even in his passive moments to his feet, but which, at a time like this, floods within a man the great well of feeling that lies latent in the heart and sends thrill on thrill down the back of the stolidest:

God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King.

And as the last cadence of the magnificent melody died away every man in that crowd stood erect, eyes shining and mouth twitching, ready to stake his all for the land that gave him birth.

The speaker, swaying over the heads of the human platform, raised his hand for silence.

"Citizens of the Empire! England, your England, has gone to war. It is not for us to ask why. We know the cause is just. Years ago we guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium. When in the Franco-German War Belgium was in danger of destruction by our co-guarantors of her safety, Gladstone declared that England would fight the first invader of Belgian territory. The threat was successful and Belgium was saved. To-day Germany

has deliberately broken her promise and invaded Belgium, and that is why Britain fights.

"You know what that means: her war is our war. At this very minute the defence authorities are preparing an expedition against those that from this time are your enemies. We want men. We want men. Who will volunteer? Will you come?"

Would they come! Men in that state of tension would march through the jaws of hell. A deep-throated shout set up and as quickly died down.

"I take it that you will," went on the voice. "We shall march to the drill hall to enlist. We shall march to the drill hall now. And remember you are not a disorderly mob. You are a nation of soldiers. Let each man choose a four and get into it. We shall march up in a column of fours. The band will lead and we follow."

An extraordinary thing is a crowd. Had any member of it been told individually to go a hundred yards he would certainly have refused; but that concourse of some seven thousand people was perfectly ready collectively to obey the youth's bidding. The papers commented next day on the orderly nature of the procession that followed the band to the drill hall, noted the fact that they were all in fours and marching in step—"doubtless the influence of the Territorial movement."

"What the devil are you going to do with them when you get them there?" asked Podger.

"I'm at present wondering that myself," answered Poulter. "The idea I have had so far has been to get up the national steam quick. The crowd was too big. I've never done any crowd-taming before, and I'm a bit alarmed at how easy it is. I thought a walk up to the drill hall and back would do them and me no harm,

anyway. They seem to be enjoying it, judging from the row they're making."

"Yes, but surely you're going to make some use of it all?"

"I'm not at all sure that the true philosopher would not leave off here after having set the yeast, and leave it to work. They know there's a war on now; at least I did my best to get that impression abroad, and they're now labouring under the delusion they're soldiers. Of course this is the time to take round the list. Perhaps when we get up to the drill hall we may persuade the authorities to take, say, a couple of thousand names, and then the bright lads will be easily persuaded they've signed on, and be called up to-morrow."

"If you can persuade the authorities!" sneered Podger. "You know as well as I do that authority, once it has made up its mind to accept no recruits till to-morrow, will not budge from its path, not even if all New Zealand stood by with an axe."

"We'll see; we'll see," said Poulter wearily.

"Yes, you will see. The crowd will find you've fooled it, turn nasty, smash up a few things, make a bonfire—there are precedents—and then you'll look nice in the magistrate's court: a Bachelor of Law up for creating a disturbance of the peace."

"That's all right. If it's only the crowd, I think I can tackle it. There is still the band, and, anyhow, the crowd knows the voice of its master. I can always tell them to go home quietly—with due instrumental introduction to the principle already demonstrated," said Poulter rather academically.

"You may not find it as easy as it looks."

"Go on croaking, do. The raven always was my favourite flower."

So along the twain went the mile to the drill hall, they and the band and the seven thousand. Arrived there, the band took up a position by the gates, the crowd massed in the street for blocks around and climbed the walls and house-tops. The twain now marched in to the staff sergeant, who was still at work.

"We've come along to hand in that thousand recruits, according to contract," said Podger. "Do you accept delivery?"

"Is it you who've brought along that beastly band and that howling mob?"

"More or less," said Poulter. "All you've got to do is to be nice and nippy with a pencil, take down the names as we draft 'em in to the strains of 'Rule, Britannia,' and pen 'em up till wanted."

"Can't be done, I'm afraid," said the sergeant.

"Of course it can be done. You want recruits; I've got 'em. I say, 'Walk in and sign,' and many are killed in the stampede. They're itching to swear allegiance. Just you open the gates and see."

"To-morrow," said the sergeant.

"To-morrow be damned. The kettle will be as cold as ash by the morning. You want to take it while it's singing. Give me authority to collect names. I'll give you in the lists."

"No good. My orders are——"

He was adamant. The minion of the red-tape regime had his orders and to his orders he would keep. Nor would he ring up to get them changed. All the suggestions that ingenuity could devise or rhetoric colour he met and countered with disgusting obstinacy. They were powerless. What is more, they were foiled. They stood in a false light with the crowd. Their youth and enthusiasm had carried them too far, and retraction to

seven thousand would be unpleasant. Very incensed they left the office.

"He has the imagination of cheese-mite," grunted Podger.

"As well for you, or you would have been nabbed long ago for parade. Come along back to the limelight."

The crowd was meanwhile amusing itself in rocking about in the dangerously playful way that crowds have, cheering the King and hooting the Kaiser at the same time, and producing a frightful babel. It was with difficulty that the two emissaries worked their way back to the band, and Poulter found that, even as Podger had anticipated, it was not nearly so easy as before to get the crowd to listen. However, local silence having been obtained, Poulter adopted the former tactics of organized cheers with a few words interspersed and gradually gained the attention of all those to whom his voice could carry. This time he was not so happy in the bearers that chance selected, and his platform reeled in a way that suggested that the war had in some circles been ushered in lubricated with beer. Now came the final diplomatic effort, the fruits of some quick thinking by two youths in flannels.

"Citizens, you have come to the drill hall to show your loyalty. Within are hundreds of men already standing to arms at their country's call. Let us give them first of all three cheers."

During the cheers the platform lurched badly, doubtless a Nemesis; the speaker swayed, struggled, and disappeared. Twenty seconds later a voice roared from the top of the drill-yard wall. The crowd quickly recognized what had happened and turned its gaze upward.

"The Territorials inside are to have the privilege of enlisting first. Your time comes to-morrow."

"What a magnificent liar," thought Podger.

"In the morning you will come back and give in your names. Meanwhile we will sing for the last time 'God Save the King' and then disperse quietly and go our several ways home. But remember to-morrow."

The band struck up, and the words of the speaker, together with the air of finality that the National Anthem always gives to the close of any proceedings, had the desired effect. The torches were extinguished, the music stopped, and the concourse filed away in all directions along the weblike streets of that part of the town, in unquestioning obedience to the dictates of its self-constituted leader.

"Well, of all the rotten examples of bathos I have ever seen, this scoops the pool," said Poulter wearily.

"You have good cause to be satisfied. You are not in jail—at any rate, not yet—and maybe some of them will remember in the morning."

"Didn't I once read that in the Crimean War a shipload of boots went out all for one foot? I believe that sergeant's grandfather was at the bottom of that. Still, it has been an interesting example of crowd psychology. Besides, some of them may remember."

CHAPTER II

GETTING AWAY

THEY did remember. It needed not the educative influence of successive campaigns on the part of the students, assisted by the Tramways, Salvation Army, and Central Mission Bands, coupled with the copious use of flags and cheering, to bring the fighting blood of the young New Zealander surging through the veins. Indeed, the open-air meetings continued for two or three nights with ever-increasing demonstration, until the ringleaders were definitely in khaki and under military discipline. Competition was very keen to be amongst the first to get away. Consternation prevailed when it was learned that only some eight hundred were wanted from Wellington and some five hundred from Auckland to fill the ranks of the advance party. Members of Parliament were invoked to use their influence to get the sons of an influential constituent a place in the ranks. Money was offered to the sergeant-majors at the drill hall to doctor the rolls, and, be it recorded to their credit, refused. Men made false declarations of age, learned by rote the letters on the sight-testing card, badgered captains and colonels, in hopes of worrying into a place with the chosen few. One legal student even went so far as to volunteer as officer's servant (a task loathed by Colonials) to make sure he could get away.

The man who volunteered in England about this time had certain data on which to build his immediate future. Kitchener had said that he would remain in England for some space at least, and so he would be near his relatives, and when he did go abroad it would probably be to France, which, after all, is not so far away.

These comforting reflections were denied the Colonial. He knew he was urgently wanted for some Imperial mission. So much had been divulged. He was to leave New Zealand at once, with time for nothing but a hurried wire to his parents at perhaps the other end of the Dominion. Whither he was going was at that time absolutely unknown to the public and to him. He was to be rudely uprooted from his native land, hurriedly conveyed in an unknown direction, and planted with the utmost speed on alien soil somewhere between the tropics and the Antarctic. The programme was vigorous but vague. While the very boldness of the idea was attractive, it lacked those definite outlines that every sensible man asks in a project. Was a man to take quinine with him or a harpoon? Would he need fur mittens or mosquito-netting? Would it be wise to take a fair amount in cash or would that be a mere waste of good money? Was it worth while taking writing material?—and even if he could get letters written, would there be a mail home?

Nor did the New Zealander labour under the delusion so common in England at the beginning of the war, that hostilities would be over in a few months. The Boer War was still a very real thing to the Colonies, and they could quite well see, in their distant isolation, that the issues involved in August 1914 were so vastly greater than those in South Africa at the beginning of the century that the struggle would be proportionately

more obstinate and more protracted. Only a little time before had New Zealand presented a Dreadnought to the British Navy solely on the conviction that there was a great crisis rapidly arising. Each volunteer realized that it might easily be three or four years before he would stand a reasonable chance of coming home again.

Small wonder is it, then, that the people of New Zealand, and especially the volunteers, were very excited over this sudden departure of the Expeditionary Force. It was the uncertainty of the destination that most disturbed men's minds. The mission was immediate and important. This all men knew; but as to exactly what it was or where it would lead them speculation was rife. The wildest rumours were circulated. They were to go straight to France. No, there would be a rest in Egypt to fortify the Suez Canal. The wiser ones shook their heads. As if the Imperial Government would send unseasoned troops right into action! The advance party was to go to India to relieve the Regulars. Nor did the kit issued give any clue. The underclothing consisted of two suits, one so fine as to be almost butter-cloth and the other about an inch thick. It looked like an expedition into Central Africa on the one hand, and on the other a trip to the South Pole.

Oh, yes; we know now that the destination was Samoa and that the occupation was pacific. In the cold eyes of retrospect many a sublimely heart-rending scene has appeared almost ridiculous; but the emotions at the actual time are none the less real. Who of those that formed the advance party of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force will ever forget the tight feeling in the throat as he penned his last will and testament—allotting his few possessions as keepsakes to his loved ones? No

time was there for finely rounded legal phraseology: just the simple bequest of a soldier on active service, hurriedly scribbled on the first paper to hand. Who can forget the tears that welled up as he read the telegram from home in answer to the one in which he said he was going with the forces. "Yes, go, my boy, with a mother's love and blessing." Not infrequently a man heard thus that among the contingent from the other city was his brother. Who will forget the mental picture he bore of his mother as she would be at home, waiting and longing for the news, so long delayed, of his arrival in the unknown land? It is the woman at home who has the hardest lot of all. For a man there is excitement and activity; but she has only the dreary anxiety, the gaunt spectre whose knock ever echoes through her long days and fitful nights.

In an incredibly short time—some forty-eight hours—all were ready for embarkation. The Auckland contingent arrived from the sunny north after a magnificent send-off by their own people, and they did not hesitate to voice their complaints at the southern lack of enthusiasm. Certainly both people and weather were cold, and doubtless the rain kept back numbers who would have otherwise thronged the streets to shout their farewells.

To any one who has travelled on a troopship a description of the life on board would be decidedly unwelcome. Quite apart from the awful familiarity which he will have with every detail of the life, there are a host of unpleasant associations, little incidents he would be only too glad to forget, which will be immediately revived. Nevertheless, at the risk of annoying the stout veteran of many a terrible voyage—and there are undoubtedly heroes who would rather face a machine-

gun than a storm at sea—it may be as well to make some passing remarks for the benefit of the uninitiated. Every one is familiar with the two most characteristic things of the sea—the motion of the ship and the swell of the waves. Harmless enough things in the abstract, we dare say, but taken in conjunction they produce the most frightful anguish known since the days of burning at the stake. It has always been observed that one of the greatest boons of nature is that the human being can bear with some equanimity purely physical pain. Neuralgia, sciatica, pleurisy—terrible complaints indeed in their worst form—still leave welling in the human breast some hope of relief. It is possible that the martyr at the stake looked on the transient agony as but a path to bliss. There is no such comfort in nausea; a man is not only bodily sick, but mind-sick and soul-sick. Life holds nothing but abhorrence. Every thought and every action of the wretched victim is tinged with the vile green of acute displeasure. Nor can he locate the malady which consumes him; it is too diffused, too all-embracing. Had nausea been inflicted in its most aggravated form on Job, it is likely that portion of the Scriptures that refers to him might require re-editing.

Imagine a goodly concourse of men provided largely by misplaced patriotic effort with cakes and sweetmeats; imagine them cramped together in two ships like flies on sugar; and imagine them beginning to get the benefit of the Pacific swell. First there are songs and rejoicings and feedings. Eating and joy are always associated. The regimental band is there; all one's friends are there. One lights one's pipe—feels expansive; there is gaiety and music. A few appropriate jokes are made about the rolling of the boat; in fact, unusually witty dialogues are heard on all sides. One

battles through the crowd, finding men one never dreamt would be on board, and there is more laughing and more joking. The boys watch the spray surging from the bows and go to the heaving stern to see the screw come out of the water. Deuced unpleasant place that wake; yes, you would be easily sucked under if you fell overboard—perhaps mutilated by the pitiless screw. And twig how the engine races—just like a car skidding in sand, but the rhythm is more emphatic. Very unpleasant. Who is that pushing in the rear there? Idiot, you'll be having me overboard in a minute! This is no place for a white man, here in the stern; I'll get back amidships. Very sobering place that stern; narrow shave with that fool pushing behind like that; makes one feel quite serious—no, no, only contemplative; the pipe's the thing.

The pipe's not a success; tobacco must have got damp. Confound that screw—I can hear it here too! I wish I hadn't gone to the stern. And the roll is getting quite emphatic. Sea-sick?—me? Rubbish! Why, when I crossed to Australia they had the roughest passage—(Are they Virginian? Yes, I will have one)—and I wasn't sick all the way. See, there's Bell the Socialist—he volunteered, after all; he's looking quite green. Perhaps it wouldn't be wise to smoke cigarettes; I'll put this one overboard in the dark—the chap I got it from won't notice. Gee, how she rolls at the side! I wish I hadn't drunk that beer, it always makes me bilious; whisky's much better. I'm slightly headachy—that's the excitement. I'll take a turn round the decks.

Can't—the crowd's too thick; half of the brutes are ill too. Why has the band left off? Who was? The conductor? Really? Into the euphonium! Haw haw! That's rather a joke. The euphonium is quite

a good way from the conductor, too—he must have a long reach. Haw haw haw! Rather a hollow laugh, sonny, but then it's a frightful chestnut. You're getting ill, my boy, that's what you are. That trip to Australia was a fool to this. There really isn't anything funny—about being—sea-sick. I rather sympathize with that conductor. Um—I wonder—where he is: there he is—um—I can *hear* him. How quickly the saliva runs—can that be a symptom?—ugh!

Imagine it! The crowded troopship, men lying in inert heaps and it—IT—lying everywhere—on clothes, on blankets, covering the decks, lubricating the companion-ways, even blocking the wash-basins.

You citizens of the luxurious world who sail first class in clean, well-appointed ships, who lie in bunks with basins at the side—you don't know what sea-sickness is. You have a steward and a stewardess to look after you; you are put in that part of the boat where the roll is least; you are provided with light to any quantity you want, and water and towels and soap. You have room to move and air to breathe. Again I say you don't know what sea-sickness is. Get you aboard a trooper, where men are lying as close as they can be packed and still some standing, waterless, lightless, airless, and comfortless, and then proceed to vomit and be vomited on. Then, and not till then, will you realize what the Kaiser is answerable for.

It is a very pale-faced, lack-lustre-eyed few that answer roll-call next morning. The sergeant is a hero. Hardly able to stand up himself, he still drags himself through his duty when many a good man would have failed with far less excuse. The roll is called, but of course there will be no parade to-day. Work will begin to-morrow. The men may all slink off again; only those

who are comparatively well will make some attempt to clean up below or to put in an appearance at meals.

The third day out, however, every one had more or less got his sea-legs. Spirits were reviving, and there was a huge queue trailing outside the dining-saloon long before breakfast-time. The saloon of the *Monowai* never had been, even in its palmiest days, a very brilliant affair. Now, however, that the brutal and licentious soldiery were to be let loose, it was very much dismantled. All the mirrors had been removed, and anything of the nature of ornament, if left at all, was carrying on its functions with very maimed rites.

"I am disgusted with Podger," remarked a khaki-clad figure about the middle of the queue.

"Wot's 'e done?" said a recent acquaintance, of whom more will be heard later. He was nicknamed "Stumpy" for obvious biological reasons.

"I went this morning at an unpleasantly early hour to the galley for a little shaving-water. There I beheld our erstwhile friend Podger bobbing about in an atmo sphere of smoke and fat, slithering hither and thither, brandishing a frying-pan in one hand and a fork in the other. Naturally I thought he was there doing fatigues; but he coolly informed me, with a greasy smile of smug self-satisfaction, that he had *volunteered as a cook*. The beast has actually deserted the ancient and honourable profession of soldiering for a cook's job."

"A profession equally ancient and honourable," remarked a voice from behind.

"It may be equally ancient," snapped Poulter. "I give the lie to the honourable. What about the old proverb, 'A good cook licks his own fingers'? That seems the attitude of the army cooks: complete indifference to the sufferings of those they cook for and an

was still rather sea-sick, and to see Brenson and Stumpy eat heartily the burnt porridge and bread and butter that served as the morning meal drove him to the last stage of exasperation. As the day wore on his headache became so intolerable that, much against his will, he had to ask to be excused parade. The request was no sooner made than granted, and he found a place beneath a great open hatch where he could lie in peace, fresh air, and comparative cleanliness.

Meanwhile the rest of the 7th Platoon of B Company, Wellington Regiment, N.Z.I., were parading on deck, sorting out their kit, finding which of them were actually N.C.O.'s, taking stock of their officers, and beginning the inevitable series of lectures on the parts of the rifle, fire control, clock code, discrimination of targets and so forth, with which the infantry always fills up the intervals between musketry and marching. Most of the 7th Platoon had heard the same tale before *ad nauseam*. Indeed they belonged to what in England is known as the "officer class." They were nearly all University men, they had been through their college O.T.C. as a matter of course, and seven out of ten were really quite as capable of taking those lectures as the officers and N.C.O.'s themselves. This point, however, did not worry them much. In the Colonies there is no such thing as an "officer class." The Colonial in England is struck when he first hears the phrase. Nor is there any leisured class out where he comes from. If a man mentions his ancestors there, men are inclined to wonder what there is the matter with the man himself that he should have to rake out all his forefathers to throw into the scale beside him. Among the women perhaps there is some attempt at classifying social grades. The young men, however, look upon themselves very much

as belonging to one class. Where one can be educated from the primary schools to a degree in arts solely at the State expense, higher education is looked upon as merely one of the many methods of spending the years between seventeen and twenty-two. It is simply a question of how one is going to make one's money later on. The man entering a business career does not feel inclined to take his M.A., but he will willingly attend some night classes in, say, accountancy. At the same time, no one considers him any better or any worse educated than the senior scholar in mathematics; he is simply educated in a different direction. In short, the only aristocracy that the youth of New Zealand recognizes is that of brains and character.

Hence it might well happen, as often it did, that an N.C.O. of ability, but who dropped his "h's" and had never seen a table-napkin in his life, was implicitly and unquestioningly obeyed by the scions of the professional classes: not as in England, because the young men saw that such things must be, and swallowed their pride accordingly, but from the simple fact that these young men saw nothing incongruous in such an arrangement. The N.C.O. was a good man and knew his work. *Ipso facto* he belonged to the "ruling caste." The feeling of prejudice that at one time existed in English regiments against the "ranker"—the man who got his commission in spite of all obstacles, by virtue of his marked talent and executive ability—could never have grown up in a country with a Colonial outlook on life. The Colonials would not tolerate a system by which officers are born and not made. The English doctrine was: "Provided he is of good parentage, provided he has so much a year, provided he has had a public school education, we will send him to Sandhurst or Woolwich and turn him out

an officer in due course." In other words, in England before the war, commissions within certain limits were less the prerogative of the capable than that of the rich. Such a system, we say, would never work in New Zealand. We have noted before that all officers were appointed to the Territorial forces after serving their apprenticeship in the ranks. If a man proved himself keen on his work, instead of regarding the Territorial system as a means of getting a good month's amusement every year, then that man would be gazetted in due course.

Which is the better of these two methods time will show. It is not proposed in these pages to take a brief for either the English or the New Zealand system. It is possible a combination of both methods would be best. This consideration is borne out by the fact that during the Great War, when the maximum number of officers has had to be produced in the minimum of time, cadet schools have sprung up all over England, at which the sons of the former officer class rub shoulders with the more capable men and N.C.O.'s of the forces, and the palm of a commission has gone to him who has best deserved it.

It certainly was an incongruous medley of men and manners that paraded the decks of the troopships *Moraki* and *Monowai*. There was Stumpy, the manual labourer, hard as nails, with a face of grim determination and a stature of five feet nothing. There was Ocott, the bush hand, tall and spare, the type of man who could swing an axe for twelve hours a day without fatigue and could blaspheme for five minutes without repetition. There was Brenson, LL.B., keen and intelligent, his dark, handsome face and quick, fiery tongue the admiration of all around him. There was Podger,

round and sleek, having run up for a breath of air from the galley, still sooty and perspiring from his labours below. There was Bell the Labourite, the Anti-Imperialist, the anti-everything that had to do with the Union Jack. There was Ding-Dong, the nondescript from nowhere, sandy-headed and irresponsible, with a taste for rum and romance. Labourite and capitalist, farmer and artisan, striker and blackleg, Territorial and civilian, bushman and townsman, Pakeha and Maori—all had flocked in that forty-eight hours to the standard.

For the most part the platoons found themselves very well pleased with their officers, and decided to reserve their opinions of the N.C.O.'s till the paint had worn off their newness. The 7th Platoon aforementioned was commanded by a graduate, and its corporals and sergeants were in many cases graduates and undergraduates. The complete strangers who had strayed into their ranks to complete their number were quickly welcomed—a welcome that was none the less warm because some of the said strangers had but a week before been in daily attendance on their college and boarding establishments in company with a milk-can or a butcher's cart.

Soon the troops began to have extra kit issued. Its nature was such as to leave no doubt that their destination was tropical. They were served out with "shorts"—breeches to the knee—and gauze neckerchiefs to protect their necks. They were to parade without their tunics, in their shirts with the sleeves rolled up. This dress was very pleasant as every day brought hotter weather, and great care was taken against sunburn in the back of the knee, and against sunstroke. It was the most deadly offence to go about the deck without wearing the felt hat trimmed with red which is now so well

known as part of the New Zealand uniform. Fine hats they are too. They make a grand protection against sun and rain, and further serve as pillows and even basins in times of necessity.

Many of the men had never been to sea before, and the life was full of wonders. The convoy consisted of some seven or eight small men-of-war. Straight out in a line they sailed, with the troopers in the rear and two vessels well out to each side, like a cross going feet foremost. For hours at a time the troops would watch the men-o'-war to port and starboard heaving in the Pacific rollers, nose down, screw whirring in the air, and wait for the splash as the stern entered the water again, and up came the bow with its long ram pointed skywards. It soon got abroad, too, that there was considerable fear of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* happening on the convoy. That would spell trouble; for, although the warships were to attack the Germans and the troopships run in the opposite direction, it was well known that none of the convoy had guns or speed nearly equal to that of the enemy. There was a certain sporting chance about it all, and the Colonials were comparatively easily persuaded not to smoke on deck after dark. A match struck at sea can be seen many miles at night-time. One or two men tried the experiment, and immediately the *Psyche* or the *Philomel* would drop back a hundred yards and blink—blink—blinkety blink would go her signal. Then a roar from the bridge, "Who the hell is striking matches? Turn out the guard. Shove 'em all down below." The privilege of sleeping on deck out of the heat and stench of the hold was so very real that the men forwent their evening smoke rather than be seen by the watchful eye of the Navy. They policed themselves in this respect.

With the change of climate and issue of new equipment many amusing incidents arose. Stumpy came suddenly into the limelight. All the shorts of reasonably small and medium sizes had been issued when his broad, squat figure arrived to be fitted out. There was nothing left for him but an outsize of the most outrageous cut. Being a great stickler for etiquette, he put one leg in each corresponding portion of the pants, though in point of fact he could have got both legs comfortably into one leg of the garment. Thus attired, Stumpy strode the deck, and wherever he went there was almost a riot. The get-up was superb. He appeared to be nothing but feet, trousers, and head; for although the shorts were supposed to come only to the knee, they came in reality to the top of his boots and the waist of them was up under his armpits. Surmounting the whole was a large grin sandwiched between a receding forehead and a prominent jaw. As he himself phrased it, he was "a break up."

"I say, Stumpy, who's dead?"

"Wotcher gettin' at?"

"Well, I see you've got your pants 'arf-mast."

Or again:

"I say, Stumpy, give us a pup out o' them breeks."

"Wot do you want with 'em?"

"I'm an elephant-fancier."

And the conflicting orders! There was no part of the ship that seemed suitable for the posting of orders for all to see. Consequently, dress orders for the day and times of parade were conveyed by word of mouth. When eight hundred mouths have been hard at work conveying orders, they are inclined to alter from their original tenor. There would be half a dozen versions of the same order in circulation at the same time.

And just as Tommy Terrier was coming on parade
In the mazes of the Webb equipment painfully arrayed,
A shade of mild resentment o'er his countenance would flit,
As an N.C.O. would hustle him to "Shamble off and git
Yer puttees in yer mess-tin, an' yer bayonet in yer kit."
He reckoned that the words of Alfred Tennyson were true
That "The ancient order changeth, yielding place to new."
Alfred must have served his time and been a ranker too!
For orders there were plenty and they came in thick and fast,
With each successive detail an improvement on the last,
Till the dear old Webb equipment was a second Gordian knot
With its owner chewing canvas and wishing he had got
A thousand tongues to help him curse his thrice-accursed lot.

Soon the men felt the benefit of the sea air. Though the sea was still rough, their appetites were ever on the increase, and in the fifteen minutes allowed it became a matter of great difficulty to get enough eaten to keep one going to the next meal. The food was very rough and badly cooked. The bread and jam, however, was good and plentiful, and in their new-found appetites they did not even cavil at the devilled leather and bitter wax that was served up in the way of meat and potatoes.

After the parades of the day were over, and they were plentiful and arduous, it was great to lie on deck, smoke a pipe or so, and watch for the sudden descent of the tropical night. Pleasant was the sense of physical well-being that came of sound digestion and healthy exercise, stimulated by the feeling of expectancy that shaded every experience with a rosy tint. The newness of it all had not had time to wear off. The

thought of comradeship, the sink-or-swim-together notion, was a very real factor in their lives then. And they lived every moment hard.

We left Poulter some time back lying under a canvas air-funnel sleeping off his sea-sickness. Podger, on his way to his bunk to get some tobacco, saw him lying there and marked the pallor of the face he knew so well—the face of the man who that morning had attempted to get some hot water from the galley, and when told it was against orders, had stood off and reviled Podger, the cooks, and the galley in general with all the strength of his powerful lungs, assisted by a carefully collected vocabulary. For Poulter was nothing if he was not forcible of ideas, and his admiration for the English language occasionally led him to make rather free use of it, though, be it said, for the most part with great precision and effect. This morning he had been particularly vehement, and it was only Podger's good-natured interference that had prevented the N.C.O. in charge of the cooks from putting Poulter under arrest. Podger, however, knew his man, and was sure that when Poulter was recovered from his sea-sickness he would in two words sweeten up relations with the incensed authority of the cook-house. As for himself, Podger felt no offence at all. He was of the plump, good-natured variety whose mind, though active, could hardly be said to prey on the body. He was seldom put out and recovered his serenity immediately. His friend's cross-currents of temper and wordy tempests buffeted and broke over him continuously, but he always stood his ground, rock-like, till calm was restored. The story that Poulter had been very irritated at his joining the cooks amused Podger considerably. He was fond of the good things of life, and had quickly seen that the cook's lot was a

happy one so far as food was concerned. He had volunteered for the galley knowing full well that he could return to duty whenever he felt the drudgery outweighing the privileges.

He stood eyeing Poulter, who had by now been sleeping several hours. Podger was just moving off when Poulter woke and looked around.

"Is that you, you greasy elf?" was Poulter's first remark.

"How are you feeling, old boy," said Podger.

"Better and hungry."

"Good appetite?"

"I've got a dashed side too good an appetite to waste on your revolting poison."

"Really hungry?" said Podger ingratiatingly.

"Not for your leathery mutton and wormy potatoes. Get you to your scullion task and leave me here alone."

"What you need," said Podger, "is a blinkin' good feed of roast beef and vegetables."

"Once a Court physician prescribed champagne for a pauper," said Poulter significantly. "The pauper died."

"We'll see what can be done."

"Far be it from me to rob a cook or an officer of his well-earned food. You needn't thieve for me. Please don't soil your hands further. Some rank butter and bad bread is all I ask."

"Little ray of sunshine," said Podger, "go on shedding the light and warmth of your kindly smile here till I come back."

Poulter's next remark, we regret to state, would not pass the censor. It implied, however, that Podger need not come back. If Podger went where he was told to he certainly could not get back. At the same time, Poulter could not help feeling, as he watched the retreat-

ing form of Podger vanish through the bulkhead, that Podger's idea of a good meal was excellent, provided it was capable of realization. He found himself yielding very much in his attitude of stoical denunciation of Podger's desertion of the ranks, and began to feel that perhaps it might be just as well to have a friend at court even if the court were but a ship's galley and the friend an acting, unpaid supernumerary scullion. This gentler frame of mind was riveted home by a masterly blow from Podger. He appeared some half-hour later bearing a tin plate containing as unsavoury-looking a dish of garbage as ever man served to pigs. It tasted, however, much better than it looked. The somewhat repulsive appearance was caused by Podger's having, in an excess of culinary zeal, filled up the dish with gravy ; vegetables and meat were swimming round in a dark brown fat that looked suspiciously as if the soup-pot had been robbed for the purpose. After Poulter had plumbed the depths of this offering at the altar of friendship and salvaged the beef he found it very well cooked and tender and tasty to a degree.

"I shall need either a fork or a diving-suit to capture all this jetsom," said Poulter, after some vain attempts to lift haricot beans on a pocket-knife.

Podger rummaged in his trousers pocket. "How would a spoon do," he asked.

"The very idea," said Poulter affably. "No, don't bother to wash it ; I'll rinse it in a little of the gravy."

In a short time this delicate operation was finished, and Poulter, having made his first meal for many hours, lit his pipe with the complacency of repetition.

"Well, Podger, my boy," he remarked at last, after half a dozen puffs, "I am rather glad you joined the cooking staff. It seems a good billet. When I'm a little

firmer on my sea-legs I might take a peep at your little social circle below."

"What, join the cooks?" said Podger, laughing. "My boy, you've got no idea what a beastly job it is. You do nothing but wash up in a temperature of a hundred and umpteen Fahrenheit."

"Perhaps you're right; perhaps you're right. At any rate, that was a dashed good feed. You can discount most I have said to-day. I was a bit below par myself."

Podger went on deck. His favourite theory was proved. Often had he argued that the creature comforts were the first things in life, and the greatest philosopher under some circumstances will prefer money or food or warmth, as the case might be, above the highest intellectual joys attainable.

He saw a group of his platoon sitting singing college songs. He went up to them. "Say, you tigers, have you seen Poulter lately?"

"No," volunteered Stumpy, who had joined the group. "But I seen him this mornin'. He was blowin' off steam at you somethin' chronic."

"Well, he is quite tame now. I caught him on the bounce as his appetite returned, fired a roast of beef into him, and he's wanting to join the cooks now! Tame is no word for it—he's sentimental. Fawned on me like a dog. Eating out of the hand. Wonderful is the power of kindness!"

CHAPTER III

NOUMEA

ABOUT a week's sail from New Zealand the troops were informed that they were to call in at a port named Noumea. Where it was, whose it was, and why they were going there—these were the immediate subjects of speculation. The answers that were generally accepted to these questions are here given for what they are worth. It was said—as, indeed, proved to be the case—that Noumea was the port of the French convict settlement on the island of New Caledonia. It was also averred that the convoy was to seek refuge under the shadow of the guns of the town, as the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, the two big German battleships, were discovered by the wireless officials to be cruising in the near vicinity. This rumour is coloured by the fact that the Noumean cable had been cut a few miles out to sea six hours before the dawn that ushered New Caledonia into the excited horizon of the Colonials. Further force is given to this explanation by the circumstance that the convoy did not leave the security of the Noumean harbour until the *Australia* and the *Melbourne* had joined their numbers. These battleships were more than a match for the enemy, whereas without their assistance the small, obsolescent vessels would have only whetted the appetite of the roving Germans.

There is no doubt the Colonials were predisposed

to like the Noumeans, though they never dreamed that their experiences would be as thrilling as they actually turned out to be. They were quite certain that New Caledonia could not be their ultimate destination; but there was a lively chance of obtaining there some clue as to what really was their objective. Apart from this, many of them had never been out of New Zealand before, and their curiosity knew no bounds as to the place and the people they were shortly to visit.

Had a masterly stage-manager dictated the programme of that day's proceedings, the first twenty-four hours there could not have been better arranged with a view to telling effect. The sky held a sun that emblazoned the Pacific with a thousand scintillations and outlined the rugged crags of New Caledonia in heavy relief. The convoy, still with its string of battleships in the lead, entered the long channel that later broadens out into the harbour. This channel is under a mile wide at its uttermost and narrows down to a few hundred yards. The sides are mountainous, and at times become so precipitous as to resemble a gorge. It is, however, not so much the shape as the colouring of these hills that renders the channel so memorable. The subsoil varies from a bright red to a deep crimson in tint, and the light topsoil is a yellow so brilliant as to dazzle the unshaded eye. In the broken ground surface that these regions present, the crimson and the orange are jumbled together with lavish effect. The Pacific sun, while lighting up these soils to their maximum colour-pitch, intensifies at the same time the rich purple of the shadows that are cast by the beetling crags. The human mind knows no two more stimulating colour-waves than the orange and the red, and no more deliciously rich than the purple. Add to this the tropical green fringing

the foreshore of the bays, the bright green of the water, and the blue of the sky, and wherever one turns to gaze the eye is let loose in a wild orgy of colour. The very dullest in the ranks was that morning bathed in warm delight at the crude brilliance and startling unexpectedness of Nature's handiwork.

Slowly they steam up the channel for an hour or so, with all eyes on the shore. The wonders of this part of the day are but as a prelude to the thrills to follow. Suddenly there comes the word that the channel is widening ahead into the harbour. Every one rushes forward, and in the distance can be dimly discerned the docks, and farther on, the town. As they enter the harbour the hills recede but increase in size. It seems to the Colonials that they are encircled by a ring of towering mountains. The only low land is ahead, where Noumea lies. There on the port bow towards Noumea a huge French battleship rides proudly at anchor, her grey funnels belching smoke and her decks lined with rows and rows of white-clad sailors. She is a mass of flags. We are flying flags too. All is gaiety and animation. How big she looks as she stands out against the background of the hill-side purple.

Our screw has ceased beating, and like a magic ship the *Monowai* drifts along, the sixth in the column. We move and yet feel no motion. Perhaps it is a big panorama passing by and we are stopping still. Look! Our leading ship is coming abreast of the *Montcalm*, the gigantic Frenchman. How dwarfed our ship looks. The trumpet rings out the shrill clear notes of the "Royal Salute." How well the call is played. Even at this distance we can hear the beautiful lipping and easy technique of long practice, and appreciate the balance and effect that the Jack Tar achieves. The

troops listen in breathless silence, and then, as the last note dies away, the *Montcalm* answers with her band. The British National Anthem—that is the Frenchman's salute to us. Yes, it sounds very well, very well indeed. It must be a big band.

Along drifts the next battleship, and the troops wait, expecting the trumpet. Again sounds the "Salute," and played magnificently. Oh that we had on our little boat a bugler like that! Alas, we know ours only too well. Now we can see the conductor on the bridge of the *Montcalm*; we can even see his baton fall. Why does not the band play? Yes, it is playing, but the sound takes time to get here. They play louder than before. Very interesting these compliments. What a great idea to play *our* Anthem.

The third ship is approaching, and ever our interest grows and grows. The third passes, and on comes the next. Each time the call seems louder, the answering Anthem more demonstrative. All the while we are drawing closer. Soon it will be our turn. It is a fine thing to be a Britisher, and to have such a national air. There is something very thrilling in hearing our Anthem played by the foreigner. We long to salute the Frenchman, as the men-o'-war do. But what are we to do? Our bum bugler will make a frightful mess of the "Royal Salute." He can't even play "Come to the cook-house door." The troops are worried about it and glance round, hoping he will not play at all. Yet we ought to make some sort of salute.

The last battleship is past. We are drifting closer, closer still. How enormous the Frenchman looks! How white and trim the uniforms of the lines that crowd the decks! The Frenchman is waiting on our salute. We can't do it. Never mind; perhaps he will under-

stand. Maybe he will salute us all the same. Yes. Look! The conductor is calling up the band. The French are going to salute us. We are abreast of them. Each khaki-covered chest takes a quick breath of expectation. They wait a second, two, three—excitement rising and rising——

Down drops the baton; and with that opening clash of brass there comes a convulsive movement through the men on our deck. Rocked in the throes of one vast emotion, the men, forward, aft, and amidships, surge to their feet and stand to attention, stand with rigid backs and heaving chests, while that Frenchman—the sound reinforced a thousand times by the echoes in the bottle-like harbour—blares forth our National Anthem. Is there a man who will ever forget the wild exultation that clutched his throat and choked his utterance during that salute?

The band stops. A momentary silence, and the troops find a voice. They raise up cheer on cheer that, merging into a bellowing roar, echoes and reverberates along the hills—a cheer that they would not, could not repress. They have to cheer and go on cheering. Many a man did not recover his voice for days after that effort.

But what is that? The "Marseillaise"? From our own ship! What in the name of—why, bless me—the band! We had forgotten. And if there is one air they can play, it is the "Marseillaise." There, hidden from the Frenchies, they have massed, and as soon as our cheering has subsided they repay the compliment in the Frenchman's own coin.

We are delighted; our courtesy is established. But what of the Frenchman? He is struck dumb. He cannot believe his ears. Astonishment and joy fairly

ooze out of every pore. Then he goes mad. He gesticulates, breaks ranks, rushes to the side, and—who says the Frenchman cannot cheer! Lord, how he yelled; there is not a man who visited Noumea that day who will not swear in your teeth that the French sailor can cheer as can no one else.

Both sides are cheering. No, "cheer" is not the word. The spirit of the *Entente cordiale*, the irrepressible expression of strong mutual trust, comradeship, and pride of country, have their very essence in that wild shout; men bend all their faculties to it; to cheer is to exist. Thrilled!—a stone would have quivered. And as the two vessels drift apart each man aboard them has the feeling of being really in touch with his Allies, and understands the great significance of the Anglo-French Alliance.

The Noumeans were very much excited by the advent of the English battleships. They had sighted them early in the morning, and they too had been disturbed by the presence of the powerful German war-boats. They were delighted to see steaming in with the convoy two vessels evidently belonging to the Mercantile service. Naturally they concluded that the Navy had done some good work on the high seas, and collected two prizes in the shape of German boats that had been unable to make a neutral port. When this misapprehension was removed, and it was explained that the supposed German boats were really the *Monowai* and *Moraki* full of soldiers, their delight knew no bounds. But the superlative came when they learned that they contained volunteers. This was the climax the Frenchman so dearly loves. He flocked from all parts of New Caledonia down to the docks to welcome the troopships which were making as if to draw up alongside. The population

of Noumea cannot be more than a few hundreds. Quite how those few hundreds manage to clothe themselves in so many colours the New Zealanders are still at a loss to imagine. It seems that the Noumean, living as he has for long years in the tropics, has acquired the love of bright clothes with which the strong sun always imbues the heart of man. His trousers were very baggy, and the stuff was of an aggressively chequered pattern. The gendarmes wore enough red braid to make rajahs in comic opera. Wives and daughters flitted hither and thither in a bewildering kaleidoscope of colour, and sported gay parasols that would get a woman six months in jail in a more temperate clime. Then there were the Noumean natives, big and brawny, clothed in white and girthed with multicoloured sashes. As the *Monowai* drew alongside, this motley crowd, simmering and swirling, was eyed by Stumpy with vast interest.

"Are they French?" he asked Poulter.

"Yes."

"Kin they talk English?"

"Possibly; but their native language is French."

"They're a fierce-looking lot," said Stumpy. "They've been left that long on that blinkin' island with nothin' to do but ter talk French and look after convic's, they must be 'arf crazy ter see us. How long have they been there?"

"A century possibly. I don't know."

"Fancy 'em stewin' in their own juice fer a hundred years. They must be fair simmerin' now. W'y don't the boys give 'em a cheer? They're cheerin' us—or tryin' to."

This last addition to Stumpy's remark was made in view of the fact that he had just caught the sound of the

French civilian's attempt at a British cheer. It was an imitation that greatly amused the Colonials throughout their stay. One man raised his voice to a thin piping treble, and uttered :

"Eep, eep, eep, eep, eep,"

at the expiry of a dozen of which the rest joined in :

"Ooway !"

Then the "Eep" started up again.

"Just like a chicken wot's lost mother 'en," said Stumpy. "W'y don't the boys show 'em 'ow ter cheer ?"

"Because the pilot wants silence to get his orders to the shore. When we're safely alongside," said Poulter, "you can cheer till you bust."

Meanwhile fruit had been hurtling up from the dock in great quantities. Poulter secured the first orange that did not fall short of the vessel.

"There's no danger of its bein' poisoned ?" asked Stumpy.

"Well, if you think there's any risk you'd better not eat any," said Poulter, offering him a hastily wrenched off half.

Stumpy's smile widened ; the half-orange disappeared into the smile ; Stumpy blinked twice and went on smiling. This process Stumpy called eating.

"The kind of poison I hope I die of," said Stumpy.

Now the boat was alongside, and the pilot said they might cheer. The people on the dock and the troops on the ship each proceeded to give the other an ovation. The Noumean band had (fortunately, it seems) been disbanded long since ; but the occasion was so momentous that a little music was deemed essential. The

quarrelling musicians had been hastily reconciled, re-banded, and herded down to the scene of the commotion. They then proceeded to add their contribution to the general din. The band consisted of about four trombones and a cornet. There may have been fewer cornets and more trombones; we are not certain on the point. However, we may say that never was the tribe of Hohenzollern more guilty of murder than that band. The victims were the "Marseillaise" and "God Save the King." They guillotined them, they dragged them about the docks, they mutilated them. When for a minute it might seem that the poor desecrated corpses had been laid to rest, this malignant tromboning band of apaches exhumed the bodies, breathed sufficient life into them to make existence once more a thing of horror, and then proceeded to give them other long, lingering deaths in different parts of the docks. Shades of Orpheus! Now we know why sticks and stones followed that ill-starred musician. It was really to be wondered at that everything movable on the ship did not follow that band. It was a great tribute to the strength of the *Entente cordiale* that the troops stayed their hand.

Stumpy and Poulter stood watching the crowd, noting the gesticulations, the throbbing activity, of all below.

Suddenly Stumpy's eye was attracted by a well-rounded girl of some eighteen years of age, who was looking directly at them. She had a newspaper in her hand.

"That's a hefty little heifer down there," he remarked. "Poulter, kin you speak the lingo?"

"I took a scholarship in it once," said Poulter, "but that doesn't say I can speak it. I'd like to get that paper."

"Send 'er down a note in yer 'at," suggested Stumpy.

The suggestion was acted on. Poulter scribbled a note in execrable French, put it in his soft felt hat, and lowered it away on a string. The maid took the note, read it, laughed, and called something back. There was too much noise to hear what she said. However, when the hat was pulled up it contained a copy of the *Noumean Journal*.

Poulter, who had been tonguing over some long-disused syllables, waited for a lull in the din and called down :

"Je vous remercie, m'selle. C'est très aimable de vous."

"Don't mention it," she called back. "Tell me, where are you going ? "

"S'truth ! " said Stumpy.

"The deuce ! " said Poulter. "One in the eye for me." Then he called back : "We don't know—that's what we are in the dark about. Can you tell us ? "

"Why, yes," the girl answered up ; "you're going to Samoa, of course."

"Samoa ! " chorused the men, a considerable number of whom were now listening.

"W'ere's Samoa ? " said Stumpy.

"Farther north ! "

"I'd like ter stop 'ere. Any chance o' getting off o' 'ere ter-night on the wharf ? "

The others were vastly interested, however. Here was the answer to the oft-asked question. Those French knew what had been hidden from them. Going to take Samoa, eh ?—the land of R. L. Stevenson. Well, there could be worse fates than that. From all accounts it was a pleasant spot.

Stumpy was still asking how to get on shore. His incessant inquiries at length cooled Poulter from the

ebullition he had undergone at the mention of Samoa, and they fell to discussing ways and means. Ten minutes later they were seen talking to their company sergeant-major.

"'Orrible stuff it was," Stumpy was saying. "Tasted like poison."

"I really think the traffic ought to be stopped," said Poulter.

The young sergeant-major entered into the spirit of the thing. He spoke to the major about it. It appeared that the Noumeans were introducing wine on board, and some of the men were becoming intoxicated. Further than that, he had made extensive inquiries (though he had tasted none himself) and he had heard on all sides than the quality of the liquor was very bad—indeed, it might have been drugged.

Shortly after this a picket was paraded to go down to the wharf with a view to preventing anything stronger than fruit being put on board by the Noumeans. Strange to say, the personnel of the picket included Podger, Poulter, and Stumpy. They received their instructions from the major personally.

As they went down the gangway Podger said to Poulter, "It hardly seems fair that we should stop the boys getting a drink, just to get past the sentries into the crowd ourselves."

"Who's stoppin' any drinks?" Stumpy put in.

"I think Stumpy has the crux of the matter," said Poulter. "It was we who said the drink should not come on board, as it rests with us to say if it may. Perhaps a few bottles will escape us in the dark."

Arrived on the dock, they were fairly mobbed by the gay Noumeans. As the first New Zealanders to land, they were fed and fêted till the troops on the deck were

wild with envy. Why should Podger and Poulter and Stumpy and their little clique be surrounded by a bevy of girls? Why should they get all the chocolate and oranges, all the wine and souvenirs?

Meanwhile the worthies in question were not troubling about the heartaches of those above.

One sweet little Noumean maid of about seventeen summers approaches Stumpy and, putting her hand on his tunic, asks in academic English, "Vill you gif me zat lion, m'sieur?"

"Repeat," says Stumpy.

"Zat lion," says she, pointing to his regimental badge. (The Wellingtons are affiliated to the York and Lancs, and their collar-badge is a lion rampant.)

"Wot you wantee lion for?" says Stumpy.

"Pour souvenir, m'sieur."

"Once again," says Stumpy.

"Souvenir."

"Soovenir, yus. I compreestand. Wot yer goin' ter give me?"

A pause in negotiations occurs here. As neither party can be fairly said to speak English, they have no reliable means of communication. They fall back on signs. Stumpy's main idea is to get a brooch or at least a kiss in return. But as there is a duenna in the background that he shrewdly takes for mamma, either his signs lack conviction or the maid is suddenly obtuse. When the picket is relieved, however, it comes aboard with its flowing shirt-fronts packed with cigarettes, chocolates, tricolours, oranges; and, mellowed by copious draughts of *vin rouge*, it feels quite well pleased with itself. Stumpy and Podger go to sleep. Poulter is violently ill all night. Each does honour to the *Entente cordiale* in his separate manner.

The French Governor of the island was as enthusiastic on the advent of the Colonials as the rest of the populace. He expressed himself astonished that so many volunteers could be found to come up so readily. He was inclined to regard it as a maximum effort, and was of opinion that after such a performance a small country like New Zealand would lean back and cry "Enough!" When he was assured that the country was volunteering practically in a body he was frankly incredulous. He had shared the impression so widespread on the Continent—that the British Colonies had but a semblance of loyalty to the mother-country and that the first great shock would show the empire ripe for dissolution. The agreeable surprise he experienced in being so tangibly contradicted by the burly bodies and lusty throats of those first volunteers took form in an invitation to a banquet ashore. Shortness of time, however, forbade such festivities. The troops had to content themselves with a route march through Noumea and on into the inner country. In point of fact, the French managed to convert this route march into a sort of informal banquet; they showered the columns with fruit and cakes along the first mile of the march through the town, and bands of schoolboys and schoolgirls laden with good things followed the procession and lined the way.

Just as the French had misunderstood the nature of the Colonial troopships, so the New Zealanders had been in error as to the true nature of the Noumean. "French convict settlement" does not sound a very inviting spot. Certainly one does not expect to find in such a place gay social life, motor-cars and Parisian fashions, laughter and music at every turn. Such was, however, the case. In the cursory glance permitted the men while they were ashore, they saw no trace of chains and

fetters, warders or convicts. The island appeared to be a sort of Arcadian settlement, with hot and cold water laid on to boot. Taverns there were in plenty, where the Navy sat and drank. The town is laid out on the usual lines adopted in tropical countries. There is almost an international architecture in such matters. The roads are wide and straight. The houses are light in colour, square in build, and with airy windows and Venetian shutters.

The Noumeans, both French and native, are fine types. The Europeans are very bronzed and the young girls distinctly pretty. The men are tall and well set up, and it is well known in New Zealand that every Frenchman on the island who could possibly claim to be of military age, volunteered early in the war and went to France. The natives seem coal-black in colour, and wear their hair in the high, stiff fashion common in the South Sea Islands. A fine big man is the Noumean black, with a shining face, of which a broad grin seems to be a permanent feature. His main business in life seems to be eating oranges and singing hymns. At both branches of his calling he is adept. Chinamen are there too—Chinese labour from the plantations. It was an amusing sight to see a coolie trot down to the dock with his baskets of oranges and a Frenchman kick over his baskets and hurl the scattered fruit up into the ships.

New Caledonia is not a prolific spot. It would seem that in the town, where the vegetation is watered artificially, everything is green and pleasant, but farther in the country is very arid, and, save some light growths of the drier variety, there cannot be said to be much vegetation at all.

Stumpy, toiling and perspiring up the winding road

their guide took them, was passing characteristic comments on the outlook.

"I'm blinked if I know wot these Noomeans do for a livin'," he remarked.

"Crack stones," suggested Podger, on whom the heat seemed to have no effect.

"Yus; but in the firs' place there aren't no stones to give yer a headache, and in the second, there don't seem no crops nor sheep nor beasts." In New Zealand farm patois, "beast" generally stands exclusively for "cattle."

"Those seem to be rice-fields down there on the low levels," said Poulter, "and they seem to be irrigated."

"Well," said Stumpy, "where the 'ell do they get the water ter do it?"

That certainly was a knock-out blow. Where the supply of water came from they could not guess. It was a problem they were well content to leave unsolved. At the same time they were working up a very respectable thirst.

"It's a shame wot I'd do to a pint," panted Stumpy, as a halt was called. "Blime, look at that spider!"

This last remark, made in a very different tone from the caressingly thoughtful way he spoke of the beer, aroused instant attention. There, bold against the sky, was outlined the largest spider any of them had ever seen. Nine inches he was over the spread of his legs, and he had a web that seemed as thick as cord. It was stretched on a gay purple shrub, under which they were sitting, and there was no mistaking the definite intent of the movement which the men made on seeing that spider dangling over them. In New Zealand the only venomous creature is a spider called the "katapo." It is very rare, but its bite is a serious matter. This

little gentleman is early impressed by earnest mothers into the imagination of their children, and the result is that the genus spider is regarded with some mistrust.

"I reckon," Stumpy went on, "we ought to cop 'im and keep 'im for a pet."

"Are you going to do the catching?" asked Poulter.

"Will you keep him in your hat or in your shirt-front?" from another.

Stumpy eyed the spider ruminatively.

"I don't think he would be a very happy regimental mascot," said Poulter.

"Now," said Stumpy, "p'raps it would be a shame ter deprive 'im of 'is liberty."

The question was decided for the troops by the spider making up his mind that he did not like being the focus of attention. His legs suddenly became a blur, and with wonderful suddenness he disappeared into the bushes.

"'E's took the bit atween 'is teeth, gentlemen, and done a mike." Stumpy, having made this rather unnecessary comment, fell back to thinking of the shameful "thrashing" he would give any stray beer-bottle that happened along.

The column fell in again and started its homeward journey along a new route. They had left all their accoutrement aboard the boats, and, save for their bayonets, they were unarmed. They wore no tunics, and even though thus unhampered, they felt the heat and the exertion very much indeed. On the way back they encountered a Union Jack flying in front of a house. The column saluted it, and the French spectators, who were becoming numerous again, viewed the salute with marked approval. As the troops swung down the road there was a splendid panorama spread

out before them. The white-roofed town in the belt of palms along the shore, the blue harbour and its encircling ring of hills, and farther out the open Pacific, made a very fine picture. And in the distance they saw something that pleased them far more than any panorama could. Stealing along the open roadstead were two huge boats, bigger than any in the convoy, bigger than the giant *Montcalm*. It passed like a flash along the ranks that these were the long-looked-for *Australia* and *Melbourne*. No need to worry now over such things as the German warships. Departure from Noumea would be speedy and safe. The men looked around with the air of definite adieu and re-embarked, still hotter, still thirstier, but very satisfied with the day's work.

Alas for the plans of mice and men! All were ready to set sail, and the boats drew off from the docks into the roadstead; the Noumeans waved farewell, and the trombones blared "God Save"; the troops sang "La-la" to the air of the "Marseillaise," and waved the tricolours they had been given by the French maids. The *Monowai* was a well-meaning enough old tub in her way, but weak. The excitement of the last day or so had been too much for her tender constitution. And when all was thus ready for an effective departure, the poor old girl gave a gentle sigh of resignation and settled down in the mud. Not that she foundered! Oh, no! She was just tired, took the wrong turning, and the ocean-bed rose and clasped her in a soft clinging embrace.

The first mate of the "Monowai" was of the thinking kind.
His words were few and far between—he seldom spoke his mind,

But when he really opened out, he left the rest behind.
Mr. Scott was stewing o'er the buffetings of fate,
The presence of the volunteers was wormwood to the mate—
But when they aped the Romeo they fairly made him twitch.
His language wasn't plentiful, but what there was was rich,
And holding in his thoughts had strained his nerves to concert pitch.
The last straw came; it proved too much for human flesh and blood,
The "Monowai" she heaved a sigh and settled in the mud.
Scott reeled, and on the bulwarks he leaned a breathing-space,
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds, he made a bad grimace,
And then he opened wide his jaws and thundered forth an oath
That made the marrow freeze within and stopped the beard's growth.
Ask the hills around Noumea what sound they heard that night,
Volcanoes ope their molten throats and belch their liquid light;
To imitate that awful sound their thunders all unite—
But aye that Scotian oath shall stand unequalled in its might.

First-aid measures were applied at once to the boat. It would not do for the French to see British navigation at fault; besides, the Navy was clamouring for haste. So they blew her siren and they reversed her engines. She grunted and she struggled, but could not get her sea-legs again.

The naval nobs came cruising up in frills and fal-de-rals,
They quite eclipsed the skipper and his sober-dressing pals ;
It looked as if the "Monowai" were manned by admirals,
And as the nobs were climbing up, the diver went below,
Tho' what in Heaven's name he did the troopers didn't know.
The rumour was, he'd jack her up—you know how rumours go.

The troops were rather of opinion that it might be etiquette to salute some of these bebraided officials. One or two men even went so far as to try the experiment; but the Senior Service displayed such indifference to these sheepish attentions that the men confined their activities to discussing the visitors.

"Is these the gents wot 'itch up their trousers an' say 'Yo-'eave-'o' every five minutes?" asked Stumpy.

"No," answered Podger, "officers of their exalted rank wear braces."

"Look at that fat ole geezer," Stumpy said with reference to a recent arrival with three bands on his arm. "'E didn't catch that rosy dial on watered grog and salt junk!"

The objects of these intelligent remarks were meanwhile holding a consultation. The result of this was a novel and pleasing diversion for the troops. While three sizable ships and several tugs pulled at stout cables made fast to the *Monowai's* stern and her engines were reversed, the troops were made to run from side to side of the ship to loosen her in her bed. One whistle for starboard, two for port.

The naval ways are vigorous the troops were soon to learn.
They had to tango round the decks, and jump, and twist and turn,

And dance the Mississippi Dip, from very stem to stern.
Mr. Scott was dancing maître, *with Wilford to assist;*
And every time he wished the ship to take a starboard list
He'd give the siren cord he held a gentle little tug,
And when its dulcet cadences impinged the troopers' lug,
They'd scuttle to the starboard rail in one wild Bunny Hug.
No wriggle from the "Monowai," it wasn't until dark,
When all the troops and all their kits were made to disembark,
The poor old derelict was launched and started to Samoa,
Assisted at the function—"Koromiko" and "Katoa"
(*Another of* 1000 *tons, but writer doesn't know her*).

The struggle was long and arduous. The evening of the third day was falling when at length she budged. Even then there was very nearly a second catastrophe. It had been in attempting to avoid a ship in the fairway that the *Monowai* had originally got beached; and at the last moment, just as the combined efforts of the *Monowai*, the troops, and the Navy had got her moving, along blundered the identical boat again, and contrived to get rammed by the *Monowai's* stern. The first mate of the *Monowai* was, as indicated by the bard, a great character; and he vented some of his greatness on that ship as he passed her; then anchored safe in the fairway, awaiting the dawn that would see his ship clearing the harbour.

It has already been hinted that the dock picket of the first night at Noumea lost all its regimental badges. The eagle eye of the sergeant-major soon discovered this, and as the convoy sailed along the beautiful channel again out into the open sea, a certain major was holding his orderly-room.

Many and ingenious were the stories told. Any one

story would have stood the test of rigid examination; but collectively, in the face of the fact that the picket, and only the picket, had lost its badges, the stories undermined each other. Stumpy got three days' C.B.; so did Podger and the rest. The last to come up was Poulter.

"Well, Poulter," says the major wearily, "what's *your* excuse? I expect a good one from you."

"I shall try in all things to please you, sir."

"Well, where are your badges?"

"Never had any, sir."

"Never had any! Why, what would you say if I showed you your signature on the quartermaster's book?"

Poulter saw his chance. He was sufficient lawyer to know what he had signed and what he hadn't.

"What would I say, sir?" he asked in feigned confusion.

"Yes," said the major with an air of triumph. What would you say, eh?"

"I would say it was a forgery, sir."

The major laughed. What is the use of bluffing people who live by bluff!

"Come now, Poulter, you had your badges. You admit it."

"Well, if you put it that way, sir, I'll admit it."

"Well, that contradicts your former statements, does it not?"

"In a way, sir. You see, it was like this. I had my badges all right at the drill hall. There was a box lying open, and I helped myself. But sign I did not. Then you gave us out those delightful little suits of underclothing that weighed at least five pounds of solid wool, and I naturally thought we were conducting a

punitive expedition against the Eskimos or inflicting reprisals on the penguins. So I thought I would need a larger tunic to hold the heavy underwear. At the last moment I dashed back and got a larger size. In the hurry I forgot to change the badges."

An amused smile crept over the major's face. "Quite a good story, Poulter. *Quite* a good story. But there are still the holes in the present tunic unexplained. Seven days' C.B."

CHAPTER IV

SUVA

STILL must we hold the gentle reader in suspense. It is only fair that he should share in some small measure the exasperation of the troops at the delay in reaching Samoa. Now that the destination was finally settled and a safe journey assured, the New Zealanders regarded a quick arrival as a right and a certainty. It was with considerable irritation that they learned that there was to be another port of call before they could bury in enemy flesh the bayonets which they had been surreptitiously sharpening.

The convoy put into Suva, the capital of the Fiji Islands, and perhaps a far distant Blue Book or other official pamphlet may give some sort of explanation of this delay. Obvious justification there was none.

It may be quite unnecessary to state that Suva is a British town and Fiji a British possession. We state it here because it was very much emphasized on the troops. After the thrilling scenes at Noumea they had come to regard an enthusiastic reception as a matter of course. They got out the band, and lined the decks ready to cheer the Suvans. They fished out suitable objects from their kits to exchange as souvenirs *à la Nouméa*. Stumpy managed to obtain (no matter how) quite a nest of collar-badges to trade for favours from any little "heifers" who might take his eye. And

great was the chagrin when they drew up alongside the dock and found it empty. Of course, it *may* be that the "populace were forbidden entrance to the dock." It *may* be that the surrounding hills were covered with enthusiastic spectators—a theory that the Suvan paper tried hard to popularize. It did not go down with the troops. As they declared later:

The editor's a decent chap; we wouldn't like to grieve him;
We wouldn't take the liberty to say we don't believe him.
But if he thinks we saw a crowd, we want to undeceive him.

A few natives squatted about the dock. A few Europeans sauntered down in oil-silk coats to keep out the humidity of the water-front. A few of the troops did some fatigues on the dock. That was all.

Although when at Noumea they'd ta'en the place by storm,
No Suvan crowd came cheering down, a motley, giddy swarm—
No Suvan optic kindled at a "Terrier" uniform—
The Suvan looked anæmic—complained that it was warm.

Poulter sniffed.

"Very British and respectable," he remarked. "Life here hardly seems one wild, delirious round of excitement, does it?"

"Naw," answered Stumpy. "Too true; it don't."

Contemplatively he dropped overboard his ill-gotten badges.

"Them Weary Willies down there," he continued, "ain't got much juice left in *their* orange."

Podger, sauntering up, remarked that the swirling, cheering crowd below made him dizzy. He really thought his heart was weak to-day and he must go sick.

"Wot I do like," went on Stumpy, "is genuine

British enthusiasm. I'm thrilled, that's what I am—thrilled ! "

No one was disappointed when that night the boats pulled out and anchored some hundreds of yards from the shore ; in fact, Suva was much more interesting from the distance. No matter where you go in the Pacific Isles, the smoothly rounded bays and shapely palms along the shore give a wonderfully fairylike effect to the land. Then, too, the natives came out in their canoes with lights and music. By eight o'clock in the evening the troops felt quite animated. Every man was opening coco-nuts or eating bananas, and as these and what they had had at Noumea were the only fruit they had had since leaving New Zealand, they ate with great avidity.

The troopship fare was rather tame, and palled on the recruit
(The troopship fare was musty spuds and bits of frizzled boot) ;
And so the animal within was clamouring for fruit.
Some even thought to swim ashore, but certain shapely fins,
That cleaved the oily surface, made them fearful for their skins ;
A sudden snap, and they'd be up accounting for their sins.
No candidates were coming forth for seats among the blessed.
When suddenly a shark appeared quite different from the rest—
He sang in lovely harmonies, and liked his little jest ;
He handed up bananas that had just begun to sprout,
And watched the Tommy take a bite, and watched him spit it out.
And when he sold his coco-nuts his humour didn't cease,

He traded them to Tommy at "Sixy-Pens" apiece—
The real authentic origin of Jason's Golden Fleece.

It was a joy to be in Suva Harbour that night and smoke and smoke with no fear of a rap over the knuckles from the Navy; to listen to the soft plash of the waves on the shore and the singing of the natives; to watch the dancing lights in the canoes; and, as the night wore on and the lights disappeared, to trace by the phosphorescent gleam in the water the track of the sharks as they swam round the ships.

Ugh! What nauseating brutes those sharks were! Six feet, eight feet, ten feet in length; and as the day came, and the ships stopped still, they grew bolder and came in great numbers. With scarce a ripple they glided round and about—long grey shapes, with one sinister fin poking above the water. This it was that had made the wake that had gleamed during the night. Great cowardly brutes they were too. A sudden splash of anything falling into the sea and in a flash every shark in the vicinity would shoot like an arrow from the disturbance. One twist of the powerful tail sent him speeding away. Then back he came, gliding through the oily water, and men shuddered as they watched, and imagined themselves in the place of the box they had thrown overboard.

"Nice ingratiating smile that shark has," remarked Poulter. "I understand a mouth with turned-down corners is a sign of pleasantry."

"His sense of humour and mine don't coincide," answered Podger. "I do not fancy a frolic in the water for all his sweet expression."

"I had a brother once," said Stumpy, "wot give a shark indigestion."

"Did your brother have false teeth?" asked Poulter.

"Naw, the shark didn't eat 'im. 'E was a A.B. aboard a missionary boat before 'e went inter the Navy; an' one day, w'en they was mooching about some o' these islands, the sharks was that thick yer could 'a played marbles on their backs. Well, Bill, wot's my brother's name, wanted a bathe."

"I should imagine bathing stocks a little below par under the circs.," said Podger.

"As I was sayin' w'en you butted in, Bill wanted a a bath. So 'e 'eated a brick red-hot."

"A very good way of having a bath, too," said Podger. "A red-hot brick I should call really luxury. Clever man, Bill!"

"Don't yer want ter 'ear the yarn?" asked Stumpy.

"Yes, of course."

"Well, dry up. If yer cough up any more tush, I close down. See?"

"Yes, I visualize."

"Well, 'e 'eated a brick very 'ot. Then 'e lowered over a piece o' meat on a wire an' waved it aroun'. The sharks smelt it or seen it, or somethin', an' started jumpin' outer the water arter it. Dinkum they did. Well, Bill teases them some and then lets 'em 'ave it. Arter a little o' this they would jump at anythin', rag an' wood an' all sorts. Then 'e gets the 'ot brick an' does the same thing. One big ole buck shark, wot had put up a good fight for the meat an' boots an' trousers Bill had fed ter 'im, makes a blazes o' a jump at it, an' before 'e could twig wot was wrong 'e swipes the brick."

"Excellent," quoth Poulter.

"He'd need a lot of sea-water to wash down that little capsule," added Podger.

"Yus. Bill sez 'e didn't seem too pleased. 'E swallowed it orl right, though, and arter a second or so 'e got ter goin' good. 'E twisted, 'e turned, 'e swam up, 'e swam down, an' went into convulsions proper. 'E scared seven bells outer the other sharks, an' they let out fer home an' mother, as though the devil was arter 'em. Then the ole buck shark—'im wot 'ad made the mistake—got movin' slower an' slower, an' then floated belly up, which is wot a shark does when it dies. An' then Bill took 'is clothes off——"

"Did he take his bathe?" asked Podger.

Poulter interrupted: "Don't tempt him, Podger. It's hardly fair."

CHAPTER V

SAMOA

AND now for days the New Zealanders aboard their troopships had been filling cartridge-clips and completing their equipment; been shaken down into platoons, and sub-shaken into sections. They had practised rushing to the positions on the deck whence they would be lowered away into the open boats, which the Navy would tow ashore; had seen Samoa rise over the horizon in the brilliant dawn of a tropical morning; had thrown off all superfluous kit for the strenuous work ahead; had watched with staring eyes the township of Apia growing every minute more distinct; had seen with consuming interest one of the smaller warships sweeping the entrance to the reef for mines, and marking out a channel through to the harbour; had watched for the return of the envoy sent by the Naval Commander to demand the surrender of the islands; had eagerly awaited the refusal from the German Governor, which would mean the launching of an attack.

And so when they picked up a message from the signal-party that had gone ashore it was a miserable anti-climax to read that:

"The Germans refuse to surrender, but will offer no resistance."

What a typical Teutonic sophism that was. Too weak to fight, the Germans still tried to keep up

appearances with tilted nose and wordy bombast. The Colonials were not impressed. They sneered with venom at this introduction of the Doctrine of Passive Resistance into the German War Book. Still the Hun has been very prolific of new war methods lately, and has revived many old ones long since in disrepute. In Samoa then he was doubtless introducing at this early stage the thin end of the wedge.

So there was no hurry. The Navy leisurely brought along the surf-boats roped together in strings. The troops disembarked into these and were towed ashore. The ropes connecting up two of the last boats of the first detachment to leave the transports broke under the strain, and the boats were drifting on to the reef. The occupants of the boats were furious at being left behind, and so not having the privilege of taking part in the first landing. Their anger was drowned in the badinage that was hurled back at them from the other boat-loads.

"Come on! Don't be afraid. The Germans won't hurt yer."

"Stay there and cover our rear."

"Effect a landing lower down the coast and make a flanking sweep."

A fussy little tug came up and collected the runaways, who were getting perilously near the reef. Otherwise the heavy Pacific swell might have done some damage to the helpless surf-boats.

Soon the whole infantry force was drawn up on the road that skirts the foreshore. The Colonel did not trust the "no resistance" story. He flung out a screen of men of several miles' radius all round the town, and drew it inwards, giving orders that anything in uniform that did not surrender was to be shot. He put strong pickets on all the principal roads, and set up his head-

quarters in the town where immediate communication with the Navy, the gunners, and the infantry was guaranteed. The men whose adventures this narrative is following formed part of the screen that was sent out to drag the jungle in the rear of the town. As they formed up on the shore they had noted the beautiful avenue of coco-nut palms, bending seawards over the broad white beach, and had been charmed by the symmetry of the native huts peeping from the foliage on the other side of the road that skirted the shore; but it was only when they went inland through the jungle that they realized the surpassing beauty of the vegetation that has so appealed to Europeans in the Pacific Isles. Conjure to the mind's eye a prospect of shapely palms, rising now sparsely, now in clumps, from a soft greensward stretching away in seeming endlessness. The stately coco-nut rears his proud head aloft, fearless alike of scorching sun and tearing hurricane, and round his bowl as if reassured by his strength the banana palm timidly droops her tender leaves. The lime-tree and the indigo, the breadfruit and the mummy apple are scattered about in wild profusion, and here and there are glimpses of red and patches of purple—the blooms of shrubs, the botanical names of which are as grotesque as their appearance is fairy-like. And in all this jumble of fruits, flowers, and foliage you have only the background of the Samoan bush. The pre-eminent charm of the Pacific Isles does not consist in these alone. It is the crystal streams and the taro plantations which have rendered Samoa world-famous. The taro is a slender plant with a leaf very like the arum lily. The natives relish the taro root as a food, and the plant is grown in large plantations. These plantations are kept some six inches under water, and the effect of

these lakes, as one wanders through the jungle, is very exquisite indeed. There are no fences, no tribal boundaries to mar the scene, and as one comes on a fair prospect of coco-nut and banana palms, taro plants, and gleaming water, one is tempted to say, "Enough! This is the loveliest spot." And yet in the distance one catches a glimpse of another scene even more inviting, and hurries on to find vista after vista opening up of bewildering green and silver each different from and more enchanting than the last.

As the screen halted for a moment to take breath, Poulter and Podger exchanged a word or so on the jungle around them.

"It is wonderful," said Podger, "what sunshine and vegetation can do together, if they are really hand and glove."

"Yes," answered Poulter. "This quite converts me to a belief in comic-opera scenery. What do you think of it, Stumpy?"

"Damn hot," said Stumpy. "Wot about a beer?"

"Doesn't the scenery appeal to you?"

"Well, now you mention it, it do. But it's a shame the way I could sink a pint."

Conversation was interrupted at this intellectual juncture by the forward progress of the screen. The track they were now following led them after some walk past a native bathing-pool. A big spring gushed from the side of a rock and fell into a pond some fifteen feet wide. In this were laughing and splashing some dozen Samoan girls between the ages of fifteen and twenty.

"WOT HO!" said Stumpy, with rapt appreciation. "I reckon we've called at the right address."

"I am pleased to note you are alive to the beauties of nature after all," said Podger.

"My oath!"

"Do you notice how there are no men here?" remarked Poulter.

"No men?" snorted Stumpy. "Wot's the matter with us?"

"I mean no native men. Evidently their Mission training includes a ban on mixed bathing."

"Well, I'm blowed if I see any reason against it," said Podger. "Goodness knows they're modestly enough clothed. I've seen far more exhilarating sights on the sands in New Zealand than those girls present in their draperies."

Meanwhile Stumpy had already commenced negotiations with a fair denizen of the pool.

"I reckon I stop 'ere," he announced.

"And stage-manage Poulter's comic-opera chorus?" asked Podger.

"No, you must come along," said Poulter, taking him gently by the arm. So the screen passed on waving enthusiastically, and the girls laughed merrily back.

There is no doubt that the Samoan is a fine up-standing man. His skin is coffee-coloured. There is nothing of the negro about him in tint, cast of countenance, or mental characteristics. One never sees a thin specimen; one never sees a stooping specimen. They have all broad, intelligent faces, cheery smiles, and well-covered bodies. Their open-air life and vegetarian diet have given them sound constitutions. Their clothing is the lightest possible, consistent with modesty. Their sole garment is a "lava-lava"—a strip of gay cotton print. The men wear their lava-lava draped from waist to knee, and the women wear theirs in graceful folds from shoulder to ankle. Probably through the climate being so

kindly, they have not resorted to clothes for warmth, and in consequence do not regard them as a source of ornament. Certain it is that your Samoan looks to the carriage of his body as your European does to the cut of his coat. The men brush their hair back, and it stands out in all directions like a halo. The women let their hair grow to its full length, and dress it in coils decked with flowers.

As the screen drew in closer to the township, the native huts attracted the Colonials' attention. They can hardly be described as "huts" at all. Their dimensions are often that of a small-sized house. The ground-plan is elliptical, and the smallest is ten by twenty-five feet in measurement. The floor is raised from the ground on a solid foundation of stones and sods. At intervals round the sides rise the wooden pillars by which the dome-like roof is supported. The roof is thatched with dry coco-nut leaves, and is often at its apex thirty feet from the ground. The hut is open from the ground to the roof through the whole length of the wooden pillars. The only walls are matting curtains suspended from the roof. These are lowered when it rains. Hence it occurs that the maximum of air and sunlight always enters the Samoan residence. The floor is scrupulously clean and covered with pebbles. On these again rest the mats of wool and fibre on which the native sits and sleeps. Chairs there are none, and his only pillow is a bar of bamboo, on a little trestle, so arranged to prevent his elaborate coiffure, of which he is very proud, from becoming crushed during sleep. There are no cesspits or garbage-tins. All refuse is burned. The bare feet of the natives do not tread down to any extent the greensward that reaches right up to the huts, and hence it comes that, except in the European quarter of the

town, there is nothing unsightly, nothing malodorous in the whole island. There is no such thing as a back door. The open walls of the houses are a door in all directions.

And the natives are as hospitable in fact as their open door would indicate. They are possessed of a certain natural dignity that combines courtesy with reserve, and no man, however proud, loses caste by entering a native hut; nor does the native bend the neck to any man.

Through the jungle, or the "bush" as the New Zealanders insisted on calling it, came the scouts, and formed up in the town. They found no Germans in uniform, and no ball ammunition had been expended. The township of Apia consists of a row of shops and houses, churches and taverns, sprinkled in a desultory way along the road that skirts the beach. At the far end lies the D. H. & P. G., the big German firm. Down at that end of the town are the Customs Buildings and the International Hotel, and from there runs the big main roadway off to the Wireless Station. It was at that end that the 3rd Auckland took up its abode for the first week or so. Half-way along the beach lies the Post Office and the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Then at the "near end"—so called because it was where the troops first landed—are the Picture-house, the Mission-house, another public-house, and the great Vailima road that the natives built up to the house of Robert Louis Stevenson. It was in the Picture-house at the near end that the 5th Wellington Regiment took up its abode. In fact, throughout all the changes of site of the camps, the 5th may be always regarded as being at the Stevenson end of the town, and the 3rd at the Wireless end. Both Vailima and the Wireless were much farther out; but

each played an important part in the life of the troops.

One was surprised to find so small a place as Apia supporting a picture-house at all. As a matter of fact Apia did not support it. Pictures had been shown there some time back. They had been of a melodramatic type, and had produced such an impression on the populace that several native youths decided to emulate these fair samples of the more romantic element of civilization. From all accounts they succeeded very well. They procured revolvers and other Americanisms and took to the jungle. They ran amok in the less frequented parts of the island, and committed several murders before they could be caught and executed. The Germans then went to the root of the matter, and stopped the picture shows. The abolition of this powerful educational factor in the island occurred only just in time. Had the matter been delayed it is quite possible that the Colonials might have been astonished on their arrival to perceive the dignified Samoans capering up and down the water-front under the impression that the latest thing from Bond Street was the Charlie Chaplin walk.

Great days were those at first; days of exploration and mild adventure. Poulter, Podger & Co. quickly saw that there was nothing to be gained by staying with the regiment. Fatigue duties that kept them moving about the island were what they liked best. They won golden reputations among the authorities because of their instant readiness to discharge any duty, however apparently onerous. The best expedient for getting out of bounds to see the island was to be sent off on a wood fatigue. The first time they went they did not realize the possibilities of their task. They had no idea

where to go for wood. Nor did they care. They bowled off along the beach toward the 3rd Auckland Camp in the hope that there would be a sly grog-shop along there. Their pleasant speculations in this direction received a rude set-back, however, by the sudden advent of the adjutant from the rear mounted on a bicycle.

"Where are you men going out of bounds."

Poulter volunteered the information that they were a wood fatigue.

"And you're searching for wood along the main road?" with fine sarcasm.

By this time Poulter had had time to haze up a ready lie to fit the case.

"We were going along the road, sir, for ease of travelling. We return along the beach collecting driftwood *en route*."

At this remark the remainder of the party, who had been looking rather hangdog, now looked exceedingly virtuous. They turned gazes expressive of cords of wood in the direction of the shore, and looked aching to take back nothing less than a shipwreck.

The adjutant cast a keen glance at Poulter, as does a man who notes a face for future reference, and rode back. It is regrettable to state that they found no wood on the foreshore. Possibly because it wasn't there; possibly because they didn't look; but they broke up a German hen-roost, and came back with ample fuel, and something for the pot as well. That afternoon there was no need of a wood fatigue. It had been a big hen-roost. Nevertheless P., P. & Co. felt the jungle a-calling. They waylaid an N.C.O. and told him that they were the wood fatigue and were going out for wood. The idea in the back of their minds probably was that if they were noticed to be absent they could aver that the N.C.O.

had ordered the party to go for wood, and were trusting to a little browbeating at the orderly-room to persuade the man to admit the allegation. The N.C.O., however, was no fool, and saw the major of the company a few yards off. He put the matter before him. Poulter saw what would be the trend of the conversation, and by the time the N.C.O. arrived to ask the cook if more wood was needed, Poulter had well established the fact in the cook's mind by means of promises of chickens, pigs, beer, and bananas and everything else that came into his mind, that wood, much wood, and still more wood was the urgent need of the moment. He then tackled the N.C.O. and gave him his marching orders. The major, it appears, saw this little colloquy and asked the N.C.O. in his turn, "What instructions have you been receiving from Poulter?"

Off went the wood fatigue towards the bathing-pool, with their towels and soap, in the most brazen manner. They got a beastly fright on seeing the N.C.O. aforementioned sent in pursuit. They immediately dodged into the jungle, scattered, and went to the pool by divers routes.

Just at tea-time that night, well laden with wood which they had got not two hundred yards from the camp, they returned to the Picture-house. They had visited many native huts, learned a smattering of the Samoan language, and eaten enough coco-nuts and bananas to make them ill for a month.

"I've drunk that much coco-nut," said Stumpy, "me eyes is poachin' in the juice."

"Which do you think best—the green or the ripe coco-nuts?"

"The green," answered Stumpy.

The Samoan drinks the juice of the coco-nut for the

most part when the nut is green. The meat is then still tender and the nut full of milk. Of course the coco-nut in its native state is very different from the object purchased in temperate climes. In its full size it is as large as a football. It has a big outer husk, which is removed before exportation. It took the men sometimes half an hour to get this husk off with a bayonet. The Samoan, however, merely plants a pointed stick in the ground, and by two or three deft thrusts of the nut against the stick he rips off the toughest husk in a trice. While the nut is green the outer case is juicy and soft. A slash of the heavy banana-knife clips off one end of the husk and nut-shell, and reveals a tiny opening in the soft meat of the nut. Two more cuts and a cleft is made for the chin, and the Samoan presents the soldier with the most delightful (non-alcoholic) drink in the world. What bliss to lie back in the scorching heat and drink and drink from the inexhaustible interior of those nuts; to feel the champagne-like liquid bubbling down the parched throat, and oozing out of the perspiring pores. In the first week or so P., P. & Co. did nothing but drink and ooze, ooze and drink the live-long day away.

One night Poulter found the heat of the Picture-house too great for sleep, evaded the sentries, and laid himself down in a coco-nut plantation. He was awakened by the heavy footfall of a horse beside him. Drowsily he looked round and saw nothing. He was asleep again, when crash! the horse seemed right beside his ear. He put out his hand, and found that the horse-step was nothing but the thud of a ripe coco-nut that had fallen. As coco-nuts often weigh many pounds and are as hard as iron when ripe, Poulter decided that one dropping from a sixty-foot palm might possibly derange his front teeth.

No one ever took up his bed and walked more willingly than he.

As a matter of fact several natives are killed each year by falling coco-nuts, and as one lies at night in the hospital—an experience vouchsafed to many Colonials before they left Samoa—one can hear a nut fall about every half-hour from the few palms that ornament the hospital grounds.

A fitting ending to this first chapter on the life on the island will be a description of the ceremony of annexation. It has not been given to many of the Allied troops to take part in such a solemnity. Certain it is that the New Zealanders in Samoa were the first to make a formal annexation during the Great War.

It was a balmy Sunday morning. The troops were formed up in three sides of a square under the palms on the water-front immediately in front of the Court-house. Then there was a pause (there always is), and the Governor and Staff drove up with a sprinkling of naval officers. There were a few British residents looking on, and a fair crowd of Germans and Samoans.

The ceremony was short and simple. The parade was called to attention. The Governor then read out a proclamation. It was a rather discursive document dealing with a wide range of topics. Annexation, lighting, meetings, commandeering of transport and liquor restrictions were amongst the subjects touched on. The salient fact, however, still emerged from the confusion of mules and meetings, liquor and lights, that German Samoa was henceforth a British possession with New Zealand as its immediate temporal head.

The Colonel then gave the signal, and slowly up to the top of the flag-pole of the Court-house, whence so long the German Eagles had flown, there rose the Grand Old Flag.

Parade—Royal Salute—present—arms!

Out rang the bugle's sharp note. And as the last note of the Royal Salute died into silence, the band played the National Anthem.

Parade—slope—arms!

Order—arms!

Parade—three cheers for the King!

Good cheers they were. The troops had had plenty of practice. Well, it was a suitable occasion for cheering. All the formalities prescribed by international law had been observed, and German Samoa was now a British possession. May she long remain so!

CHAPTER VI

THE GERMAN

It is a common, if somewhat sweeping, statement that the German is not a good colonist. The opinion that was formed of him by the troops in Samoa is not strictly in accordance with this assertion. It was quite obvious that the German was still very much a German. His home was still in Germany. He regarded himself as staying in the Pacific only temporarily, and continued to report his movements about the world with great diligence to the Potsdam authorities. There were very few German women in Samoa and fewer pure German children. In this the Boche differs from the Britisher very considerably. Where the British colonist goes he regards himself as settled. He takes his wife and family. In fact, the Colonial Britisher's attitude towards Britain and the Colonies is difficult to describe—and impossible for the Teuton mind to grasp.

While the New Zealander, say, still calls the British Isles "home," he nevertheless regards himself emphatically a Colonial. When he is in England he will discuss whether he will stay "at home" or go "out" to New Zealand. His point of view seems wider than that of the German. He regards himself as part of an empire. The German seems to look upon himself as a son of the Fatherland. The conflicting traits of the two peoples in this connexion are reflected in their respective laws of

expatriation. While the English courts are comparatively easily satisfied that a former British subject has effected a change of nationality, German jurists are much more scrupulous.

Whether their observations are correct or not the reader must judge. It was quite patent in Samoa that the German set himself out to make as much out of Samoa as he could. He farmed the land and the people with great thoroughness. He put in force a complicated and efficient system of law defining the rights of Germans, aliens, and natives. He trained a large body of native police. Their mark of office was a leather belt fastened by a heavy metal buckle inscribed "Gott Mit Uns." These were a very fine body of men, and the natives gave them respectful obedience in all matters. The excellence of the German policy was in this respect very marked, and the British forces made great use of the Samoan police as interpreters and guardians of the peace.

The German, too, organized the taxes to an extent that astonished the New Zealand Customs officials who took over the Custom-house. Every native paid a poll-tax and a hut-tax. He paid it as a matter of course. Every shop had a licence, and the granting of these licences was a great source of revenue to the German Government. The withholding of these licences was a source of considerable discontent among the natives. A man might have to wait seven years for the right to retail cloth or tinned meat. The German, too, had a good system of roads running through the island, which he kept in excellent repair. There was a very fine school of a secular description staffed by German teachers, where native children—and adults, if they chose—were taught German, arithmetic, and

"Deutschland über alles." The large Wireless Station mentioned above was a private German concern, backed, no doubt, by the State. This was probably a strategic as much as an educational move. A German newspaper was published under the name of the *Samoanische Zeitung*. The system of land tenure was satisfactory, and the holdings were surveyed with great accuracy. Many of the troops who had been surveyors or surveyors' hands in New Zealand expressed their surprise at the big concrete standards that were placed as boundary-marks. After the rough-and-ready iron and wood pegs of New Zealand, these concrete blocks seemed an ultra-refinement. Though the best public-house was English owned, there were three others besides under German management, and the supply of Pilsener beer seemed inexhaustible.

A great source of discontent, however, to English, German, and native, was the D. H. & P. G. These letters stand for the name of a German firm. The troops never heard the name in full and they christened it "The Alphabet." The Alphabet was by far the biggest business in Apia, and the Kaiser was reputed to have a large private share in the concern. The D. H. & P. G. had the lighterage rights of the harbour. The dues they charged were so exorbitant that prices were artificially inflated throughout the island. It was said that it cost less to bring goods from Africa or New Zealand than it did to get them lightered ashore from the reef. This concern was early placed in the hands of a receiver chosen from the ranks, and all the Kaiser's share was diverted into the coffers of the New Zealand Government. This is a happy reflection, and even if not true, gave great satisfaction to the troops and the British residents.

To what extent the Germans carried their methodicity in matters of State can be gathered by the fact that Governor Schultz had arranged a meeting of native chiefs for the day the New Zealanders arrived. He decided not to alter his arrangements, and even in the face of an invasion rode off some considerable distance to the conference. Doubtless he put in some good work for the Fatherland during the palaver; but any one but a German would have shown some passing interest in the events in the harbour.

So excellent did the Colonel-Administrator find the machinery of civic life in Apia that as soon as he had time to attend to such matters he proclaimed that the German law was still to remain in force, that the German coinage was still to be legal currency, and that all German officials might retain office at their wonted salary. For the most part the Germans resigned. The vacancies thus arising dislocated matters for a while. The difficulty was overcome, however, by a census being taken in the ranks in which every man stated his former occupation. The Colonials were a very cosmopolitan body, and men were found in plenty who could fill all the posts. The school, it is true, was discontinued as such and became a barracks; but the Custom-house, the Post Office, the billet of Crown Prosecutor, receivership to the German firms, surveyorships, court offices, and so forth were easily filled by experts; and the jails too, be it mentioned, were equally easily filled from the ranks, by past masters in the multifarious crafts and accomplishments that lead that way.

So much for the German as a statesman. As a farmer he was thorough, but in a sense detached. He was not carving out Samoa's economic future but Germany's. He did not waste time on the ease-loving Samoans in

attempting to induce them to work on his plantation. He imported Chinese labour at very cheap contract prices. The terms were something like a mark a month at first, rising to five at the end of five years, and then return to China. And it was a mutual hate society indeed. The Samoan hated the Chinaman and the Chinaman hated the Samoan and the German too. As soon as they got word on the advent of the Colonials that the German rule was at an end, they broke bounds and thronged the town. A riot broke out immediately between the indignant Samoans and the coolies. The native police used their batons freely and blood flowed. One Chinaman, rushing from a policeman, butted into a sentry's bayonet. With a howl of despair he dashed off at a tangent only to upset an officer of the 3rd Aucklands. The officer's platoon sergeant and a man thereupon did summary justice. The din during the process was pandemoniacal. After this all the Chinese were sent back to the plantations with great expedition. Meanwhile some of the more enterprising of them had not come down into Apia at all. They planned a far sweeter lot. Theirs would be to strike work and gamble away the hours. So they struck, and demanded their monthly stipend when it was still some forty-eight hours underdue. The German overseer naturally refused to pay out. The next event was a heated Samoan emissary from the overseer rushing into the Picture Palace and demanding to see "Te captain." His message was that the Chinese labour had besieged the German overseer in his house and had broken into the cellars. Apparently a drunken Chinaman is a very brave man, for fully two hundred of him, according to report, were bent on murdering the overseer.

The 7th Platoon was rapidly fallen in under its lieu-

tenant. They were told the nature of the work before them, that the native had stated the distance was a short one, and that there was a goodly prospect of some shooting. They were so keen to start that the pace must have been easily five miles per hour as they set out. The route lay roughly in the direction of the Wireless, and as the Wireless was in a fairly elevated position, they had a steady uphill climb. The march occurred in the first few days of the occupation, and apart from the exhilaration of getting away from the restraint of camp on such an errand, the route traversed held innumerable objects of interest. As they left the town, they went through Tamassisse's village, then on up through the German plantations. Here for the first time they saw rubber growing in great profusion. The rubber-tree is very symmetrical with big pointed leaves of brilliant green.

Poulter, a little ahead with the native guide, was wheeling a bicycle for scouting purposes.

"What sort of tree is that?"

"Rubber," said the native.

"Rubber! Shades of Belgium! To think that that innocent little tree had been the cause of more greed, gambling, fraud, and revolting cruelty than any herb known to botany. Such a pretty little tree, too."

The rubber-trees were laid out in sizable plantations but their cultivation was not general.

"What's this on the right?" asked Poulter.

"Cocoa."

"Is that cocoa? That red pod so close to the stem of the tree?"

"Yes," from the native.

"Talk about the Swiss Family Robinson! In all their varied adventures they never got an antithesis

so striking. The angelic cocoa-tree *dextra* and the satanic rubber-plant *sinistra*.

The cocoa-tree is certainly very remarkable. The striking feature is the position of the pods which hold the cocoa-beans. They seem to grow anywhere, out of trunk, branch, or twig. They are light red when ripe and have a rough husk, and in shape are not unlike a big pear.

Poulter was no botanist, as the reader has quickly gathered; but he pumped the Samoan for all the information he could extract. The Samoan was a Mission boy and spoke English well. He informed his questioner that there were no sheep in Samoa. The only animals that are reared to any great extent are cattle. Horses there are and mules; but they are merely as adjuncts to the plantations and are not bred in large numbers. The Samoan informed Poulter, and the statement afterwards proved correct, that the great industry of Samoa is copra—the dried meat of the coco-nut. Hence the coco-nut palms are laid out in great plantations. The young nuts are attacked by a grub, or crab as it is called in the islands, and the Germans had, as mentioned earlier, framed a considerable amount of legislation on this head.

"Did the Germans pass a law forbidding the crabs to climb a tree?"

The Samoan gave a mellow laugh and explained. "No. The law say that coco-nut palms must be protected and offer reward for all crabs the Samoans catch and bring in." The men later saw large parties of Samoans scratching the earth round the palms and putting dozens of little white grubs into tins.

The native asserted that the industries next in importance were cocoa and rubber. Fruit, too, is extensively

cultivated. Banana, pine-apple, and a fruit known to the troops as "mummy apple" are the most common. By the time Poulter had sucked up as much information as he could conveniently digest, the column had travelled some five miles. He had been riding his bicycle to a certain extent and had not noticed the distance. He now perceived that the platoon seemed to be falling off in pace and waited for them to come up.

Never was a transformation so marked. The troops who had started off so blithe and keen were stumbling along like drunken men. None of them was as yet in good condition, and the uphill climb, heavy accoutrements, ammunition and rifle had, in the intensity of the midday Samoan sun, taken full effect. They came on panting, limping, perspiring, the ranks yawning with gaps made by the men who had fallen out.

Poulter arranged to take his turn on foot, and a man limping badly was put on the bicycle. Poulter fell in beside Podger and was immediately treated to a monologue that convinced Poulter that for once his friend was really irritated.

"We've been handed a lemon," ejaculated Podger between the grunts. "Damn the swine, he's sure to be dead by the time we arrive—and if he isn't he deserves to be." Pause while negotiating a rise. "Why are we so deuced squeamish over one Hun? I thought we set out to kill them, and here we go sweating up some hundred and fifty miles of perpendicular incline to pay our respects."

They were crossing a stream where the bridge was being repaired. As they were scrambling up the bank on the other side a man caught hold of Podger to help himself along. Podger swayed, slid, and collapsed.

Down to the bottom of the bank he went, a sprawling bundle of rifle, haversack, Podger, and profanity.

He arose with the light of murder in his eye. It was a marvel to Poulter where his friend acquired the vocabulary and the staying power, when by all the rules he should have been winded. Not only did he use up all the currently accepted curses with great force and thoroughness, but invented many quaint and feeling conceits of his own on the spur of the moment. After he had been going well for some two minutes he dashed up the bank, arrived at the top after a desperate struggle, and fell an inert heap. A halt was called and not before it was high time. The men were done. It does not sound a very big thing to march six or seven miles; two months later they could have done it with ease; but considering their then condition, the intense heat, and the heavy pack, they had done as much as men could do. No individual man would have reached so far. Most of them were long since beyond the stage even of cursing. Every man limped. The new boots they were wearing were all badly made in the heels, and when they returned that evening the feet of the great majority were in a pitiable condition. One man, a man be it said who never grumbled during the whole march and who kept in the ranks all through, was sent back to New Zealand because of the damage that march did his heels. His boots were full of blood and he could hardly put his foot to the ground by evening.

After a considerable halt the platoon struggled on some distance farther. Just as they were finally breaking up and some fifteen men had collapsed by the way, the Samoan police hove in sight loping along at an easy pace that simply ate up the miles. The platoon commander called a halt hard by a fruit plantation, and

conferred with the chief of police. It was arranged that the police were to go on up to settle the riot while the platoon "remained in support." Such was the euphonious phrase used to cover the state of coma into which the platoon then went. For two hours thereafter scarcely a man stirred except to consult his watch or his water-bottle.

Meanwhile Poulter, who was the freshest of the party, having been on his bicycle a good part of the journey, went in quest of adventure along with the Samoan policeman who was left behind to give local information to the troops. The adventure they had together consisted in finding a grove of mummy apples.

The mummy apple-tree grows about ten feet high, and its leaves are eighteen inches in diameter on the end of a slender stalk. The fruit, not unlike small marrows in shape, cluster where the stalks of the top leaves grow out from the trunk. The ripe mummy apple is a beautiful golden yellow and the flesh of the fruit is a red-orange tint. The pips are black and very numerous. When green, the fruit makes excellent horse feed, and if cooked forms a table dish not unlike a vegetable marrow. Ripe, however, it is far the most delicious fruit on the island. The policeman picked several ripe apples and fed Poulter to repletion. Then between them they gathered a large quantity and returned to the platoon.

The men had had nothing for their midday meal beyond bully-beef, biscuits, and water; and to see them devour the luscious Samoan fruit was a sight for the gods. One or two men did not take to the fruit immediately, but the lightning rapidity with which the pile disappeared testified to the palatable flavour of the fruit and the condition of the men. A larger excursion brought Poulter and Podger (this time) to some Chinese

working in a pine-apple plantation. A little demonstration with the bayonet brought the coolies to their bearings, and they produced a big bunch of bananas. The carrying back of this hundred-and-fifty stalk was a work of some magnitude. The excursion occupied quite two hours.

They found the platoon drawn up ready for the homeward march. The policemen, it appeared, had reached the plantation, some three miles farther on, and at their appearance the Chinese in their hundreds, according to accounts, had fled from the Samoans in their tens. The police brought back two wretched-looking specimens of coolies as ringleaders, and the triumphant procession started back munching bananas. First twenty policemen, then two Chinamen, then fifty New Zealanders. The march back told heavily on the men. The Samoans set a great pace and the Colonials would not cry "hold." The stragglers were coming in the rest of the night. The great thing was for the platoon to get the impression abroad that they themselves captured these Chinamen. They succeeded, but at what a price! Ever afterwards they referred to that day as "Black Monday."

Socially the German in Samoa "did himself well," as the expressive slang phrase put it. He seemed more to overdrink than to overwork. He owned excellent horseflesh, and each day saw him in at the taverns. The advance part of the New Zealander's convoy consisted of two ships. The Germans took these for the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, which they had been expecting for some time. Preparations were immediately made for a dance in the Cinema-house. The preparations mainly consisted in the storing of a cupboard in the building with Pilsener, whisky, champagne, and liqueurs in large quantities. All the Germans were drinking champagne

although it was still early in the morning, and the news of the true nature of the ships they were welcoming so palsied their enterprise that they forgot the "preparations" they had made in the Picture-house. Consequently, when the Wellington Regiment was quartered in that building a small group of men happened on the cupboard. That cupboard, carefully guarded, lasted them several weeks. It was a constant source of wonder to the troops how the lucky party managed to keep so fresh on water. But now they have the secret.

Strange to say the Germans did not show any great animosity to the troops. After a day or so they fraternized together in the taverns and sometimes even got tipsy in each other's arms. There were exceptions, of course. One man, a Cockney Tommy, reservist of the regulars, nicknamed Caruso because of his proclivity for singing in his cups, made it a duty to thrash at least one German a week. As his wrists were always swollen and his face was never so, we gather he must have been in the main successful in his little affairs. He had a minor trial during some weeks in the fact that the doctors removed all his teeth. He was unable to eat; but he thrived on whisky obtained by threats of personal violence from old Shick (one of the tavern-keepers), and he eased his mind during this crisis of his career by increasing his victims to two and even three in seven days. His particular aversion was a certain Count Karl, late Death's-head Lancers, who wore a ring that he boasted the Kaiser had given him. Caruso had the pleasure of eventually cornering this distinguished Hun and pummelling him for half an hour. Let it be said that Caruso was a very small man and fought fair. No German ever lodged an official complaint, and so we may presume they were well satisfied with his *modus operandi*.

For the most part, however, the Germans got on very well with the troops and the authorities. The Colonel showed great clemency towards them and gave them full citizen rights. In some cases they disobeyed the trifling restrictions put upon them, and were court-martialled and deported to New Zealand. They were not allowed to leave the island, and had to be in their own houses by 10 P.M. They often broke the 10 P.M. rule, and were consequently often in trouble. They gave their parole not to leave the island. One man, reputed to be the schoolmaster, broke his word and escaped to a neighbouring island. He was caught and brought back.

At the interview which followed the Colonel asked him why he did not keep his promise.

"I did not give my word."

"Yes you did: you promised not to leave the place."

"Show me the writing."

"The writing? There was no writing. I had your parole."

"It is not binding unless written."

This was too much for the Colonel. His blood rose and he roared out: "Is that your German honour. You must write a promise?"

"Yes."

"Well," said the Colonel, "can you tell me any reason why I should not shoot you at sunrise?"

"No, I cannot," said the German, never flinching.

"That's the best answer you've given me yet."

He was not shot, but interned in New Zealand.

Another incident that is told of a German planter, is that when the troops were first encamped in the town and had placed sentries on the road, this man boasted he would defy the sentry. He rode through at a gallop on his horse. The sentry challenged, but did not fire,

apparently thinking it was a runaway. But an officer who was close diagnosed the case differently, drew his revolver and rapped off a few rounds into the air. Friend Fritz pulled up instantly and spent a night or so in the guardroom thinking up a defence.

The greater number of Germans settled down under the new rule and contented themselves with fierce arguments on the subject of the war. They of course believed that Germany would win, but they were also convinced that they could never have reached Paris as they attempted at first. When it was pointed out that the Germans were at one time about fifteen miles, so the papers said, from Paris, they answered that that was only some young cavalry leaders who had ventured too far. They thought the violation of Belgium totally insufficient ground for England's "treachery," and considered that Britain had come in to obtain Germany's colonies—a very pointed argument under the circumstances. The troops informed the Germans that they needn't worry about that—Britain would take and hold 'em all right—to which the Germans replied that *that* would be decided in the Treaty of Paris, 1915.

CHAPTER VII

THE SAMOAN

Reference has already been made to the fact that Samoa is regarded as a land of romance. There has been an attempt to describe in a general way the country and its inhabitants. A thorough appreciation, however, of this sun- and music-loving people and the beauty of their island can be had only by living amongst them. It is a hopeless task to nail down in words such an elusive impression as a smell or a sound. Which one of us can describe the perfume of a violet! So in a place like Samoa, where half the charm lies in the very unfamiliarity of its smells and sounds, and where even familiar sensations take on a new significance in their new surroundings, the attempt to describe the peculiar atmosphere of the place is rendered doubly difficult. In an island where a heavy odour of green foliage pervades the air, where there is laughter at the bathing-pool, and mellow harmonies at the meeting-place; in an island where at every turn the eye meets the glint of the sun on warm placid waters or travels languorously along the graceful lines of magnificent brown men and women —there is so much that is original, fairylike, fantastic, that while the fancy leaps with joy at each fresh experience, the intellect utterly fails to define in what lies the charm.

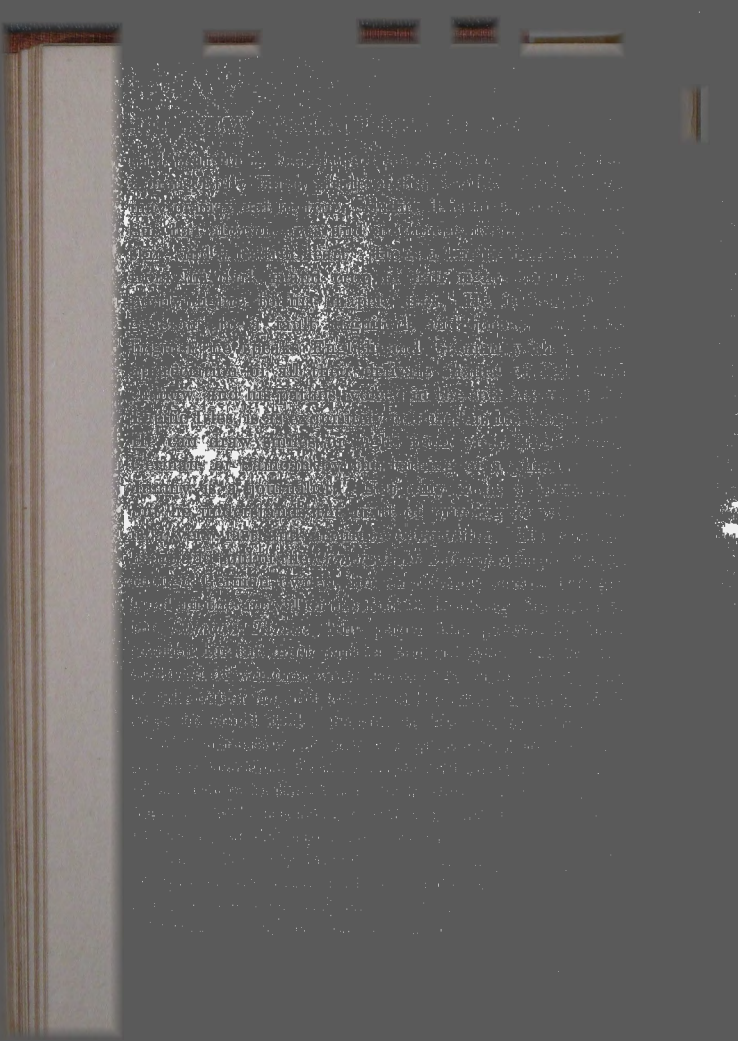
Perhaps some help to the conveying of a conception

of the atmosphere that clings round Samoa may be obtained in a description of a few of the individual natives, their aptitudes, education, and outlook. This will entail many considerable digressions.

No book on Samoa would be complete without mentioning James Ah Sue. Those who were privileged to know him would undoubtedly affirm that he was the most interesting character of the island. Jimmy's history takes us back to Bully Haze, the pirate of the Pacific.

In Akaroa, New Zealand, there are still people who remember that bold adventurer, thief, blackbirder, pirate, call him what you may. Akaroa is the French settlement in the South Island. The British Flag was planted in New Zealand but thirty-six hours before the French admiral arrived to claim the land in the name of France. The descendants of the settlers he left behind still live there in Akaroa, and the visitor sees to-day the French names and signs in the streets. Akaroa knew Bully Haze well. The story is told that if he did not have a ship, he took one. Akaroa remembers him because her harbour was the scene of one of these depredations. His plan was usually, however, to go into partnership on some harmless trading expedition with a man who owned a ship. The luckless owner was unaccountably detained in some little known island (the technical name for this process is "marooning"), and Bully Haze sailed off on a much less innocent expedition. He spent most of his time running from British frigates and "blackbirding" in the Pacific. Doubtless Samoans in the history of the island have been kidnapped and turned into £ s. d. rattling in the pocket of our hero.

Haze's right-hand man was a Chinaman, so the story runs, and the right-hand man's wife was a half-caste Samoan. Here we come back to James Ah Sue. It is



kava bowls were his favourite souvenirs, though as a devotee of either Mars or Bacchus, Jimmy was decidedly lukewarm. Affection for the British and his family seemed the mainspring of his actions. The writer has in his possession a small tortoise-shell brooch presented by Jimmy to the writer to take home to his small sister, of whom Jimmy had heard a good deal. The brooch was inscribed "Peta" (the Samoan version of Peter), and had belonged to Jimmy's baby boy who died. Jimmy was deeply affected whenever he spoke of that little boy of his. Yes, the troops were all decided that Jimmy was a white man.

Well, when the advance party of the New Zealanders left Samoa after six months on the island, Jimmy, to use his own phrase, was very "cut up." He had made many close friends among the troops, and he was quite disposed to make friends with the new-comers. These folk took over the *Pullthro'*, issued further editions and, referring to the somewhat facetious element that had run through its former numbers, remarked in the editorial that whereas the former editions had been milk for babes, the future ones would be meat for men. Jimmy's loyal heart was roused. He admired sincerely a goodly number of contributions and contributors of the old *Pullthro'*. So the *Samoan Times* replied in a very vigorous fashion. While not wishing to detract from the merits of the new management of the *Pullthro'*, the *Samoan Times* named all Jimmy's heroes of the old days and challenged the new-comers to produce one even half so good as the least of these.

Jimmy, indeed, was but a specimen of the British Mission-boy type grown to maturity. A fine type they are. The Missions in Samoa have done very good work in the last ninety years. As a general rule in

native islands, Missions are but the advance party of our national colonizing system. The missionaries themselves are doubtless genuine enough, but John Bull himself is a hypocrite in the matter. He has persuaded himself that in sending out evangelists to the ends of the earth he is but doing what his religion demands. It is in reality one for his God and two for himself. When the missionaries have tamed the savage, or stirred him up to rebellion—it is immaterial for John—the next event in the island's history is the advent of a cruiser; and there is another Crown colony or protectorate to colour the map pinker still. We first introduce the doctrine of faith, hope, and charity, and then, in the name of civilization, we let loose the world, the flesh, and the devil on the unsophisticated savage. In the end he finds himself robbed of his land, strongly addicted to whisky, possessed of some very mixed theories of a hereafter, and a marked tendency to tuberculosis.

In Samoa, however, the missionaries have been left a freer hand, in that John Bull's State system has been excluded and his colonists discouraged. The Missions, then, are British. The Government has been at one time German-British-American, and latterly, before the war, purely German. There were only some seven hundred Germans all told in the islands, hardly sufficient to have any marked effect on the native habits and character. The Mission work has had an open field. The system has been to take the brightest boy from each village in the two German islands, and keep him at school for a couple of years or so. He was taught arithmetic, English language, history, and ideals, together with boat-building, agriculture, and some other crafts. When he returned to the village he invariably became, if not the head man, at least the head man's

right-hand man. He Pooh-Bah'd the place. If the troops came through he welcomed them in excellent English, saw to their comfort, and entertained them. By the work of almost a century, the Missions had built up a pro-British feeling among a large section of the natives that the Germans early realized they could not shake. The Germans then turned against the Missions and found they were turning against the most powerful moral factor in Samoa. This strife always went on in a desultory way, but a final issue was never consummated. Whatever may seem to have been the sequel to the Mission work in other parts of the globe, we can undoubtedly say that the unfeigned delight of the Samoan at the arrival of the New Zealanders was due to the steady work of the missionaries.

One of the secrets of the Mission's hold on the natives is music. The most outstanding characteristic of the Samoan is his gift of harmony. On one occasion Stumpy and Poulter had occasion to walk from the Malifa camp into Apia. They were not going together intentionally, but Poulter overtook Stumpy on the road to the beach.

As they met Stumpy remarked, "Clinkin' mornin', aint it, scout?"

"The remark would certainly be called for in Wellington," said Poulter, "but here it strikes me as thrashing the obvious."

Stumpy scratched his head. He had often in conversation with the 7th Platoon lost his bearings somewhat, and here was a case in point. He decided to try another tack in the hope of getting into water a little shallower.

"Where yer goin'?"

"I was going for a walk by the shore along to the post office. Are you going that way?"

"Yep," said Stumpy. He felt more at home now,

and lengthened his stride to that of his companion. Stumpy continued:

"Wot's to-day?"

"To-day I fancy is the Sabbath."

"Garn, this isn't Sunday, is it? I thought it was Friday."

"I often lose count myself," said Poulter. "One day is very much the same as another here. But those church bells are a pretty good guide."

"Blime!" said Stumpy. It was an obvious enough deduction. His train of thought ran on.

"Them niggers'll sing till the crack o' doom."

"They're very fond of music and so far as I have heard their voices are not unmusical. On the slightest provocation——"

"They'll squat down on their haunches an' sing beautiful," added Stumpy. "I heard 'em lars' night. Me an' Caruso was up pinchin' pine-apples, an' we come on a crowd singin' 'ymns and 'Tofa ma Faleni' or wotever it's called, an' all sorts."

"Yes" said Poulter. "The other day when I was out at Malua at the Mission printing-house I heard the Mission band. It is a brass band of about forty instruments, and Mr. Griffin in charge of the printing-house is the conductor. He has taught them to read music and at any time of day or night you can hear them practising. They are very quick in these matters, have a perfect ear, and their technique rapidly improves. Griffin is very keen, and when I heard the band playing together it was as good a performance as I have heard ontside of professionals."

"You don't say," said Stumpy profoundly. "There's no doubt the beggars 'ave got the semiquaver bug pretty bad."

The two had strolled along towards the church on the foreshore. Suddenly in the service a big organ boomed forth. The soldiers stopped and listened.

"Blime! that's a devil of a big organ," said Stumpy.

Poulter did not answer at once. Then he whispered, "Stumpy, let's get closer—I don't believe that's an organ at all."

Wonderful is the power of music. These two young men, so different in temperament and training, whose only thing in common was the fact that they had never voluntarily been inside a church for years, found themselves moving with reverential footsteps to the open door whence the pæan of sound issued.

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord.

That was the hymn they heard, though the words were in Samoan.

"Stumpy, that's no organ. That's the men's voices. There's not even an organ leading them!"

Like a mighty diapason rolled forth the melody. Countless dusky throats, deep and vibrant, were singing the bass of the grand old hymn. Over against them stood the women, their sweet voices pouring out in the joy of life the air of the treble. The other parts were there. Tenor, alto, nay, more than these. The Samoan harmonizes in eight parts all the simpler hymns. At the open door, a little to one side, the two stood enraptured. Never was there sound to compel the human heart like the sound of the human voice. And such voices! None of your flat-chested, wheezy, sparsely scattered congregations of the Old World, scarcely opening their mouths to emit the sound they seem ashamed of. This was a congregation of men and

women whose mighty lungs heaved together in the densely packed church, a congregation that sang for the love of singing. No wonder in the distance it sounded like the rolling of some mighty organ! That bass—was there ever anything like the depth and volume of that bass?—a sound that had in it the vastness of the ocean and the echo of eternity. We read of the emotion of the sublime, although we seldom meet it in real life. But that Sunday morning, the two soldiers, illegally absent from church parade at the camp, were visited with an experience the memory of which they will carry to the grave.

"I myself," said Poulter afterwards, "broke down like a fool; and even on Stumpy's flint-like lips there was a something very, very like a quiver."

Stumpy accompanied Poulter as far as the post office and then expressed a desire to go up to see some natives he said he knew. Poulter was a little dubious as to the propriety of this adventure. He knew from experience that Stumpy had a quaint assortment of friends. There was, too, an order against the troops frequenting the native huts. Certainly this last thought did not have much weight. General orders are rather abstract guides against concrete temptation. Stumpy, possibly guessing what was passing in his companion's mind, remarked:

"The cove's a chief wot I'm goin' ter see."

"Who is he?"

"Tamassisse."

Tamassisse! That settled it. Poulter would go to see him. Tamassisse was a very great chief of pronounced German sentiments. As one walked up the Vailima road to Stevenson's house, roughly speaking all the territory on one's right belonged to Tamassisse's

people and on the left to his rival the British *protégé* Malietua.

The two went their way up the road to the Wireless Station, past the 3rd Regiment camp to Tamassisse's village. It is a sizable township and towards the centre is the chieftain's palace. The palace is a fine sample of the Samoan house, well raised from the ground, spacious and airy, with a high vaulted roof and an abundance of comfortable mats. At one end the visitor is a little surprised to see a large and striking portrait of Wilhelm II of Prussia with a pompous autograph scrawled across the corner. The two men in khaki approached the hut and addressed themselves to Tamassisse's (only) wife. This was less from etiquette than necessity, for Tamassisse knows no English. The chief himself is a very fat man indeed, and sat with the dignity becoming a chieftain.

Stumpy remarked, "We come in, eh?"

The interpreter-wife-chamberlain signified assent.

"Mornin', Tamassisse," said Stumpy.

The chief nodded.

"Why you no go church 'smornin', eh?"

Tamassisse took no notice. Stumpy and Poulter sat down on a mat. At a sign from the chief a native brought in a green coco-nut by way of refreshment. Each of the men, however, had long since had experience of the effect of green coco-nut juice taken without any exercise to follow, and his draught was no deeper than politeness required.

Stumpy's eye wandered round the hut.

"She your wife?" said he, pointing to that household official. Tamassisse made no sign.

"Yes, I wife," came from the lady.

"And very nice you'd find it," said Stumpy.

At this point conversation flagged and the two were getting restless. Suddenly Poulter noticed the Kaiser's portrait.

"Where you get that?" said he.

The dusky queen replied that they had got it in Germany. This point required a little clearing up. Had Tamassisse actually been in Germany? It was answered emphatically in the affirmative and Tamassisse, appealed to in Samoan by his wife, vigorously nodded his head.

"The Kaiser give him dat. He see the Kaiser. Haved big long talk with him."

Here then was the secret of Tamassisse's loyalty to Germany. The Germans had taken the chief to Berlin to interview the Emperor and the photograph had been one of the many cunning devices which that potentate had adopted to bind Samoa, in the portly form of Tamassisse, for ever to his chariot wheels. Still, as Tamassisse knew no more German than English, and the Kaiser might be safely presumed to know no Samoan, Poulter was of opinion that their little *tête-à-tête* might have lacked some of the essential characteristics of a friendly chat. This further point needed clearing up.

"The Kaiser, he talk Samoan to Tamassisse?"

"No, me go too," said his wife. "Me go and talk German to Kaiser, Samoan to Tamassisse."

Stumpy saw the light.

"She is wot they call an 'interrupter,' ain't it?"

"A very good name in many cases," assented the other.

"Where did you see the Kaiser?"

"In big room; many soldiers; plenty shine."

"What was the Kaiser like?"

"Him very big soldier. Bigger'n Tamassisse. Bigger'n you. Bigger'n Colonel."

A man who was bigger than the Colonel must have made an impression.

"How big?"

The Samoan woman rose, and going to the pole that rose up in the centre of the hut pointed to a knot in the wood some eight feet six inches from the ground.

"The Kaiser he big to there."

At first the two thought she must be joking, but persistent inquiry led them to understand that it was her literal conviction that the Kaiser was a giant. Probably in the interview he had stood on a dais to impress the simple natives, and adopted a theatrical grouping of his Staff to the same end. Suffice it to say that the Samoan and his wife were firmly convinced that the Kaiser was the biggest and greatest man on earth. Tamassisse, adjured by his wife, lent the weight of his mighty nod as verification of her assertions. No wonder then that Tamassisse's politics were emphatically coloured.

"What does he say about the war?" asked Poulter. The question was interpreted and the answer came back:

"Tamassisse say he think big mix up."

"Yes, but who is going to win?"

"Tamassisse say papers all tell lies. No man know, may be German, may be English."

With this masterly piece of diplomatic fencing the two had to be content. After making quite certain that there was not likely to be a meal for some time, they paid a casual adieu to the potentate and his lesser half and strolled back to camp.

So far as the troops could ascertain the Samoan is a monogamist. True, the bonds of matrimony sit lightly upon him; his mate is easily changed; but he has her and holds her while the arrangement suits and then there is a quiet domestic revolution. In this connexion

we beg leave to quote a finished little contribution which appeared in the pages of the *Pullthro'*.

"THE SAMOAN LOVABLE

"We met one night on the water-front, he, whom I shall call my lovable pagan, and I. His merry eyes and charming personality at once attracted me and we conversed. I told him of New Zealand, of trains, of electric cars, of theatres, of various modes and arts of our civilization. And he told me of Samoa, of his country and home, of his ideas of things in general. He spoke good English, touched here and there with an Americanism, and I must add with a fair number of unnecessary adjectives, which, however, did not seem objectionable modified as they were by his smooth articulations. Work! Well, he had worked for two years in Fiji and did not like it. But then, in Fiji one had to work to live. It was not like Samoa, where he could work when he liked, and still have plenty to eat and drink. Ah, no, Samoa was the place for him, and his teeth shone, as he said with an infectious laugh: 'There's no place like home.' He spoke cheerfully, but I felt a sudden pang as I thought that Samoa was not 'home' for every one. Was he a Christian? Again that laugh. What was the use of being a Christian anyhow? Why, a Christian had but one wife, while he —well, he was yet under thirty and he had six already! Surprised? What was there to be surprised about? How could a man get a good wife unless he tried several? None of the first five had reigned for long, but he now had the best little wife in Samoa. She always kept the house clean and always had fresh clothes ready for him. In fact, she was as near perfect as could be hoped. How long had he been married to

her? Well, three years now. Married in the church? Once more that merry laugh. No, not in the church, but now, maybe, he would marry under a British official. His wife's people (from whom he had *stolen* her in the first place) had plenty of money, so why not? No, the Germans were no good in sports, no fun for the natives; but the British, ah, he could remember the old days, when a man-of-war visited the island, then there were races, swimming and boating, and all the natives rejoiced. The English gave the natives a chance to rise; but their enemies, pah, they tried to keep them down. So he talked, on and on, always bright, always entertaining, never uninteresting.

"And such was my pagan—my Samoan lovable."

It appears Samoa has two languages in daily use. They are not dialects spoken in different parts of the islands, but a dual language spoken by everybody. Of course the grammar and syntax are identical. The difference is one of vocabulary. The one language is the chiefly language, used by the vulgar when they talk to the patricians. The other is the common language, used by the commoners and the patricians when they are talking to people of their own status. It is a quaint mixture of bad form and bad luck for a commoner to use the common language to a chief. His fellow-commoner would call him a pig. An instance of the difference between the two vocabularies would be the Samoan for "knife." There is no such word in the chiefly language. It is bad luck to use such a term before a chief. The idea is paraphrased and the dangerous notion of the "knife" removed in the process. The phrase used in the chiefly language would be translated as "that round thing."

The Samoan's diet is in the main vegetarian. He prepares a peculiarly appetising dish of coco-nut, taro, and onion. He eats a great deal of baked breadfruit and banana. He is partial to meat when he can get it, and he was very willing to exchange weapons and such-like with the troops for tinned beef.

His drink is water, coco-nut juice, and kava. Kava is the root of the pepper plant. The natives originally prepared it with great ceremony by mastication, but nowadays the rites are curtailed and the root is ground between stones. It is mixed with water and makes a decidedly uninviting beverage. Some of the men, however, affected a liking for it. Although it does not seem to deaden to any extent the mental faculties, its effect on the equilibrium is rather pronounced. As Stumpy put it, "You go in the legs."

The general temperament of the Samoan is peaceable and happy. Occasionally he has a war. Stevenson relates how in his day a pretender to Malietua's throne was beaten and exiled. In fact, during the stay of the Colonials, hostilities were commenced. It appeared that Tamassisse's big white stallion kicked one of Malietua's sons. The aggrieved scion of royalty retaliated on the horse. This was sacrilegious in the eyes of the native holding the horse, and he took up the cudgels for the animal. The victim of these last reprisals told his story to his tribe and they regarded the beating of the chieftain's son as a *casus belli*.

From this point on the story has two versions, that of the Aucklands and that of the Wellingtons. The Aucklands were away on a route march out towards the Mission printing-station, and were enjoying a bathe in the early afternoon, when an orderly, mounted on a bicycle, came out at great speed to call them back.

The natives had risen, and a civil war was in progress. The regiment came tearing back to Apia to find that there had been a desperate battle waging for two hours —but that up to date no one was hurt!

The Wellington regiment tells a different story. News of the impending hostilities having got about, the O.C. the regiment formed his men into a wide screen and threw them out into the jungle to prevent Malietua's men coming through to the other side of the town, where lay Tamassisse's village. The Colonel seems to have ascribed far more guile to the innocent Samoan than he in fact possessed. The natives had no intention of coming through the bush. There was a road and they would use it. Not in such large numbers as would attract attention, but in ones and twos they would saunter past the water-front picket carrying their huge banana-knives, and when massed together lower down the road they would take justice into their own hands.

The sentry at the water-front picket noticed a number of armed natives passing his post, and asked one or two where they were going. They answered casually that they were going into the town. A few were let past and then the sentry had some misgivings. So he ordered the next one or two to wait. All right! The sentry he say wait. They wait.

Along they came in ever-increasing numbers, but still with no demonstration of violence. The sentry he still say wait, and they wait. Tamassisse could wait too. To-morrow—yes, to-morrow maybe sentry let them pass.

And so these hundreds of full-blooded Samoans, on murder bent, stood there, knives in hand, at the bidding of that sentry.

By and by the sentry he say go away. All right, they go away. The sentry he say go home! All right,

they go home. Maybe to-morrow the sentry let them pass.

By to-morrow the quarrel was forgotten. Such is the simple Samoan—a child in everything; his infantile anger, a storm in a teacup, is turned by the word of a single white man, who to him is an adult. And in a few hours he had subsided and was ready to grin and bathe, eat and sleep, as though such a notion as killing his fellows had never entered his head.

It was undoubtedly this childlike turn of mind that appealed so strongly to Robert Louis Stevenson. Evidence of the love the natives bore him, and he them, is still to be had on all sides in Samoa. Perhaps it would be best to relate a few of the anecdotes which men in Samoa tell of Stevenson in a separate chapter. Let us call it "Echoes of R. L. S."

CHAPTER VIII

ECHOES OF R. L. S.

WHEN the New Zealanders arrived at Samoa, Vailima House, the lovely homestead that Stevenson had built on the heights above the harbour, was used by the Germans as the Governor's residence. A certain Dr. Schultz was installed there, but after the occupation his tenure was short. He went off to a life of harmless inactivity interned in New Zealand. It was thought politic to make the radical change of government as little obtrusive as possible, and so when Colonel Logan dropped quietly into Dr. Schultz's shoes, he dropped equally quietly into Dr. Schultz's house. This move we say was dictated by policy. It would dislocate matters if the natives did not know where to search for the Governor. Besides, Vailima was the best house in Samoa. Yum, Yum!

Philosophically as the Samoans looked on at the upheaval in their midst, it was nevertheless deemed advisable to mount a guard over the Residence. Although the guard supplied only one sentry by day and two by night, Vailima was so far distant from the camps on the shore that the guard mounted for three days at a time. Hence it was a strong enough party to be under the charge of an officer. The main duty of the sentry, so far as could be detected with the naked eye, was to turn out the guard when the Colonel-Administrator

drove up (in a Ford), and as the Colonel early decided his guard should pay him no compliments, the sentry was often puzzled to know what he was there for at all.

At the end of the first week on the island, Podger, Poulter and Co. were ordered to prepare for guard duty at Vailima. The party was fourteen strong inclusive of the corporal and sergeant, and their platoon commander was the officer of the guard. Their kit and rations were to go up by the transport wagons and they were to march the four or five miles to the Residence. All the men of this particular party were drawn from the 7th Platoon, and as this was composed to a large extent of undergraduates, they were comparatively well conversant with the associations of Vailima and the history of Stevenson.

"I little dreamt when I read 'The Vailima Letters,'" said Poulter, "that I would do guard over the very place where they were penned."

"My recollection of them is pretty hazy," answered Brenson. "If they had but had the decency to let us know that Samoa was our destination, we might have fetched a few of R. L. S.'s books along."

"I take it you think his works would be unobtainable here," Poulter went on as they marched at ease up the Vailima road, "on the 'no one is prophet' principle."

"I do rather think they would have a restricted sale in the island. Shakespeare and Lloyd George are the only English-speaking word merchants the Boches patronize, and I don't see the Samoans consumed with a passion for poor old Steve. As for the British here, they either have copies or are the sort that would never buy them. No, I don't think we'll set up a bookshop with R. L. S. in the front window!"

"But Steve in his day was very popular with the natives?"

"Popular! Heaven bless you, he was *the* man on the island. They worshipped him like a god. Why, the very road we are treading is said to have been originally made to Vailima by Malietua (the father) out of sheer love for R. L. S."

"Who told you that?"

"The American Consul."

"Where the deuce did you meet the American Consul?"

"I met him round at Macdonald's, to whom I had an introduction. He told me a lot of stuff about Robert Louis."

"Interesting?"

"You bet."

"Did I understand you to say," said Poulter after a pause, "that this very road was made by the natives for Steve?"

"I said it. Whether you understand it or not I am not answerable for. Don't you believe it?"

"Well——" said Poulter, hesitatingly. "Remember the authority."

"Oh, Mac said so too," said Brenson. "And a darn good road it is. Phew, but it's getting steep!"

This last remark was accompanied by a sweep of his hand across his forehead. "That's a good half-pint of coco-nut juice gone west," said Brenson, as he wiped his hand on his shirt. The incline was not really very steep, but the accoutrements and ammunition were heavy and a halt was soon called. They sat themselves down at the side of the road and commenced opening coco-nuts. Their bayonets were useful instruments for this purpose, as their gapped and tarnished condition would

testify. As the march was resumed, Brenson discovered he had left his jack-knife, given him by a veteran of the Boer War, in the glade where they had been drinking the coco-nut milk.

"Never mind! Perhaps you'll get it on the way back," suggested Podger.

"The literary satiety you will feel on living in Vailima should compensate for a jack-knife," said Poulter. "Anyway the blessed thing wouldn't cut gossamer."

"It would cut tobacco, though," said Brenson, highly annoyed. All were in a bath of perspiration when they arrived at the corner where the 200-yard avenue turns off the main road up to the Residence; and even Brenson's annoyance gave way to curiosity as that house, perhaps as famous as any in literature, came into view. The entrance gate is a two-posted affair of substantial build, and through it the drive runs in a gentle curve to the right, leading to the main door of Vailima House. The building is two-storied, with an imposing staircase running up from the entrance hall. It is by far the biggest house in Samoa, and Stevenson managed to avoid that irritating squareness of build that one finds in European houses in the East—a style of architecture that presents to the eye bare whitewashed walls and yellow shutters and is associated with odours of a very marked character. Quite where the difference lies, it was hard to say; for Vailima *is* square in build, and *has* shutters; but it is built of wood, it is not white-washed, and there is no Eastern smell. Then, too, the aspect is lightened by the big open-air dance hall, as the men called it, to the extreme right of the building as you enter by the gate. This adjunct is quite thirty feet by thirty square and is open at the sides. It was used as the guardroom. As soon as the formalities of

changing guard had been observed, the new guard flung themselves down on the floor of their quarters to cool down after the climb. Poulter secured a rocking-chair and throwing off his accoutrements and opening his shirt-front, rocked vigorously to create a breeze. Then a native arrived with a tin bath full of limes and water, and the guard consumed long draughts of the delightful drink.

There is a sort of convention in the army that a guard stays in the guardroom. The officer in charge of the guard had left his men prostrate on the floor and had for some time been telling fish-tales to the officer of the old guard, when he suddenly discovered that his men were all off exploring Vailima grounds. He thereupon shouted for his guard to "turn out." The summons was not obeyed instantly, as men had to collect from the orchard, the vegetable garden, the laundry, the kitchen, and the grounds in rear of the building. When, however, they had scrambled into their equipment—which they had no right to have taken off—and formed up outside the guardroom, they were well strafed and told that only two men at a time were to be allowed out of their quarters. So they collected in the guard-room and compared notes as to what they had seen. What met the eye from their point of vantage was, in the immediate neighbourhood, sizable lawns carefully laid out and subdivided by hedges; in the distance to the front, the jungle sloping down to the sea, and to the flanks and rear, jungle sloping up to the high lands. One man supplied the further information that behind that hedge in the front of the building was a vegetable garden adorned by a scarecrow. Another said that behind the bamboo on the left was a stream, the banks of which were planted with European fruit-trees.

Another said that there were two Chinese cooks in the kitchen, and a fourth averred that there was a brace of pretty Samoan girls in the laundry. Things seemed to be looking up all round.

After a while the officer of the guard came in and called for volunteers for a "rather unpleasant fatigue duty." Brenson and Poulter immediately volunteered. The officer then informed the remainder of his men that the fatigue in question consisted of finding the bathing-place that Stevenson had built, and having found the place, of testing its qualities!

They had not far to go. Down past the bamboo clump one could hear a cascade falling. Their search took them in the direction of the splash of the water, and they travelled along a cool green path through the bush in the gulley. This path eventually stopped at the bathing-place.

"No one but a nature-lover like R. L. S. would ever have got this place up as it is," remarked Poulter.

"Some engineering here, too," quoth Brenson. "I think the lighthouse blood in his veins was responsible for that massive dam there."

It appeared that Stevenson had availed himself of a sizable cascade some fifteen feet high, falling into a narrow part of the gorge, to build him as fair an elfin pool as man could wish. It was not very large—about twenty-five feet by fifteen; but the bottom was concreted and shelved gradually from the deep end at the dam up to the waterfall. In fact the water was falling on the concrete as the pool shallowed off to nothing. It was possible to swim fast towards the top and beach oneself high and dry on the slippery concrete. Then you worked along sideways till you got under the cataract in the corner and were whisked off down the incline

again into the deep end by the force of the water on your back.

"This is better than a kick in the eye," remarked Poulter, as he went down the chute for the tenth time. "Home was never like this!"

"Just as well it wasn't or I'd never have gone to school," answered Brenson.

"You've yet to produce evidence that you did, anyway."

"Well, at any rate, I've read 'The Vailima Letters.'"

"Do you remember any mention of this pool?"

"No, my principal recollection of them is that Steve spent most of his time quelling riots and playing the flageolet."

"With occasional bursts of superb prose and malarial fever."

"By way of relaxation. He would have done better to come down here. Whoof!" said Brenson, as he shot down the ledge into the middle of Poulter's back.

Hereon ensued a fight, silent and determined. As each was in the last stage of the drowning agony their officer intervened, and after a brief interval for resuscitation and dressing, the party returned to the guard-room (*via* the orchard higher up the valley).

"Well, boys," said Brenson, as they rejoined the guard, "we've seen a concrete illustration of the fertile brain of the immortal Steve."

"So concrete, indeed, as to take all the skin off," said Poulter ruefully. "I wonder what Stevey did to repair the epidermic damage caused by sliding over that concrete."

"Played his reed no doubt."

"Well, he'd have to stand up to it. I'll defy anybody to sit down after tasting the joys of the bathing-pool."

Permission was later granted by the Colonel for the guard to take exercise on the lawn at the back. A man found at this juncture a long pole with a hook on the end. A Samoan showed him its use. It was to hook down the breadfruit from the lofty trees on which it grew. It was not long before every man had down a breadfruit and was examining it. It is a weighty affair, four inches in diameter and spherical in shape. A little trimming with a penknife and one had an excellent bowl to hand. A lime did good service as a kitty. Brenson soon had a rink formed, and was initiating his colleagues into the ancient and honourable game of bowls.

"No, bowl under-arm, you idiot. You're not playing cricket."

"Like they bowl at a girls' school?"

"Perhaps! *I've* never been to one. Along the ground, please. Good shot! Now you come in round here. Gently, gently! You don't want to knock down Vailima House at this early stage. That's better."

And so forth. The men had always imagined that bowls was a game for greybeards and Elizabethan admirals. They owe it to Vailima House that they now know that it is a very fine, nay exciting, game if played with breadfruit and limes. Several times in the course of the next three days the Administrator was half convinced that an insurrection had broken out on his back lawn; but he was reassured on looking out of his window in the discovery that the din merely arose from the protectors of his person discussing whether distance to the bowls should be measured from the long end or the centre of kitty, the elongated lime.

At night they mounted double sentries. Brenson and Poulter were on together. They met frequently in the course of their wanderings round the buildings.

"What did Steve do to keep away the mosquitoes, O thou learned in the lore of Vailima?"

"Smoked and used mosquito netting," answered Brenson glibly.

"Well, we mustn't smoke, and I didn't include any netting in my kit. Besides, these damned insects would defy any such measure. They're the best part of an inch long."

"A man of his temperament would probably keep 'em as pets," suggested Brenson. "I should think such large ones would be very intelligent."

"Make 'em sit in a row and buzz in harmony!" sneered Poulter.

"Why not? Performing fleas are a *fait accompli*, so why not musical mosquitoes?"

"Well, he'd have a great number to choose from. I never saw them before in such numbers and magnitude. They're eating me alive."

"I fancy they prefer their victims alive. They are not carrion insects."

"I can't sustain this impossibly clever conversation," said Poulter, moving off.

"Sustain," snorted Brenson, "I was wondering when you were going to begin."

It was quite enough to make one nervy—the buzz of the merciless insects, the spectre-like Samoans as they flitted about the grounds, only their white lava-lavas being visible, and the everlasting native drumming that went on for the best part of the night. The drum consists of two tubs shaped something like rude canoes. One tub is always smaller than its fellow and the sound it gives out is of a higher pitch. The stalwart Samoans, beating the drums with stumpy clubs, display great ingenuity in the working out of complicated rhythms.

The occasion *par excellence* for the drumming is when tribal friction is rife, or when a council is summoned; but the Samoan takes much smaller occasions as ample justification for a tattoo. Apparently if a Samoan gentleman feels disinclined to sleep he strolls to the drum hut to soothe his nerves. This is the only explanation the troops could find for the fact that the major part of the noise is made at night. As some native ragpicker stands there playing the devil's tattoo with variations, the sound, wafted up on the evening breeze, has a very weird effect. It is suggestive of a great host steadily advancing and then receding. It was published as a fact among the troops that one sentry became so excited by these alarming sounds that he fancied he heard in the solitude of the early hours a rustling as of numberless disaffected Samoans advancing in the bush near at hand. In a loud voice he challenged "Halt!" The rustling ceased and then commenced again stealthily. The drums in the distance died away seemingly at his command. Then they grew loud and the rustle was more pronounced.

"Halt!" rang out again the sentry's challenge. On came the unseen, ever more menacing, while the drums throbbed fiercely.

"Halt or I fire." The sentry was in deadly earnest. His hands trembled as he ripped open his cut-off and shoved home the bolt.

Drub, drub, drub! rolled the drums louder and louder, and the advancing host seemed all about him. He could see the bushes move.

Well, on their own heads be it. His was to defend the Governor and alone he would do it.

Bang! rattle, rattle, bang! roared the rifle as he emptied his magazine into the bushes.

The guard turned out as never guard turned out before. In their scanty attire they rushed in support of their sentry, and by their united efforts the enemy was laid low. Whoever they might be, they were either gone or dead. The drumming stopped. However, it was not deemed advisable to go into the bushes till dawn. The foe might rally. Another half-hour and then they would make a search.

At last dawn breaks and with the first pale streak the guard, bitten mercilessly by mosquitoes, creep cautiously into the bushes to reconnoitre. The corporal utters an exclamation. Here is one of the slain. It is —it is the only one! And quite enough too. A poor old milch cow has paid the penalty of her folly in not answering the sentry's challenge, and lies bullet-ridden and wholly pitiable. The music of some dusky Wagner as he traced the fortunes of his Pacific Faust had been true to the canons of Grand Opera and ended in a tragedy. Poor old cow! Still in her way she was a more worthy heroine than many of the heroines of the stage. She at least did her duty to the last, pulling the grass it was her life's work to turn into milk. History relates not her obituary notice in the guard report. How she died must have needed some explaining!

Shades of Stevenson! How he would have revelled in these Colonial Volunteers, as they swarmed over his property at Vailima, peeping and prying, joking and laughing, eating and playing with all the vigour of their young manhood. The guard duties were not really onerous and for three days the men ran riot. They climbed up to Stevenson's grave on the left of the house. A goodly climb it is up there. It is a matter of history how the natives cleared the path to the summit of the steep hill where he had wished to lie. The path is long

since overgrown, but the eager climber has no difficulty in finding the great stone tomb that is Stevenson's last resting-place. It is just possible Stevenson wished to be placed so high because of the prospect the spot would command of the shores he loved so well. If so, it is a pity that the trees around are grown so as to cut off all view of the island.

As the book-lover pauses beside the grave of that master of English, and gazes at the tranquil surroundings he has chosen for his graveside, the peace and solemnity bring stealing softly to the mind the words of the requiem he penned:

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Many a flippant Colonial, who panted up the slope to "take a look at Steve's grave," when he reached the massive stones, stood there silent and rebuked. All his persiflage somehow failed him before the simple dignity of the scene, and after lingering a while he went slowly down the hill brooding in his thoughts. In the warmth of life, it is a chilling thing to come suddenly on the emblems of death. He wondered how soon the earth might claim him as her own. Perhaps his might not even be the small cross of the recorded grave. Six inches of earth might serve to him what that monument does to Stevenson.

A good meal, however, is a sure antidote for such

reflections as these, and the cooking at Vailima was good. Your ten-minute philosopher soon dropped his meditative vein under the stimulating influence of Irish stew and strong tea.

And while the atmosphere of Vailima was so suggestive of its builder, one continually came on little gems of anecdote with Stevenson as their setting. A native produced a testimonial which Stevenson had given him, to the effect that he had been a good servant and had served him for many years. It was signed "R. L. Stevenson" and was quickly purchased by one of the men for a few threats and a fifty-mark note. (It must be remembered that German notes were legal tender.) It was without doubt genuine, and dog's-eared with long wrapping in the cloth where the native had stored his treasures.

One of the European residents told an amusing story of Stevenson and Malietua. Malietua—the father of the present chief—was the hereditary friend of the British, and Stevenson ever did his utmost to strengthen the friendship. He was eminently successful in this respect, and when Vailima house was built and equipped, Stevenson gave a *fête* to Malietua in recognition of the help he had had from that worthy and his people. Malietua and his party arrived in force and Stevenson took a great delight in showing the simple people the wonders of a civilized house. To this end he produced all the triumphs of domestic science. He showed them the mangle and how it worked. He turned on the taps for them to gape at. He initiated them into the mysteries of a mincing machine and a ringer. From the roof to the basement they went, and the dignified Samoans sat on his couches and fingered his books. They were determined, however, not to be overawed by the wonders

they saw, and betrayed on their dusky features no trace of surprise. Stevenson was a little disappointed. He had pawed the air and seemed to have pawed in vain; but old Malietua, aloof and self-contained, gave away the show. They were descending the stairs and came abreast of a bust of Stevenson's father, the great engineer. Malietua paused before the marble and looked hard. Then he pointed to the bust and inquired:

"Him talk?"

It was enough. R. L. S. was satisfied.

Another time Stevenson was walking along the foreshore in the early morning. He had a chronic habit of early rising, and on this occasion he heard a long, monotonous wail, growing in intensity to a yell of agony, and then dying away. The sounds appeared to be coming from a German warship lying within the harbour. She had been there some days and the previous evening had been doing some shooting practice at targets placed out past the reef. Stevenson revolved in his mind what the sounds could be, and decided to ask the captain of the ship that evening. He had been invited to dine on the man-o'-war, together with some German military officers from the shore, and other notabilities of the island. It was a glittering uniformed assembly that had gathered, and when Stevenson put the question to the captain, an ominous hush was instantly observed. The captain affected not to hear, and the others forced conversation. Stevenson started to reiterate the question as to how the howls had arisen, when a major of infantry next him leaned across him and at the same time ground his heel heavily on Stevenson's boot. The latter took the hint and did not press the point. Afterwards, as they were being rowed ashore, the major explained that those howls were not made for foreign

consumption. In point of fact, a layer of one of the guns was being flogged for bad shooting on the previous night!

To say that the guard were sorry when at the expiry of their three days they were relieved by another party is hopelessly to understate the case. All their finer sensibilities recoiled at the notion of leaving this Arcadian life, with its easy hours and its good food, to go down and suffer the platoon sergeant's gruelling and to eat the cook's experiments. True, life at Vailima had had its downs as well as its ups. The mosquitoes were maddening at night. Poulter had some mosquito lotion which was in great demand, till he inadvertently allowed some to get into his eyes; and the wild Indian dance he performed and the roars he thereon emitted put the lotion shares very much below par. Another man got a terrible fright on sentry go. He did not understand that motor-cycles cannot pull up with the instantaneity of a pedestrian, and was horrified to see the bayonet he presented in ceremonial go clean through the breast of a dispatch-rider whose brakes were not applied soon enough. Which was the more alarmed it is difficult to say. The enraged blasphemy of that cycle orderly was as the music of heaven to the sentry. The bayonet had passed between the arm and the side and done no more than to rip open his shirt. Judging from the way that orderly talked, he will be talking still.

The guard never went to Vailima again. As scouts, some of them often passed it on scouting expeditions, but the Administrator's residence is not the place for a private to drop in for a casual chat. They obtained, however, in their short stay there a better insight into a Samoan resident's life, especially the life of *the* Samoan

resident, than any amount of reading could ever afford. They had lived in his house, bathed in his pool, seen the gardens he had made, the walks he had loved, and every man who ever did duty at Vailima feels a kind of personal friendship for its builder and a deep sympathetic appreciation of the inspiration of his works.

CHAPTER IX

SCOUTING

WHILST the regiment, under the masterly hand of the adjutant, was settling down into the hard and fast lines of true discipline, the scouts were getting freer and more casual day by day. The explanation lies in the fact that the scouts were not under the adjutant for discipline. As is the garden so is the gardener. To whom they were nominally responsible we prefer not to state. The only temporal chief they owned was the bushman Ocott. He ran them on the lines on which the bush contractor runs the bush camp. His rule was free and easy, with great latitude up to a certain limit, the passing of which meant "the sack," i.e. return to duty in the ranks. After the happy-go-lucky life they had been leading, that would be a terrible punishment. One man who was so returned to the ranks was put on guard the ensuing morning. His crime-sheet was forthwith made out, and comprised the offences: dirty man, dirty rifle, improperly dressed, unshaven, late for duty. The adjutant penned the indictment, and under its comprehensive terms the ex-scout got C.B. for about the "rest of his natch," as Stumpy put it.

The scouts were lulled by the soft delusion that the whole regiment was burning with a secret passion to join their number. Suffice it to say, the scouts did have a very much better time than the platoons.

They did no duty in the regimental sense. When they marched with a column at all, it was at the head and not as part of it. They did no regimental fatigues. They contrived to get the impression abroad that they had permanent all-night passes. "Who is to say when we may not be required to scout for Germans landing," said Poulter. "It would be horrid if we were taken unawares through the officiousness of some sentry or other." When this pass myth was exploded by the torch of an orderly-room investigation, it was an easy enough thing to stampede the horses quietly feeding in the horse-paddock and send them galloping past the sentries. All scouts wishing leave for an indefinite period would then start in pursuit. No reasonable sentry would stop them, after just having narrowly missed his death from the horses, and through the barrier they went, happy in the knowledge that the horses would return for their feed in the early morning, while the scouts could come in any time they liked.

Ocott, the chief scout, was a man well deserving of study. He belonged to a type only to be found in the Colonies. He came from the bush. She is a rough, hard schoolmistress is the bush. Her lessons continue for long hours, and call for the maximum endurance of which man is capable. Most of the felling is by contract, and so done against time. Work is solid and measured, for while the bushman never hurries, he never slackens. Bush is usually felled in the winter, when the undergrowth is wet practically all day and every day. The bushman's dress is surprisingly scanty. He makes no provision to keep out the rain. The tramp from his camp to the scene of his labours (colloquially known as "bush-whacking") wets him to the skin in the winter months. Wet he remains all day, and wet he returns

to camp at night. Clothed in little besides bush boots, a jersey, and woollen underpants, which to him serve as an outer garment—a dress well calculated to reveal the clean lines of his build—with a stubby pipe gripped constantly between his teeth, his lithe figure sways for hours with the sweep of his axe, in motions as graceful and poise as noble as any sylvan god of the ancients.

Though trees of over three feet in diameter are usually left standing, the work is very arduous. From dawn till dusk it continues. It is very dangerous work too. Catch the axe in the tough vine of the supple-jack, and the keen edge may snick off a foot; time one step badly, and the pitiless tree pins its writhing victim to the earth. He runs a great risk who fells bush alone.

Men need four meals a day when they are bush-whacking. They have two by candle-light, morning and evening, and two at their work. Their staple diet is meat and heavy bread. Anything of a lighter nature digests too quickly. It won't "stick to yer." They drink tea. Whisky and beer are debarred in bush camps. A man wants all his faculties about him in the bush. It is often very difficult to kindle a fire in the winter, the undergrowth is so wet. But the bushman can boil the billy where the child of the town would be helpless. The dead leaves up under the fronds of a tree-fern, the pieces of dead supple-jack that dries so quickly, the wood, even green, of the tawa-tree—the tree with the long black berries that the pigeons love—these are the things to make a fire when all else fails.

This is the life that produces your strong, silent men, a life the hardship of which would in a week wreck the constitution of a flabby man of affairs. This is the life that develops self-reliance till it becomes almost a

religion. In the bush the dense vegetation often prevents one from seeing more than a few yards. All direction is taken from the lines of gulleys and streams, and observation of the lay of the land and the nature of the trees becomes automatic. In a long track a bushman might "blaze" a tree or so—cut a piece of bark out with his axe; but he is generally scornful of such mechanical aids. His sense of direction is something beyond the comprehension of one not bred in the bush. He will follow for miles unerringly the apparently obliterated track of horse, cow, or man. Provided a deluge of rain has not wiped the trail out altogether, a heel-mark here and a snapped twig there are as a broad highway to the bushman.

To any one who has spent much time in the bush it becomes an obsession. At the end of each season men swear they will never go into the bush again. Yet each recurring winter finds them at the old work. They start in May, which is the beginning of the winter in New Zealand, to "swag" it into the "back-blocks" (the outlying country as yet not broken in), and soon can be heard their sharp chop, chop, echoing in the heavy, damp air.

How quickly do they work a transformation! Those exquisite ferns, banked up in feathery billows or nestling in clumps around the roots of some giant tree, will soon be crushed beneath the weight of falling timbers; those magnificent tree-ferns, reaching as high as sixty feet and spreading their fronds as wide as a secular oak—already the axe is at their bowl. Three strokes, and the soft "punga" is down. But that giant tree yonder—it will take more than three strokes or three thousand to fell him; they work for hours on him; his wood is very hard; it gaps the axes; they rig up platforms to cut at him where his circumference is smaller; first they scarf

him on the side he is to fall; then they make another cut above the scarf on the other side; they go on chopping and chopping; he seems to be cut right through, and yet he stands; will he never fall? Yes—he's moving; no—he's righted himself; a few more strokes; there, he's going now; creak—creak—crack—the bushman leaps back well out of the way. Crack—crash—boom—boom—boom—and the echo goes billowing through the silent places—the death-roar of the monarch of the forest. He who stood proud and erect when New Zealand was not yet heard of by the civilized world, he who stood a mighty tree when William the Conqueror crossed the Channel, he who was more than a sapling when Rome rose from the mists of Antiquity—has fallen in half a day to the desecrating hand of man! Travel the Highlands of Scotland, journey the Rockies of America, wander through jungles in Hindustan—never will you see anything to surpass the magnificence, the delicacy, the grandeur, the tenderness of the native bush of those little islands in the Antipodes! And yet before the year is well over the bush that stands there, the crown of nature's glory, will lie a smoking wilderness of blackened logs, dreary to the eye and chilling to the heart. Yet we must live. The land which carries the finest timber grows the best grass. As the economic books say, "We must develop our resources," "Turn over our virgin soil." And in the cause of human existence we commit the vilest sacrilege that ever God-forsaken man perpetrated in the temple of Nature.

The bushman himself is inclined to be taciturn; and when he does speak, he rolls out oaths at every breath. His vocabulary is small; some three hundred words cover the scope of his conversational powers. Of these by far the hardest worked word is "bloody." Wherever

men are congregated and the English language is spoken, that adjective will be in the midst of them. The word is rather meaningless in itself, and it is difficult at first thought to realize the cause of its popularity. Nevertheless you hear it in bush camps, you hear it in the houses of the *élite*. Royalty patronizes it, labour loves it. And why?

Say it slowly, roll it on the tongue. Pitch it high, pitch it low, force it and caress it. Did the genius of man ever invent a linguistic contrivance more expressive of the superlative! Those explosive consonants, that long growling vowel, are a joy to the masculine heart. Take the word from Thomas Atkins and the war would be over. If Webster were alive, and were asked what is the most resonant, popular, expressive, hygienic adjective in the dictionary, he would choose, of all his vast vocabulary, the bushman's pet.

The bushman's habits are as rosy as his tongue. Three months in the bush runs up a big cheque. Then he has a "break." Goes into the nearest town, and goes "on the bust." Sometimes his bust lasts two days, sometimes a week; it is even on record a man has been drunk for three months on end. The normal bushman has his fling over in a day or so; shakes himself one fine morning, and returns to the bush quite content to live the rigorous life for three months more. Men get a yearning for stimulant after these long periods of abstinence. The professional good man with the side whiskers and the gold watch-chain is horrified at these excesses. He forgets that he himself has a hundred interests; that his womenfolk are kind and sweet-minded; that public opinion is there behind ready to point the finger; he forgets that the bushman is homeless, comfortless, womanless; that the bottle means the only warmth and

excitement that his hard life knows. Verily we say that the men our venerable friend would call lascivious, foul-minded sots are nine out of ten better men morally, physically, and mentally than their gelatinous critic. There is more real kindness, true companionship, aye—delicacy of feeling—among these bush-blackguards than in half the religio-charitable institutions of the country. Which things are a paradox. Bushmen hate a "row." Their refusal to drink or to gamble in camp is mainly because of the ill-feeling engendered thereby. We do not say that they never quarrel in the bush; but we do assert that there are fewer quarrels there proportionately than in all the hospitals, sewing-bees, philanthropic committees, or societies for the propagation of bun-struggling that ever paraded their loving-kindness for the edification of the gullible.

Ocott belonged to the genuine bushman type. Tall and lithe of build, he seemed incapable of fatigue. He professed the customary contempt of the bushman for dainty food, and for the soft incompetent child of the city. He tolerated Poulter in his presence only because that youth had, a few years previous to the war, spent a considerable period in a bush camp. Soult, the boy scout, he abominated. Gundy was his particular friend. That worthy seemed to have gyrated his existence between the bush camp and the racing stable. Gundy and Ocott both had a strong leaning to horse-flesh, and it was probably through this that the scouts were chosen to fulfil the task of transport drivers, rough-riders, long-distance orderlies, officers' grooms, horse thieves for the supply of department, and any other duty in Samoa mediately or immediately connected with horse-flesh. The grooming they did was of a rough and ready character. The horse in the back-blocks of the Colonies

is not a pampered animal. The only attention he gets is a bang on the rump with a bridle in the evening after work, and he is rounded up in the morning by a cattle-dog. If he is ill, there are no elaborate prescriptions made up. You knock off his shoes, and turn him out in a swamp for the winter. The cold mud of the swamp is a panacea for all the ills that a horse's legs are heir to, and the fight for existence on a varied feed of grass, rushes, ferns, and shrubs tones up his constitution to such an extent that when he "comes in" in the spring (provided he is alive to come) he is shaggy and lean, and ready to buck his ears off. So it was not to be wondered at that as officers' grooms the bushmen and their associates did not shine.

The scouts were responsible for the original commandeering of the horses, for working a good many of them, and the ultimate ruin of many of their constitutions. Those were great days in those first few weeks out on the horse raids. They were conducted by Ocott, Gundy, and Poulter. Overnight they would get orders that at a certain German plantation there was to be had good horse-flesh in plenty. It was to be rounded up and brought in. Mounted on the officers' horses—the best as yet commandeered—these three worthies would start at dawn out in the direction of the ill-starred farm. It would be about ten o'clock when they arrived at their destination. They would have a drink or two *en route*, and when they got to the farm, they would be feeling as if the world was theirs. The German very often came out to meet them. A casual party of horsemen he was quite pleased to see. Any animosity he might feel he hid, perhaps in the hope, inherent in every German, of doing a little spying.

"Mornin', Fritz," says Ocott.

"Goot mornin'," says the German.

"Fine day, Fritz," says Ocott, with more finesse than one would have expected from him.

"Yah; very goot."

"Fine place, this."

"Yah."

"How many acres you got?"

"Seffen hundredt."

"Cocoa, how many?" says Ocott, beginning to manœuvre round to the point.

"Vifty acres."

"Coco-nut?"

"Drei hundredt," Fritz answered readily enough. He wanted to appear friendly, and at the same time every German has a healthy respect for authority.

"Rubber?"

"Nein. Haf not."

"What you got the rest in?"

"I feed him mit der cows and bulls, and vot you call dem—bullocks."

Fritz didn't mention horses. By this time he generally became suspicious. While referring to crops and such things as the army of occupation would not be likely to want, he was a good linguist. But when one mentioned cattle, or horse-flesh, or beer, Fritz developed deafness or a total inability to follow what one meant. Simultaneously with the development of this distressing affliction, Fritz's bland smile disappeared, and his grey eye wandered. He glanced round uneasily and shouted scraps of German, Chinese, or Samoan—they sounded very much alike in his guttural accent—and seemed obviously looking for somebody. Now was the time for the scouts to act. If Fritz got word out to his overseer that the Government were on the plantation

commandeering horses, the scouts could depend on it that, when the animals were rounded up, there would not be one worth taking back. It was not difficult effectually to sever communication between Fritz and his head man. The bungalows were usually raised on piles some six or eight feet from the ground, and the place stood in the middle of a good clearing, so as not to attract too many mosquitoes. Hence a man, well mounted, at front or rear could effectually ride down any messenger, black, brown, yellow, or white, whom the German might choose to dispatch.

Then began the catechism in earnest. Fritz was obviously trying to gain time, to think up some lie to put the scouts on a wrong track. They would ask again and again where he kept his horses and how many there were. He seemed utterly unable to understand what "horse" meant.

"Bless my soul," roars Poulter, leaping off his mount. "This is a horse—or an apology for one. You got any, eh?"

"No understand."

"Horse—hairy—equus—cheval—hippos—what the deuce is the German for 'horse'? You got 'em?"

"Nein."

"Liar," says Gundy. "I seen yer drivin' a pair lars' night down to Apia."

"No understandt."

"Well, gentlemen," says Poulter, "the enemy has reached that stage when he doesn't understand. We are quite familiar with the condition, having met it frequently before. I vote we administer the customary antidote. To horse, gentlemen! To horse!"

Fritz has a lucid interval.

"Nein, I also come. I all der horses show queek."

"Potsdam Intelligence Department suddenly active again," remarks Poulter.

"Yus. 'E's blinkin' quick w'en we get a shuffle on."

While Fritz gets him mounted Ocott remarks, "Where that ole square-'ead takes us won't be thick with 'orse-flesh, I bet. I go with 'im and stick ter 'im. I want youse boys ter kid yer waitin' 'ere, and then w'en we've gone, put the fear o' death inter them Chows roun' the 'ouse, and scoot out arter 'orses orl roun' the show. Yer twig?"

They twigged. It was an escapade after their own hearts. While Ocott was viewing all the old duds in a corner paddock—(in Australasia "paddock" is always used where "field" would be in England) two stock-whip experts were cantering along the tracks on the edge of the fences, opening all gates for a big round-up, and making for the back boundary of the place. They noted all clumps of trees by the way that made likely shelters for horses in the noonday heat. Arrived at the back boundary, very often marked by surveyors' concrete blocks (your German is a very painstaking surveyor) the two separated and made for the corners of the back fence. Then the drive commenced. Any horses they met took immediate fright at the sound of the stock-whip. Away went the horses, with the horsemen in pursuit, through the small undergrowth, past the yet unfelled jungle, ducking their heads to avoid low branches, on through coco-nut palms, cocoa groves, rubber and pine-apple plantations, sweeping before them everything that answered to the name of horse. By the time Fritz arrived back to the bungalow, having convinced Ocott to his own satisfaction that he had no horses on the place, in would come a round dozen or more neighing and tossing their heads to give him the lie.

Then the fun began. Fritz was very angry. Fritz was very eloquent. He forgot his English was limited. His vocabulary suddenly blossomed forth into a thing of beauty, and if any gaps occurred, he borrowed copiously from German, Samoan, or Chinese. It vos a dirty trick; he would tell der dam Colonel; he would haf dem all under arrest yet; yah, he vould! dot vos zo. Dey vos thieves: dat's vot zay vos, thieves!

"Aw, stop yer gap," says Ocott, manœurving a fine chestnut mare into the enclosure round the house. "Gundy, you cut down the paddock an' put up them rails. You'll have 'em all doublin' back."

"You cannot haf dat von. It vos my trap-horse."

"Is it a good one?" asks Poulter.

"Ah, she vos kick, kick like der defil."

"Too fierce a brute for you, Fritz. We'll tame her down."

Fritz swore vengeance again. The Colonel, the Governor, the Kaiscr, Gott and several others were all going to do divers deeds of retribution.

Meanwhile the scouts had made a selection, and penned them in the enclosure round the house.

As the head-ropes came out, Fritz tried other tactics. He became soft-voiced—wheedlingly reasonable. The horses were not his; they were on trust; he could not give them away—they were not his to give.

"Who's givin' away 'orses," says Gundy truculently. "We're takin' 'em. There's a difference, Fritz."

Well, would they have a drink? Beer?

"Now you're talking English—very good English. Don't mind if I do."

During the drink Fritz became even more wheedling. He appealed to their gratitude. He told his wife, if he had one, to do the same. Needless to say he appealed in vain.

The beer consumed, the party prepares to depart. They have kept a sharp watch on the chestnut mare, and the bay and the black they have head-roped, for they do not intend to be caught with so thin a bait as a glass of dark beer. They thank Fritz cordially for his hospitality, give him the receipt he never fails to demand, and, following Ocott's instructions, tie the horses together by the head-ropes. Why he always insists on this the others can never quite grasp. It is an idea of his own, and he cannot see that it is more reasonable that each man should lead one or two horses, as the case might be. No, they must be all tied together, and amid the renewed curses and lamentations of Fritz, the crack of whips, and the exhilarated yells of the scouts, the cavalcade sets off at a break-neck speed along the eight or ten miles to the camp. What rides they are in the still Samoan air! On they go, caring for no one. The cautious Samoan hears them coming, and drops into the nearest plantation out of harm's way. The German planter, driving home, pulls close to the fence to let them pass. There is emphatically an element of danger in those horses tied together. Let a man or a vehicle come between them, and there would be a frightful accident. The public, however, gets good notice. The sound of galloping hoofs carries a long way, and the whoops of the scouts and the sharp cracks of their whips add an urgent note to the warning. As a rule they encounter very little traffic, and on the party go, horses and men enjoying the fun. If might is right, then the right of the road is theirs. Those were days indeed when a man felt he was alive.

The fodder for horses, strange as it may seem, was very scarce in Samoa. All they got was a short allowance of green mummy-apple and what grass the scouts cut

of their own accord. This grass-cutting story was a valuable counter for any too urgent inquiry as to the whereabouts of an individual scout. Should Gundy be going away on any little outing of a delicate and romantic nature, he contrived to take a horse to be shod, or a bill-hook to be sharpened with a view to cutting grass. Occasionally the scouts were sore put to it to explain Ocott's absence. At times the Hell-babe's craving for intoxicants would return, and as he was in daily—almost hourly—communication with the officer in charge of the scouts, he had to content himself with liquid nights and comparatively dry days instead of his usual deliquescent week. On one occasion he disappeared altogether for about three days and nights. Where he had been, or what he had been doing, we can only conjecture. Suffice it to say that just as the scouts were getting alarmed, thinking he had met with some mishap, and were cogitating reporting the matter with a view to having a search instigated, the Hell-babe lurched in at dusk. It is difficult to describe the effect that three days' constant drinking has on a man. In the first place he is usually not drunk; but his features are so altered, and the smell of him is so repulsive, that it is with difficulty that one recognizes any resemblance between the wreck he now presents and the man as he was before the "bust." Ocott's eyes were blackened, his features swollen, his stature shrunken, and the only sounds he seemed capable of making formed themselves into a whine over the punishment he would incur. He was going to give himself up. Already he dropped the tears of the penitent.

"What the blazes do you want to give yourself up for?" asked Poulter.

"Ain't the Ole Girl" (the name his officer went by) "foun' out I bin away?"

"No, you fool. Why should she?"

"Ain't she bin down 'ere axin' arter me?"

"Yes, but we filled her up with wind, and I took the orders."

"D'ye mean to say she doesn't know?"

"No, of course not. What's the use of having brains if we didn't use them. We told her if she came in the morning that you were down about the rations, in the afternoon you were cutting grass, and in the evening you were out getting a little rest after a hard day's work. I gave her several imaginary messages you had sent her, including a forgery of your execrable script in the shape of a note. For all she knew or all the use you are here, you might as well have stopped away a week!"

The Hell-babe did not seem affected by the force of this last gibe. He was overcome with relief at the thought that the scouts had been loyal to him, and that he was safe from the disgrace he expected and deserved. The scouts, however, let it be plainly understood that they would not stand any more of these dubious little episodes, and furthermore that the scouts were to be more of a republic and less an autocracy. The work would be done in their own way, in their own time, and Ocott could tell what lies he liked to "The Old Woman" to explain any disparity between instructions received and work carried out. Relations having been thus sweetened up, the scouts became more lax and independent than ever. They came and went as they pleased, deciding each night how the next day's work was to be allotted. The Hell-babe found himself a buffer between the tempers of their officer and the half-disguised threats of his men. His life was not a happy one. With the roof coming down on him, and the floor rising up

beneath him, he was often in a tight squeeze; but he bluffed magnificently, and still retained his stripe, and at least nominal control of the scouts.

One fine morning in November 1914 one of the officers' servants came down to the scouts' quarters, and asked to see Poulter. The man met Poulter himself, however, in the evening and informed him, as between man and man, with many expressions of confidence, that the major wanted a saddle—a better one than he had. Quite how Poulter came by it the major would not inquire.

"No questions asked?" from Poulter.

"Yes," said the man. "And no responsibility accepted."

"In other words the major stands to win. He gets the saddle, and I get the jail?"

"Precisely; the position in a nutshell; but remember a major's still a major, and can palsy any proceedin's in their infancy."

"Thank you; I don't want any shelter from his shadow. The game's quite worth the scandal in itself."

That night the horses stampeded, and Poulter spent the best part of the night on horseback looking for them. Next morning when he saddled a certain chestnut mare, she was resplendent in a saddle, if not of Government pattern, at least as comfortable a piece of saddlery as was ever made in Germany. No one asked any questions, but Ocott was a trifle surprised to see Poulter, before he took the major's mount to the mess, removing a stirrup and giving it a crashing blow with the back of an axe. The steel cracked at the hoop. Poulter examined his handiwork critically, seemed well pleased, and put the stirrup back in its leather. The matter was rapidly

dismissed from the Hell-babe's mind, as at this moment there sounded a general alarm. This was the signal for every one to turn out in full marching order. When the officers came riding up, the scouts were all lined up in front of the battalion still adjusting their equipment, and trying their best to give the impression of having just come in from some arduous task at the other end of the island. The parade having been checked and reported all present, the officers rode their horses back to the horse paddock. Poulter approached the major, gave him a magnificent salute, and remarked, "That's a fine saddle you bought yesterday, sir; but I have detected a flaw in one of the stirrup-irons."

The major saw the break, and as the chestnut was by no means a quiet horse, thought it better that the stirrup should be replaced. Poulter, who had been very anxious to take a trip out round the Beach Road for some weeks past, readily volunteered to take the stirrup-down and get it matched. The major consented. As soon as the major had gone off to the mess, Poulter proceeded to the town. He took the stirrup with him. In a fit of absent-mindedness he forgot to remove the stirrup from the saddle; and as the horse was attached to the saddle it follows that the horse went too. This is probably the explanation of the fact that, as soon as the major's back was turned, Poulter rode off on a commandeered horse, a stolen saddle, and a stirrup he had cracked with malicious intent. Before he started out, he removed his Webb equipment and left it with his rifle lying against a tree in the horse paddock, secure in the belief that one of the scouts would take it into their quarters for him.

Whither his expedition took Poulter does not come

within the scope of this tome. On his return in the evening he found he was too late to buy new stirrups, so he burnished up the pair which were on the old saddle, and placed them in the leathers of the new one. Well pleased with his day's work, he proceeded to get his tea. The enjoyment of his evening pipe was slightly marred. however, by an extract from regimental orders that he heard being declaimed by the orderly sergeant. It was to the effect that the man who owned rifle No. 16452 and a full set of equipment and ammunition would report for same at the guardroom.

"Dammit, that's my blinkin' rifle," he exclaimed. "Didn't any of you tigers bring in my pop-gun?"

"No, where did you leave it?"

"Under one of the palms in the horse paddock."

"No, why?"

"Well, I left it there; and the blinkin' adjutant has pushed his frame in."

"Oh! Then that gooses your hash!"

"Does it, indeed," said Poulter. "I'm not so sure."

At the same time things looked ugly. The leaving of a rifle and ammunition about in a place where it was easily accessible to the natives or the Germans was a serious matter. He would be tried, and probably sent back to the ranks.

He took a walk up to the guard-tent to see who was on duty. He found he did not know the N.C.O. of the guard particularly well, and the casual conversation he attempted to start was interrupted by a hasty shout of "Orderly officer." As no one but the guard was allowed in the guard-tent, he was bundled out in expectation of a call to "turn out the guard." However, he managed to locate his rifle. He saw it in the rack, and recognized a big dent in the butt where he had played cricket

with it to the bowling of Stumpy with a stone for ball.

The great question was how to lure the rifle from its lair, without having his name taken by the guard. The scouts held a council of war. Gundy, Ocott, and Poulter went into camera. They had few suggestions to make, and Poulter vetoed them all as impracticable. He finally made a suggestion himself.

"Bennett's the orderly-dog to-night. I drilled him too often at school not to know his voice backwards. I'll get outside in the dark and give a blotting-paper bellow of 'Guard, turn out!' and keep 'em busy with a little hate-music for a minute or two. Meanwhile Gundy, who has been giving a very creditable imitation of a caterpillar behind the tree by the tent, will nip into the guard-tent in the general confusion, soak up the goods in question and skedaddle while I am edifying the guard with a few colloquialisms."

"W'y the deuce don't yer wait till Bennett 'imself 'ops into the breach, and then dip in yer own wick and get all the honour and glory?" said Gundy.

"Fine idea that!" said Poulter. "I imagine the heroic little band of scouts keeping their lonely vigil, watching, waiting through the livelong night for the cruel orderly officer who never comes. Or better still, imagine him coming and bringing an orderly sergeant with a lanthorn; what with Bennett's torch and the sergeant's glimmer, my chances of doing the gay Lothario and eloping with the rifle are about as remote as the Battle of Hastings. No, Gundy, set your massy intellect a-clanking and think again."

"I'll do it, I'll do it," says Soult, who had come up. "Let me try. Come on, we'll do it."

"If you butt in there's sure to be a mess-up," said Poulter.

But Soult was all enthusiasm. Yes, he would collar the rifle. Nothing would please him better.

Although the evening was not yet very far advanced, the guard at the Malifa camp was turned out on this particular evening with great severity by a voice which, although they could not see the speaker, they recognized as the large voice of the subaltern of the day. They were very prompt in their appearance, but they were not prompt enough to satisfy the martinet, who, shrouded in gloom, poured forth a stinging deluge of comments on the slackness of the camp in general, and this guard in particular.

"Talk about a band of girl guides!" he was saying. "Here, you there," he suddenly stormed, "look to your front, confound you, look to your front."

This last outburst was caused by the fact that a resounding clatter of falling dishes had occurred in the guard-tent, and some of the men had involuntarily looked round to see the cause of the unusual disturbance.

"Curse that little fool," thought Poulter, "he'll start striking matches next, I expect."

"Guard—numbah!"

While the guard were absorbed in numbering the careful observer could have detected a shadow flitting from the guard-tent and making for the scouts' quarters.

"Guard—dismiss."

When Poulter returned to the tent, Soult was bubbling over.

"Like stealing chocolates from a baby. It seemed a shame to take the money."

"Humph!" said Poulter. "Let's see the rifle. Yes, I thought so!"

A tense pause ensued.

"Well, what's up?" inquired Soult.

"You little fool—you *little* fool! It's the wrong rifle."

"Won't grandma be pleased!" said Gundy.

"Well, it's your own fault," gabbled Soult. "You put the wind up the guard to such an extent they did not notice which rifle they took, and I suppose some one turned out with yours. Anyhow, it's your equipment."

"Yes," said Poulter, "it's my equipment."

"Well, one of the sentries will have your rifle," said Soult. "All you've got to do is to ask each sentry if he has his own rifle, and if not——"

"And be put under arrest for tampering with a sentry. The adjutant's always telling them what lords they are, and what they can do, and they're itching for a chance. The best thing for you to do is to creep back late to-night, and shove back the rifle under the tent-flap. There'll be a deuce of a row if it's found here."

Next day there was a rifle inspection, nominally to see the condition of the arms, but in reality, Poulter guessed, to see if any man was short of that part of his equipment. This rejoiced Poulter's heart, for he now knew that the authorities did not have any record of which rifle had been issued to which man. He could easily borrow a rifle from his brother in the other regiment for the inspection, and with any luck could keep up the ruse for an indefinite period. So at inspection Poulter had a rifle, and though it was a different pattern from the regimental rifles, the R.S.M. did not press the matter. It was clean and that was all he cared.

But as time wore on and the rifle was not recovered Poulter began to fear that it would get in such a condition of rust in the humid Samoan atmosphere that he would never be able to get it clean. So he decided on a

bolder course. He would go up and claim the rifle in the ordinary way. He would just trust to luck that the matter might be overlooked. This he did and the N.C.O. of the guard smacked his lips as he took the receipt for the rifle—the receipt that would bring the culprit to book.

The ensuing few days were ones of great activity for Poulter—days of ruses, alarms, plots and counterplots, evasions, and double shuffles that would fill volumes. He was determined to try and let the authorities forget, and the authorities were very persistent in remembering. When the police arrived to take Poulter to the orderly-room, he would be off on ration duty. Call next day. They called next day; he was away on a similar task. The military police considered their scout must be a very elusive bird. Very good, they would call in the evening, and warn him for the morning. He heard the men coming, and got under a house near by, and heard the other scouts answering the inquiries that he would not be back for a day or so. This story was somewhat discounted by the fact that Poulter, rather carelessly, be it said, chased a fugitive hen right into the sergeant-major's quarters. He got the hen, and also got an official intimation that he was for orderly-room next day. His luck was out! But he drank the dregs when he learned that the very hen whose neck he had wrung on the sergeant-major's threshold was the identical one which, for weeks past, had been laying an egg a day in the corner of the saddle-shed.

And just at this ebb-tide of his fortunes there came a German scare. The foe had landed at the other side of the island, so a native said. The scouts were to go over and reconnoitre. Such things as to-morrow's orderly-room were forgotten, and off went the Hell-babe, Poulter,

Gundy, and a scout known as the Lizard. They made good pace to the other side of the island, and rode all night in their haste, drenched to the skin and icy cold. Of course there were no Germans there. So they took a leisurely day or so, making a reconnaissance as they called it, living with the natives, and on one occasion, desperately hungry, they hit up a Chinaman at 4 A.M., who fed them on tea and pine-apple.

Poulter was sure that the rifle business would be forgotten when he got back. But no. He was warned immediately on arrival in camp. As he pondered matters over, he suddenly remembered how it was that he had come to leave his rifle under the palm. Had it not been the upshot of a train of circumstances commencing in the procuring of a certain saddle for a certain officer? That officer was to try him!

It was a very elated prisoner that was marched before the major next morning. Albeit he kept his smile well up his sleeve.

No. 1/365 Private L. Poulter charged, while on active service, with conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, in that, etc. etc.

"What have you got to say for yourself?"

"Sir, you cannot hear the defence till you hear the evidence for the prosecution."

"The evidence is documentary."

"What is the document?" That is the worst of trying lawyers.

"The evidence of a certain officer."

"Isn't he in Samoa, sir?"

"Yes."

"Then why is he not produced?"

"Military law does not require it."

Poulter's jaw fell. His hope had been to demand

that the adjutant should be called as a witness, and then he could threaten to divulge the whole story of the theft. He would then trust to the major's sagacity to quash the proceedings before the matter got to the Colonel's ears.

"Well, sir, I at least have a right to know who accuses me, and to the ordinary decency of a chance of cross-examining this officer who is so shrouded in darkness."

"You have no such right," said the major with finality. "Did you leave the rifle where the charge states you did?"

"Yes, sir," said Poulter.

"Why?"

Here was a chance. It was a desperate throw to make a show of sparing the major, and to trust to his gratitude.

"Hadn't we better clear the court, sir? The evidence is of a sensational nature," said Poulter significantly, "and closely affects the honour of persons in high places."

"No, we will not clear the court, as you phrase it. You will remember this is a military tribunal."

On his own head be it then!

"Well, sir, a certain officer asked me to 'procure,'" here Poulter laid great emphasis, "to *procure* him a saddle."

"Yes, I remember the case, I think," said the major.

"This I did, sir. The officer then ordered me to replace a defective stirrup, and in my zeal to obey the order I forgot the equipment I had left lying under a coco-nut palm. That is why I am brought before you, sir—for obedience to *your* orders."

"Alas, Poulter," said the major sadly, "such is the way of the world. Say we overlook this offence——"

"Thank you, sir," said Poulter hurriedly. "I shall not be in such haste to obey again."

The major ignored this interruption.

"Say we overlook this offence. The saddle was Government property when once in the stable. Can you explain why you broke the stirrup with the axe? Can you explain why you rode my horse for the rest of the afternoon without permission? Was there any excuse for palming off my old stirrups on me as a pair of new ones?"

Poulter was silent.

"Furthermore, was there any justification for you turning out the guard as you did, and employing a confederate to try and steal the rifle? That alone is a very serious affair. Was there any excuse for you to evade the ends of justice by staying on the other side of the island for two days after your mission there was ended?"

Poulter was still silent.

"For your own edification I may inform you that saddle has been paid for, and that if you had had half a grain of sense you would have come to me when you lost the rifle, and I would have fixed the matter up. But I now propose to punish you for all the lies, evasions, and trouble we have had from you ever since. I've a good mind to send you back to the platoon; but failing that I'll give you seven days' C.B. . . . I wish I could give you more, but that's the maximum."

And then the sergeant-major: "Right turn, quick march. Halt—cap on—seven days' C.B."

CHAPTER X

THE *CALLIOPE*

THE casual observer notices lying in the Apia Harbour, about a hundred and fifty yards from the shore, the remains of a big vessel. Evidently the wreck has been there some considerable time. The ironwork is very rusted, the side plates and decking are torn away in many places, and while the hull lies parallel to the shore, the stern portion has been broken off and is twisted round at a sharp angle to the rest of the ship. There she lies, stranded on a coral reef, like the skeleton of some mighty sea-monster, whose ribs protrude high above the shallow water and whose back seems to have been broken in its death-struggle. The decking and plating that are left are very suggestive of lumps of the leviathan's flesh still clinging to the gaunt bones. To one who knows the history of Samoa, this wreck is one of the most interesting things in the islands—more interesting, we dare say, than Vailima House itself. That ship is a monument to British seamanship, a relic of an episode the telling of which should thrill with pride every loyal British heart.

Before we hear the story, let us wade out and examine the hull. The water is not very deep ; it scarcely comes up over the knees. The sandy bottom is firm and makes good walking. As we go out we startle one or two conger-eels, big fellows some six or seven feet in length,

and they wriggle off out to sea at a great pace. There are small cuttlefish too, but they are nothing to be afraid of. They cling to one if they get a chance, so keep moving.

And now we are out at the wreck of the old German warship, for warship she was, and her name was *Adler*. The Germans in Samoa did not like that wreck with all its associations, lying there mocking them like a death's head. They decided to blow her up. There where the steel is so torn about is where they put the explosive. They were making no mistake and put in a big charge. In fact, it was too big and all the explosion did was to cut the wreck clean in two, as you see, and blast off a great number of the plates. That is how the monster's back came to be broken. It was not done when the wreck occurred. The steel framework is practically all that was left. They hoped to finish the job later, but the bare ribs offered no good resistance for blasting operations. So they left her looking even more pitiable than before.

See how the iron is rusted—all except the shaft of the propeller, which by some miracle is left without any corrosion roughening its shiny surface. Look at those pretty little blue fish playing round the seaweed that clings to the monster's sides. What a bright blue—almost peacock-blue—they are. And notice those little green chaps with the black markings. How the water magnifies them too.

By a small gymnastic effort we can climb up on to the remains of the decking right aft and forward, where the explosion took less effect. What a desolate old tub she looks! And now as we sit on the old *Adler's* decks and lean against her capstan—about the only thing left whole—let us have her story.

Well, in 1888, if we have the date rightly, there was some trouble with the natives. Britain, Germany, and the United States were at this time wielding a joint control over the affairs of the islands, and in some way or other friction had arisen. So the Powers sent along a few warships to intimidate the natives. The *Adler* here was one, and there were two other German ships. The Americans had three warships on the scene too. *Trenton* was one, and *Nipsic*, we are informed, another. The sole representative of the British Navy was *Calliope*.

The ships of the respective Powers were lying within the reef and their landing-parties were conducting operations against the natives. Suddenly a hurricane arose. How quite to understand what a South Sea hurricane is like, a man needs to have been in one. The rain is so torrential as completely to obscure the view over more than three yards. The gale is so terrific that the sea is lashed mountains high and the coco-nut palms leaning out to sea are bent back till they touch the ground in the opposite direction. Often huge trees are completely uprooted and flung hundreds of yards away and buildings are flattened like match-boxes.

The officers of the ships riding at anchor in the harbour had seen all the indications of an impending hurricane, but for two reasons were loath to put to sea. The first reason was that there were a goodly portion of their complements ashore, and they were unwilling to leave them unsupported; and the second and probably more weighty reason was that no ship would take the lead in running away from the danger and so appear to show the white feather before the ships of other nationalities. The danger was very real. There is only one narrow passage through the reef, and the harbour itself, formed by the main reef and the shore, is full of smaller reefs

whose slightest touch in a hurricane would spell disaster. The wind blowing inshore would be sufficient in itself to carry the ships aground, to say nothing of the tremendous seas which were rapidly rising, and which shortly rose over the outer reef as if there were no obstruction there at all.

While the officers of the various ships were torn by doubts as to their immediate duty, the hurricane burst with full Pacific suddenness and violence. There was no lack of decision now. The obvious thing was to drop another anchor at once to prevent being driven ashore, and to get up the maximum steam as quickly as possible. The question was no longer as to who should get out last, but as to who could get out first! Once in the open sea they were safe; but so long as they remained within the outer reef their only hope might be to save the crew. The ships would be doomed. As the hurricane rose to unprecedented intensity, every sailor knew it was a fight with death. *Adler* was in the worst position to effect a passage through the reef. *Calliope* was next her and her chances seemed none too hopeful. The other ships had positions more or less near the opening. The American, *Trenton*, was nearest the passage.

Could they make the necessary headway? Already they were dragging their anchors. Feverish were the attempts made to increase the boiler pressure. On board the *Calliope* they were wrenching off wooden doors and piling them into the furnaces along with sides of bacon and anything that would make a furious blaze.

Already *Adler* is doomed. She cannot get up the necessary steam. She is slipping, slipping, under the fearful pressure of the hurricane. Her anchor chains snap and she is lifted bodily aloft by the waves and

hurled across the reef close inshore into the shallow waters where her wreck lies to-day.

The natives on shore see the disaster and hostilities are suspended. Expert swimmers as they are, they dash into the lashing waves to rescue the sons of the very Fatherland with whom they have but two hours since been at war. They are successful to a small measure in their noble effort, and a few Germans are saved. A paternal government at Potsdam later awarded to the rescuers a sum equivalent to twelve shillings and sixpence for each German sailor salvaged alive that day. So now we know what a German sailor is worth in the eyes of his Fatherland.

Meanwhile, the other foreigners are losing way against the hurricane. *Trenton* alone of them, just by the entrance to the reef, is holding her place. And now two more vessels are ashore. They are rapidly dashed to pieces. To this day, the curious can see their bows on the strand at Apia.

And *Calliope*—what of her? Thanks to her good New Zealand coal—Westport coal—thanks to her good British workmanship, thanks above all to her good British seamanship, she is getting under way. It has been a very near call, but she is winning. In the teeth of the gale she is making headway. A yard a minute is all she can do; but as the hurricane increases so does the pressure on her boilers. Yes, she is making good.

Still *Trenton* holds on to her place. The other American ships and the three German ships have by now either grounded or sunk in deep water.

It takes a long time for *Calliope* to come abreast *Trenton*. There is not much room for the two ships in the channel. At last the American begins to lose ground—her anchors are dragging—she is doomed.

What of *Calliope* now? On she goes. She will make the opening! As a huge buffet of the hurricane bends her over till her topmast actually brushes the deck of *Trenton*, the staunch Americans on board set up a cheer for the seamanship that had done what they could not do. The crew of *Calliope* answer back and on goes their ship battling out into safety. And *Trenton*, brave as has been her fight, founders in Apia Harbour and all her crew perish.

That, sirs, is the story of *Calliope* and the hurricane. She was badly damaged in the ensuing struggle with the waves and went straight to New Zealand for repairs. In Auckland to-day is the dock she occupied. They named it after her. It is called "The Calliope Dock."

Now look around you, and see if yonder opening in the reef, where the swell does not break, is not vested with a new significance. And this poor old wreck we are sitting on, with her little blue fish and her pathetic broken back—she is more than a wreck to you now. Let us wade ashore and go along the beach to see the bows of two of the other ships that perished in the hurricane.

The *Calliope* officers ascribed their triumph that day to the strength of the New Zealand coal their ship carried. We will not deny that the coal is very good; but in the name of New Zealand we beg to ascribe the credit of that wonderful escape to the seamanship of that Navy which is our greatest protector and our proudest boast.

CHAPTER XI

DON'T KILL THE LIZARD

"Yus," the Hell-babe was saying, "I never seen sich a country for vermin. There's flies everywhere. If you go into the middle of the bush, an' sit down quiet ter eat a mummy apple, they come buzzin' round an' settle on yer blinkin' face. And they're that thick round the cook-'ouse an' the destructor that they shut out the sun, an' it's quite dark. That's why the cooks blink w'en they come out into the sun. No wonder yer find flies in yer meat an' tea an' duff. And there's the ants. Yer only 'ave ter say down in the platoon, 'Pass the ants,' and every one knows it's the sugar yer gettin' at. Yer carn't go to bed in comfort at night for the blinking mosquiters. They come roarin' aroun' in billions an' eat half yer bloomin' jaw off if yer don't put yer 'ed under the clothes. An' then it's so blinkin' 'ot yer stifle, and just as yer poppin' off ter sleep a blinkin' centipede comes along an' nips yer ear-'ole. S'lovely country."

"Talkin' o' centipedes," said Gundy, another scout, "young Soult the other night was snorin' that 'ard I couldn't get ter sleep. Wot with the buzzin' and bitin' o' the mosquitoes and the prickly 'eat I've 'ad, and young Soult makin' more noise than a reaper an' binder crossin' a road, my chances o' gettin' off was about as rare as hen's teeth. So w'en young Soult was turnin'

over 'arf wakin', I ups and yells in 'is ear, 'Say, sonny, a centipede 'as just gorne down yer blankets.' 'Struth,' 'e sez, an' ups and under them blankets diggin' fer the reptile like mad. Never seen a bloke so funk. I easy seen 'e wouldn't sleep for a bit, so I had a chance o' poppin' orf. So I just says, 'E was a blinkin' big un,' by way of wot Poulter calls a Parthian Shot, wotever that is, and dozed off."

"Was he really upset?" asked Poulter.

"I've seen blokes gettin' busy wi' a bull arter 'em, and I've nearly 'ad a tree fall on me onct. But I'll swear I never saw anything like the funk Soult got into."

"Well, I ought to be able to devise a plan to square up my little account with that youth," said Poulter.

"The devil you 'ave. Cough it up."

"It is rather inchoate as yet. It needs working up to. When young Soult comes in, I may drop a few hints about strange insects here. Just keep the game going; but, boys, an you love me, do not try to do any leg-pulling yourselves. It will be fatal to the scheme altogether. You can help a heap, but later on. Just now yours is the thinking part. I want to work up my effect in my own way."

"Yes, that's all right," said the Hell-babe. "You boys close yer traps, and let 'im go nap. You'll only box the thing up, and if you argue he'll unload some of that psychology of his on ter yer, and it aren't worth w'ile ter go lookin' fer trouble."

"It is quite true," said Poulter, "that I intend to avail myself of a few well-known mental laws. Stated in technical terms they would be too vigorous for your anæmic vocabulary. But in plain English I shall rouse his curiosity and his fear, and then ring up the curtain on as amusing a little farce as——"

"Are you still talkin'?" asked Gundy.

"Yes," said Poulter.

"Good," said Gundy. "It would be a loss if you was struck dumb."

A few minutes later Soult drove into the horse paddock, watered and fed his horses, and came over to the mess under the indigo-tree.

"Have you boys kept me anything?" he asked in his usual breathless way.

"Yep. Stew in that dixie. Tea in the other."

Soult was a youth best described as tumultuous. Whatever he did, he rushed it with a yell. This to a certain extent helped him on the path to achievement, in that he gained momentum, but hindered him in that he irritated quieter natures by his obtrusiveness. He had been an energetic boy scout and junior cadet, and was still under age for military service. To use an Americanism, he "got busy" over all the issues, great and small, of everyday life. Enthusiasm was of his very fibre. His speech and movements were rapid and nervous, and while he was capable of very quick thinking, his deductions were often inaccurate. He quickly shifted his ground in argument, and was easily swayed by stronger natures. Poulter described him as having "too much canvas and too little keel."

The boy sat down and started his midday meal. The others stayed at the table under the tree, chatting in a casual way, obviously waiting for Poulter to begin. Poulter was rather disappointing. He probably thought that the general interest would seem too keen to Soult's bright little mind, and lead the boy to suspect a ruse. Poulter rose and went inside the tent. There he remained a while. Soult finished his hurried meal, and was just getting up to go, for fear he might be made

to wash up the dishes, when Poulter, apparently by chance, strolled out of the tent.

"Did that lizard you were telling me of have a big head, Gundy?" he asked, pulling at his pipe.

"Pretty large," said Gundy laconically.

"What lizard?" jerked Soult.

The party took no notice of the interjection.

"Why I ask is, I have a sort of strange idea from some biology I did once as a youngster. You say it's eyes were very bright?"

"Glowed like coals," lied Gundy vociferously.

"Yes, I expect that's the beast," said Poulter, puffing slowly.

"What was it? Where did you see it?" from Soult.

Again the interruption was treated with calm contempt.

"It would be as well to tell you that that lizard is the only really venomous thing in Samoa. It has a gentle little bite, but the effect is frightfully serious. Did it show any disposition to chase you?"

"Where, when, how, why, what?" gabbled Soult.

"No, it ran away. I thought its eyes were very bright, and I would 'ave liked to 'ave caught it. But I'm thinkin' it's as well I left it alone. Has it ever killed anybody?"

"Only whites; the natives are immune."

"What's all this? What's all this?" persisted Soult. "Poulter, what are you talking about?"

"If you would talk less and listen more, you might get some clue," said Poulter loftily.

"Shut up, young 'un," said the Hell-babe menacingly to Soult. "This is a serious business."

"Serious! I should think it is," went on Poulter. "It means we shall have to move the mess."

"What, after all the trouble I have taken to put up the table and the forms," cried Soult. "Move the mess? Why on earth——?"

"Well, because Gundy to-day saw under this tree an animal that I for one would not like to run the risk of living near. If I make no mistake, from his description it is that famous variety, the *Iguana Opalea Ma Non Troppo*. That, I think, is its correct name. It is, in the first place, as rare as it is poisonous."

"Well, let's kill the brute," interrupted Soult. "Pour boiling water down all the holes round the tree—put a little carbolic acid in——"

"A very bright boy-scout suggestion. The only drawback to this fine scheme of yours is that, apart from the value of such a rare animal, alive, to science, there is the fact, if I remember rightly, that its eyes are very valuable as ornaments."

"Ornaments?"

"Yes, that's what I said. Don't you listen to what I tell you? If we could catch it alive, and treat them properly, its eyes, which Gundy says are very bright, will be transformed into such excellent imitation opals of the red pin-fire variety that no lapidary, unless he specializes in opals, can detect the difference."

"Gee whiz!" said Soult, breathing deep.

"Yes, that is so, I fancy. That is why it's called the *Iguana Opalea*, from its opal-like eyes. You have noticed how, when a fish's eyes are boiled, they become hard, and you can play marbles with them. Well, this beast's eyes, if boiled in alcohol, retain the natural brilliance of the pin-fire opal, and carefully dried and varnished they make magnificent jewels. But of course the difficulty is to catch it."

"Catch it, of course we could catch it," Soult said

enthusiastically. "Couldn't we take watches round the tree all day and night? It must come out for food."

"They do not eat more than about twice a year, lizards don't," said Poulter; "and anyhow he would not come out in the daytime."

"Well, I reckon we ought to try to catch it," said Soult with a definite air.

"What means do you suggest," asked Poulter. "Make a little cage inscribed 'Lizards only' in Esperanto. Then let him telephone his entry to the guard-room, and the attending man shall creep down and effect the capture?"

"Wot about a little salt on its tail?" sneered Gundy.

"Aw, shut up, Gundy," said Soult. "You're always on to me."

"You must bear in mind it's very poisonous," Poulter went on.

"Yes," said Soult. "But you could protect yourself against a bite, I should think."

"Maybe trousers over the knees, puttees and gloves might do the trick. Anyhow," said Poulter, "it's hardly worth worrying about. Gundy may have been mistaken."

"There warn't no mistake about it," put in Gundy in a sulky voice. "My optics are as good as the next man's, an' I tell yer I seen a lizard 'bout six inches long, with a big head, an' eyes that glowed very bright in the dusk."

"Well," said Soult, "that's good enough for me. I bet you I get that lizard."

"If you make up your mind to it," said Poulter darkly, "anything is possible."

The rest of the afternoon Poulter and Gundy seemed to be consumed with suppressed mirth. For no apparent

purpose they spent considerable care in searching out a long stick, forked at the end, and attaching a cigarette to each prong of the fork. This operation completed, they got another stick, and bound a very formidable-looking pin to one end of it, so that the pin protruded half an inch from the end of the stick. These mysterious weapons, which they called the "eyes" and the "bite" respectively, they secreted in the bushes together with some red ink.

"You'll have to get the ink ready to dab on his leg as soon as we get the puttee off," said Poulter, "and then run for the body-snatchers."

"P'raps it might be as well to pass the glad word to the carbolic merchants before we start."

"No, that won't do. If we give them the tip, they are sure to come smelling round to see what the joke is, and Soult is no fool. All you've got to do is to run over there and tell them that the major wants the stretcher quick. They're so afraid of him they'll move like the wind. When they arrive, I'll take charge."

The evening meal was a failure. Every one seemed nervous and glanced continually in the direction of the bushes at the back of the indigo-tree, where they had their mess-table—every one indeed, except Soult.

"I don't half like this place," Poulter was saying. "What do you think, Ocott?"

The Hell-babe reckoned that the mess must be moved the next day. In this Gundy concurred.

Soult, the youngest, seemed to be by far the most confident. "What rot you chaps talk. It never comes out in the day. In the night we're not here. Anyway I'm going to make it my business to be here to-night."

"Are you going to try your luck at catching the lizard?" asked Poulter.

"Why, certainly."

"You must have nerves of iron."

So Soult, with a great air of bravado, washed up the dishes in the gloaming, and as he went off to throw away the dish-water, Gundy and Poulter held a last consultation. When Soult returned, they were not to be seen. He looked round cautiously, then went to a tent close by, and provided himself with an extra pair of puttees. These he wrapped round his bare knees, and, drawing a pair of woollen gloves on to his hands, he took up a murderous-looking slash-hook, and sat him down under the indigo-tree to watch.

Luck seemed to favour him. He had been waiting but five minutes or so, when his acute little ears detected a movement in the bushes. An instant later, and there appeared to his excited vision, low down at the side of the tree, two glowing points of light, that looked horribly menacing in the dark of the tropical night. His voice rang out in fierce exultation.

"Boys, it's here!"

"Take care! Take care! for Heaven's sake," shouted Poulter beside him. "Remember the bite."

Soult had not realized Poulter was so close to him. He disregarded the warning.

"I've got him—I've got him!" he shouted, and slash-hook aloft he rushed at the bushes. Crash! fell the blow, and the glowing cigarettes leapt right and left, as the blade severed the forks to which they were attached.

"I've got him!" he yelled again. Poulter made a sudden move, and half an inch of pin found a resting-place in Soult's calf.

"Boys, I've got— Ow—ow—wow—help!"

"Yes, he's quite right. He's got 'im," remarked Gundy, emerging from the bushes.

Meanwhile Soult was yelling with the lungs of panic.

"Oh, what's the matter, boy, what's the matter?" said Poulter, in great trepidation.

"I cut off its head, and it must have bitten me," wailed Soult. "Wow—ow—wow! And it's poisonous, too."

"Good Heavens! Are you sure?" asked Poulter.

"Sure! Look at my leg and see!"

They had the puttee off in a trice, and revealed to Soult's excited gaze a big red stain on the back of his leg.

"Quick, Gundy, get the ambulance," said Poulter.

Gundy was off in a flash, spilling half a bottle of red ink down his trousers in the hurry. Meanwhile Poulter had dosed Soult liberally with cold tea and vinegar—brandy he called it—and Soult, who as a boy-scout was a teetotaller, drank the nauseous mixture without a murmur. Even then he showed signs of collapse, when the timely arrival of the stretcher-bearers gave him a new lease of life. Off he went to the medical tent, and was painted from the waist downwards with iodine, and made to swallow about a quart of weak arrowroot as an antidote.

Luckily his sound constitution and blameless life stood him in good stead, and he fought down the deadly venom, and survived the restorative measures. By nine o'clock he was so far recovered as to limp back to his quarters assisted by a stick; still tingling very much with the repeated coats of iodine, but wonderfully strong and brave for one who had so recently had at any rate one foot within the Valley of the Shadow. The scouts were very pleased to see him back, and their enjoyment was in no wise diminished when he assured them he had really destroyed the reptile, and that even

if he were laid up for a few days, they would not have to move their mess. And they thanked him from the bottom of their grateful hearts for what he had done for them.

As Poulter had prophesied, it was one of the medical people that let the cat out of the proverbial bag. Even then she remained in her wrapper for three whole days. Soult was made of the right stuff. He looked a little queer at first, and then forced a smile. The smile broadened into a rollicking laugh and he went up to Poulter and said, "Well, anyway it was a damn good trick. You had a good laugh out of it, and now I have one. And he who laughs last, you know, he who laughs last——"

CHAPTER XII

PALOLO FISHING

We regret to state that this chapter is of a more or less instructional nature. To appreciate the vagaries of palolo fishing, it is necessary to understand what are the habits of the fish—if fish it really is.

Inquiries were early set afoot by the sporting fraternity as to what sort of fish the palolo is, and how it is caught. The natives were definite on the point that it is a worm floating round in a sort of jelly. It is caught at night in a net, and when fried makes delicious eating. The Europeans corroborated the first part of this story, but when asked as to the palolo's flavour their replies were varied. Some said it's better than oysters. Others said it's even worse than oysters!

It appears that the fish can be caught on only two nights in the year. These nights are about a month apart, and if a good haul is made on the first night it is useless to attempt to fish on the second night; and if there is a poor catch in October, then November never fails to be very prolific.

A worm that times its movements with such nicety sounds rather like a myth, and the Higher Critics of the advance party of the Expeditionary Force had no hesitation in stigmatizing it as such. They gave no weight even to the comparatively definite statement that "The palolo is not a worm at all, but some sort of

growth thrown off by a worm, which is found in the coral of the China Sea, just as much as round Upolu (Samoa). The worm lies all the year round in the cracks of certain coral reefs "—we quote the inevitable *Pull-thro'*—" at no great depth below low-water level, and the floating palolo are parts of this larger worm, which, under some mysterious influence, are thrown off one day of the year."

Well, even Higher Critics have been known to make a mistake occasionally. They made one in Samoa. They went to sneer, and remained to fish. Poulter and Hanna received an invitation from a man named Stubbs on the water-front to help him fill a canoe with willing fishers. The invitation was accepted.

The hour of departure was fixed at 2 A.M. This would entail a lengthy vigil till about one, a stealthy exit from the camp, for it meant breaking bounds, a cautious walk to the waterside, for all the officers up at G.H.Q. were rumoured to be going after palolo, and a careful hour or so on the water. It worked out rather differently.

Stubbs's invitees counted themselves doubly blessed when they discovered that a man in the canteen was holding a birthday party on palolo night. It was his third that month. He had a birthday "cake," several bottles of it in fact. Poulter unfortunately divulged the fact that he had never drunk gin before. The obvious course was therefore to put the water into the gin-bottle, and the gin into the water-bottle. So Poulter had two fingers of water—very cautiously too—and the glass was filled up with raw spirit. He admitted afterwards that he had thought it seemed a rather potent beverage; but as the Germans were reputed to bring their spirit up to proof by the use of nitric acid he had not worried. After three of these bumpers Poulter grew

very entertaining; talked a good deal; invited the whole room to come and assist at Stubbs's palolo party; gave a dissertation on palolo; explained how the natives timed its coming. It appeared that the chief talking man of the village keeps a calendar. "He has a basket hung on the rafters, nine black pebbles, nine red and green feathers, and three leaves. Each day he drops a p-pebble into the basket. On the tenth day all are turned out, and a feather put in their place, so that a feather is—hic—put in every tenth day. On the hundredth day nine—hic—hic—feathers and nine black pebbles are turned out, and a leaf put in their place, so that when the bashket holdsh three leavesh, five feathersh, and four—hic—p-p-pebblesh the p'lolo ish due nex' morning."

They agreed amid shouts of applause that it was high time it was.

Poulter insisted on continuing. He had read up the subject, and was going to give them the benefit of his reading.

"Thish interval of three hundred and fifty-four days ish good, ish good, I say, for two yearsh, and on the nex' it ish necessary to reckon three hundred and eighty-four, since—hic—hic—the last p'lolo—hic—fishing."

This dissertation—accurate indeed, so far as our information goes—produced an ovation from the gentlemen at the birthday party. They had not, it is true, drunk the mighty draughts that Poulter had accounted for, but they had been at it longer. Yes, they would go palolo fishing.

So off they went, but not exactly according to plan. The sentry they were to have evaded was too astonished to get in the way of the party that marched through his post singing lustily. They made a fine procession down the road to the beach, and Stubbs and party were very

chagrined to see Poulter and Hanna arrive with four others in a rather elated condition. There was not room for them in the canoe. Hanna tried a little diplomacy. Then two others of his party also tried a little diplomacy, and in the ensuing negotiations a sergeant in Stubbs's party received a black eye, which he carried for many a day as a pleasing souvenir of the palolo night. It began to dawn on Hanna & Co. that they were not wanted, that a hitch had occurred somewhere. So, after securing the fishing-nets and the paddles of the canoe to make sure Stubbs and his black-eyed sergeant would also be disappointed, they conferred as to what they should do next. The angry curses of the disgruntled canoe-party at finding themselves without paddles were soothing as the gentle rain from heaven to their scorched feelings. Then Hanna made a suggestion. They should all swim out to an American ship lying in the harbour, whose skipper he knew, and ask him for a boat. So they hid the luggage on the shore, six bottles of gin and a cork-screw, and having hastily stripped, started to wade out in the deliciously warm water till they reached a depth that made swimming necessary.

The skipper was "real tickled to death." Yes, he would give them a boat—and some iced lager and a gramophone. So they all got aboard the boat, and rowed ashore to catch a few Samoans to show them where to fish. This was a task of some difficulty, as the Samoan, when hard pressed, runs fast, drops his lava-lava, and is difficult to see in the dark. But one of the party had an inspiration. He could put his finger in his mouth and make a sound like drawing a cork. Two performances of this valuable accomplishment produced three natives from the void. A few more pops, and the difficulty was to make a selection.

At last they were off, clothed again, and with a full complement of Samoans. The natives paddled them to the part of the reef where the palolo were wont to appear in former years, and indicated that the shining gelatinous substance floating in the water was the sport of the evening.

"Good," said Hanna. "Get out the giggle-juice, and give the Samoans the nets."

"And we'll all proceed to get a load aboard," went on Poulter, whose accent had worn off through the swim.

So the nets and the corkscrew did an hour's good work in the last part of the tropical night. The Samoans were delighted. They had made an excellent haul. The Colonials were very interested, and even went so far as to do a little fishing.

"If you put your hands into the water," said Hanna, "you can feel the little beggars twisting round your fingers."

"Say," said the American skipper, who had an accent sharp enough to open a jam-tin, "I reckon that kid's had quite enough to drink."

Hanna was indignant.

"Feel for yourself," he retorted.

"Naw," drawled the American. "I've kept to lager so far. I'll put my hand in right here, but to feel the sensations you feel, I reckon you need to have spent—Cripes! You're right, kid—you're quite right. I kin feel 'em clinging round my fingers."

The others indulged in a laugh at the good-natured neutral's expense, but the stream of chaff that followed was rudely interrupted by a well-known authoritative voice demanding silence, evidently from a canoe close by.

"Who are in that boat? Give me your names."

"Well, that's torn it," thought Poulter. They all recognized the voice, and their first instinct was to drop overboard as quickly as possible, and swim for shore.

At this juncture the neutral, like the trump he was, intervened in his rasping dialect. "Yer want to know who's in this boat. Well, I'm in it, and I'm a free-born Amurrican citizen. An' what's more, you're out of it, an' I guess, stranger, whoever you are, that's where you're goin' ter stay."

With that there was some fevered paddling by the crew, who had now regained their wits, and they got well away from the danger-zone. How the American skipper got his boat back to his ship is a standing mystery to the palolo-fishers. He seemed to see in the dark like a cat. Then he invited them all aboard again and they fried some palolo. It has been said that brandy and oysters are a very bad combination. Not so palolo and Schnapps. If any gentle reader wants to brighten the hours between four and five in the morning, and does not mind a racking headache afterwards, let him eat fried sea-worm and drink overproof gin in the smell of an American banana-ship. He will experience then and for many hours afterwards a train of sensations he will never forget. From the heights to the depths he will go—and lower still.

It appears a military policeman early that morning was mildly surprised to see an individual reclining in the middle of the road surrounded by a slimy mess. The recumbent one was diligently attempting to pick up some worms on a corkscrew, and put them down the neck of a bottle from which he had neglected to remove the cork. The delicate operation was discontinued at the suggestion of the policeman, and the gentleman with the corkscrew was very grateful for a little assistance

back to camp. His *protégé* explained to the policeman that he had been out with a party to the reef, and made some reference to swimming and a gramophone and an American ship, but the connexion between them all was left a little obscure. It was definitely stated, however, that he of the corkscrew had been the only sober one of the party, and he had had the presence of mind to fill his hip-pocket with something a native had had in a bucket. For this he took great credit. It appeared, however, that he had not got far with his plunder, when the road jumped up and hit him in the middle of the back. The contents of the hip-pocket had squelched out into the road, and he had had great difficulty in gathering them back into the bottle. As the bottle was to all appearances empty, and corked tight, the policeman politely inquired what was in it. The gentleman gave his corkscrew a graceful wave in the air, as if summoning his faculties as a conductor beats up his orchestra, and answered with care—"Plo-plo."

Not quite satisfied with this attempt, the gentleman with the corkscrew stopped and thought a moment.

"Pa-lo-lo. Thatsh wha tit is—hic—palo-lo. Thatsh what we were catching—I've got it in the bottle."

CHAPTER XIII

LATER LIFE

WHILE we have spoken a great deal in general of New Zealanders and a great deal in general of Samoa, it might be said that we are open to criticism in that we have not spoken much of the New Zealanders *in* Samoa, which, after all, is our subject. In this chapter we hope to give some suitable account of the ups and downs they experienced during their six months' occupation.

As soon as they were settled into a camp, and had begun to feel at home, they were systematically moved away to pastures new. The Auckland regiment ran round like a kitten chasing its tail between the Customs Buildings and the Wireless Station. One site she occupied was particularly lovely. It was at Vaea and the tents were pitched between rows of coco-nut palms; but it, too, had to be vacated by orders of the R.A.M.C.

Her sister in arms, the Wellingtons, was leading an equally butterfly life. She soon flitted from the Picture-house because she could hardly be said to have room to spread her wings there. Next she dallied in the race-course. She sipped the honey of the wild flowers for a while that abound round the course and finally fluttered over a track they cut for her through the jungle to the school buildings. There she stayed in a more or less moribund condition till her life in Samoa completed its appointed span.

That race-course, by the way, was an amusing monument to the sporting Englishman. A stray race-card that was found was in English, if you please, with a German translation placed alongside it! The notices on the stand, a wooden erection with a galvanized iron roof, were similarly in English first and translated into German. The crudeness of the course was compensated for by the beauty of the scenery. There may be more lovely race-courses in the world, but the Colonial decided that the tropical flowers and palms that surrounded the field would be hard to excel in beauty and variety. As a camp the race-course was abandoned on account of the rumour that during the rainy season, which was fast approaching, it was usually under water.

The great recommendation of the next camp site in the German school grounds at Malifa was the bathing-pool just across the road. It was a very picturesque pool, formed by an eager streamlet encountering slightly rising ground in its path to the sea. As the containing gorge gave no escape round this obstacle, the stream seemed to hesitate, deepen, and then finally leap over the dam with a mischievous little gurgle and run away off down the rapids, laughing to itself as it broke over the boulders and slapped the bare legs of the troops washing their clothes. At the upper end the pool boasted a waterfall. And strong was the swimmer who could breast the current here; but lower down in the deep end a child could swim against it. Here too the German had made a few characteristic improvements. He had erected a bathing-shed and had surmounted a concrete foundation (that for substantiality would have served as a gun platform) with a sizable spring-board. The dominant feature of the bathing-shed was its complete lack of privacy, and the apparent intention of the

designer of the spring-board was that a man taking a full forward dive therefrom should strike the rocks on the other side of the pool and bash out his brains. Fritz must have been in the habit of undressing in public, and taking to the water holding his nose and jumping perpendicularly.

Later some enterprising spirits deepened the pool by a dam at the lower end. This was a great success and men would stay in the water for hours together, racing, playing water-polo and torpedo. Overindulgence in these joys was probably responsible for a good deal of the prickly heat and perforated ear-drums from which the troops suffered.

The D Battery (this sounds like swearing, but it isn't) was later quartered by the beach in the Picture-house. They installed electric light in their quarters, dug in their guns on the foreshore, gave public entertainments, swam in the sea, browned in the sun, and generally lived the life. They were the ultra-sporting element. Occasionally they had a busy day as the infantry called it, or a battery gun-drill with live shell as the gunners called it. They floated moving targets out somewhere by the reef, ranged into them with percussion, and having (as they fondly imagined) found the elevation, they opened fire for effect with time-shrapnel. It was an amusing sight to watch the natives during these practices. With their eyes starting out of their heads, they crowded down to the foreshore, and jumped perceptibly every time a fifteen-pounder fired a round. The terrific report, the scream of the shell, and then the tremendous column of water which rose as the projectile struck the surface of the sea were all calculated to impress the simple Samoan; but when the shrapnel burst high, and the sea was fluffed up with bullet splashes, the natives

shrugged their shoulders and seemed to think that the reef, always a treacherous place, was never more unhealthy than now.

The sappers sat tight in the premises of the German Gentleman's Club, if such an animal as a German gentleman can be allowed to exist even as a phrase.

"Them engineers and artillerymen makes me sick," remarked Stumpy one day. "You'd think, ter see 'em swankin' about the place, that the sun rose in their back yard."

"Yes," assented Podger, "they do rather monopolize the limelight—or the sun, I should say, to carry on your metaphor. But I notice on those rare occasions when I read Field Service Regulations that the book always speaks of artillery acting in co-operation with infantry, and of sappers going ahead and preparin' the way diggin' holes and such-like; the book seems to put 'em subordinate to us. It doesn't seem to count spur-clankin' and fancy salutes as part of the legitimate programme."

"Ain't they paid more a day than us?" inquired Stumpy.

"I fancy they are: but pay or no pay, spurs or no spurs, it's the infantry that win the battle. 'The culmination of the attack is the infantry assault,'" quoted Podger incorrectly. "Remind them of that when next they trouble you."

"The remindin' I'll do will be with the toe o' me boot," said Stumpy. "It's a wonderful reminder, and I'm itchin' ter bustle some o' them pouter pidgeons off their perch."

It is, indeed, a great tribute to the troops to say that, after a few months in the tropics, they could clank their spurs and look spirited at all. Samoa is a good place

to live in, but there are a few "ifs" about it. If you are well up in the hills, as was Stevenson, where it is fresh and dry, and if you are fed properly as the German planters took good care they were, then your days will be long, and what is equally important your nights short. The Colonials, however, found their nights intolerably long with sleeplessness and mosquitoes, and stood a fair chance of having their days cut short altogether by the ravages of disease. They were living in the low-lying land near the beach, where the atmosphere was humid and enervating. Strange to say, they got very little exercise beyond a short early morning route march twice a week. What was far more important, however, was the fact that they were eating rations which might have been eminently suitable for a cold climate, but which in a place like Samoa would produce blood complaints and gastric trouble as a matter of course. Meat and bacon were the staple articles of food, and the fruit which abounded in the island was practically never issued to the troops. Their only legitimate means of obtaining it was by paying the exorbitant prices the natives chose to charge. There were other ways, of course, but these were discouraged by fairly heavy penalties.

The result of this was that after two months or so the men began to decline in physical condition. Save in a few instances, their blood became disordered, their nerves upset, and their appetites indifferent. Small cuts and breakages of the skin refused to heal and opened into great festering sores. These grew and grew, and the only way to cure the patient was to deport him to New Zealand. Round these sores the flies swarmed, displaying great initiative in attack. It was futile to attempt to ward them off. They seemed indifferent to

carbolic and positively thrived on iodine. Even a bandage which covered the affected part was usually swarming with them. In fact, the fly trouble in Samoa may be said to have developed during the rainy season into a pestilence. The insides of the tents were black with them. They flavoured the stew and turned up in the bread. When a man received his hash for dinner, he picked it over with his fork and put the casualties along the side of the plate as he might plum-stones.

"This year, next year, sometime, never," said Podger. "This year, next year! The omens to-day read that we leave Samoa next year."

"On first scrutiny only," said Poulter warningly.

Podger accepted the correction and examined the spoonful he was about to devour. "Yes," he exclaimed. "Sometime," I've found another, that's seven. Now there are five hundred men in the regiment; seven times five hundred are three thousand five hundred. We stop here a year, say three hundred days, and the cooks will kill three hundred by three thousand five hundred, that's roughly a million flies. We are fortunate in having some one besides the lizards who really do put down the pest."

It must be said, however, in justice to the R.A.M.C., that very vigorous anti-fly measures were put in force. No sooner was a banana peeled or refuse of any description produced, than it was to be taken to the incinerator and burned. Disinfectants were lavishly used, and punishment for breach of discipline in these matters were meted out with unsparing hand. Still the health of the troops grew worse and the sick parade so large that it was not an unusual thing to find half a platoon sick at a time.

Then the dysentery and fever broke out and the field

and general hospitals were filled to overflowing. It was a pitiable sight to see great powerful men, who had never before had a day's illness in their lives, lying groaning, groaning, ever groaning, from the pain and weakness. There was soon no room in the hospital and the men simply lay about inert and helpless. As they slunk up to the medical tent to get the only food that did not aggravate the agony—a vile-looking mixture of arrow-root, dirt, and straw, made by the medical orderlies—they held their hands to their stomachs in a vain attempt to lessen the spasms that shot through their bodies with the jar of each step. Then, too, the rheumatism tore many a victim with its red-hot claws, and sent fine young specimens of manhood back to New Zealand with hands cramped up and back bent double, like some poor old octogenarian tottering to the grave.

"Mornin', Blossom," said Poulter one day, coming out of the scouts' quarters, to a great specimen of humanity, the Labourite Bell earlier referred to.

"Mornin', Dewdrop," answered Bell.

"How are you to-day?"

"Haven't slept a wink for four blinkin' nights. I've got earache that bad I could cut it out with a knife. S'elp me cat I'll go mad."

"Well, come to me to-night," said Poulter, "and I'll fix you up."

Bell grunted and then groaned. He was looking really ill. Poulter purposed giving him from his private store some phenacetin, a drug very rare on the island.

That night Bell arrived, if anything worse. Poulter made a calculation from the size and vigour of the man that he could stand a twenty-five grain dose without collapsing, and gave him the capsules.

"Fire those into you," said Poulter, "and lie down somewhere quiet."

Two hours later he went into the Socialist's quarters and found him asleep. Poulter sat down and gazed at the brawn and beef of the demagogue lulled to a gentle slumber by a dose that would have stupefied an ox. There he lay, the ranting anti-Imperialist, the bitter agitator who had more than once torn down and desecrated the British Flag; and yet by a strange paradoxical trait, Bell had been among the first to volunteer, and he had made a good soldier. He still kept some of his old political views. Right and wrong were to him a question of party. Only the other night Poulter had heard him ask in a threatening way, of a total stranger, "Are you for Labour?" and when the individual accosted had answered in the affirmative more from fright than conviction, Bell had held out his hand and remarked, "Just as well for you; put it there, pard." And there he lay dead asleep, the grim mouth, that pain had made still grimmer, relaxed a little and looking almost kindly.

The next day Poulter met Bell again.

"Mornin', darlin'," said Poulter.

"Mornin', Honey-bud," said Bell, "them pills you give me done me a wonderful lot o' good. I went to sleep without knowin' it, an' not before I needed it. I must a' got in eight hours easy. An' say here, you an' me's been none too good friends. But I don't give a b—— whether you're for Labour or not, we're going ter be good friends now. An' if there's ever anything you want done among the boys, and I know you're up agin some of 'em, I'm the boy ter fix it right. See?"

He held out his hand and Poulter readily took it. There was no mistaking his gratitude. He was almost dog-like as he used to follow Poulter round after that day,

anticipating his every want and shielding him from entirely imaginary dangers.

Poor old Bell. He was a good chap at heart. When he returned to New Zealand he volunteered again. And on the slopes of Gallipoli—that peninsula which has proved the last resting-place of so many Colonial soldiers—he made the supreme sacrifice. Any little misdemeanour he may have committed before the war is now turned into such paltry insignificance that we feel almost ashamed to tell of it. All honour to Bell and his party who have so splendidly answered the call of patriotism, against, be it said, in many cases, the promptings of their carefully doctored political conscience.

Truth to tell, the New Zealanders were beginning to regard themselves as men with a grievance. They had been the first to volunteer, and had imagined they were in for a stirring time. Now they were marooned on the island with apparently no hope of ever getting off it. Men who had volunteered long after they had, got right away over to Egypt with an immediate prospect of doing a little fighting, while they were left in Samoa to rot, as they said, with flies and fever. This, then, was their reward! Forgotten —that's what they were—forgotten. Wild rumours were constantly surging through the camps that the next mail boat would take them back; and the next mail boat came and went and still they stayed on. With some of the weaker spirits the yearning to get out of Samoa became an obsession. Men even stowed away on the returning mail boats to effect that end. One ship going back with German malcontents for internment in New Zealand received a pleasant surprise about the third day out, in the shape of a red head emerging from a room somehow connected with the steering gear.

The head was followed by a very dilapidated looking shirt and trousers, found to contain, when straightened out and put on end, the somewhat whiskified person of Ding-Dong, the acknowledged jester of the "Aucklands." He announced that he had had a drink or two in Apia, and had arisen from dreams of bliss to find himself amongst a lot of machinery. He got back to New Zealand—yes, he got there all right—but in custody. His sorrowing companions of the Aucklands inserted the following shipping notice in the *Pullthro'*.

"Expected departures: S.S. *US.* (soon we hope.)

"Unexpected departure: S.S. *Ding-Dong* (Destination unknown)."

Despite this undercurrent of discontent, however, they managed to find plenty in the place to interest them, and did a considerable number of things to interest themselves. These latter often got them into trouble, as we shall see.

The points of interest most frequently visited, apart from the hotels, were the sliding-rock and the Wireless Station. The sliding-rock is a famous institution in Pacific waters. A mountain stream, the water of which is very soft, has for ages been flowing over an almost perpendicular face of rock some thirty feet high. At the bottom of the rock there is a deep pool and the natives love to sit on the top of the rock, slide with a whiz down its slipping surface and plump into the water beneath. This recreation quickly recommended itself to the troops, and every Sunday afternoon parties of men took a walk to the sliding-rock. On one occasion P., P. & Co. were at the rock together with a man who for want of a better name we shall call Hanna. (It happens to be his name anyway.) Poulter had several times been over the rock, and being a little worked up by the wild exhilaration of the sport, was going rather carelessly to

the niche where one sat to start a slide. Now the rest of the rock was just as slippery, but not nearly so smooth —and the water below was not six inches deep. Poulter slipped, clawed the glassy surface, and went sprawling over at the wrong place! On to the jagged rocks below he fell—fortunately on his feet. A drop of thirty feet sends the points of the rocks well home, and when they got him on the bank, Hanna did some fancy work with a jack-knife. Then the question arose how to get the one-footed gentleman (for such he remained till long after his return to New Zealand) back over the intervening miles to camp. When at length they reached the roads a Samoan woman was attracted by the stained bandages and heavy limp of one of the party, and came wheeling her perambulator to see what was amiss. It must not be inferred that every Samoan household boasts a pram, though there usually is ample scope for one. Where she got it the men did not inquire. It was very dilapidated, and the off fore wheel was smaller than the near. Consequently as she walked along, the vehicle kept working over into the party. They shoved it off several times, but finally regarded it as the solution of the difficulty. The pram was commandeered and Poulter installed therein. The woman's protests were silenced in wonder at the story they told. Hanna spun what he called a "fish-tale." Fish-tales were his speciality. The gentleman in the vehicle had had a bloody encounter with a shark. The shark had been killed—she saw the knife, Hanna's knife—and the gentleman had had his foot mangled. Now for obvious reasons a shark is a matter of intense interest to a Samoan; and a shark-killer is a great hero. The woman told the other women and they told the men, till a crowd followed chatting and wondering. As the procession lengthened the story

grew till Poulter had killed five sharks and eaten three in the course of an afternoon's bathe. The triumphal procession made an imposing entrance into camp. First Poulter in the pram; then Hanna; then the woman, who was not allowed past the sentry and bewailed the loss of the vehicle; and then the gibbering Samoans. Hanna declared the afternoon quite a success. Poulter was of a contrary opinion.

The Wireless Station figured very largely in the life of the Colonials. At first men went up to see it of their own accord. It was a good long march away from camp, but it seemed worth the tramp to see the mighty tower and extensive power plant. Its strategic value had been carefully impressed on the troops even before they landed. In fact, one corporal upon arrival in Samoa went so far as to write home that he was just setting out with twenty men to capture the Wireless. That was harmless enough and read well at home. In Samoa it did not read so well. The troops got the papers, and then they got the corporal. He was drenched with ridicule, and to do him justice came out of it very well. Dozens of men there "pulled the long bow" as to their doings, and he merely had the bad luck to get into print. A specimen of the moral gauntlet he had to run is appended from the *Pullthro'*.

THE CAPTURE OF THE WIRELESS

"I am just about to set out with forty-nine men to capture the Wireless. We expect some resistance."—Extract from Corporal's letter published in New Zealand.

Behold me in my glory,
And let my voice be heard,
Famed in song and story,
The Corporal of the Third.

THE Corporal, you heard me say,
And I have earned the title.
So listen to my modest lay,
And thrill at the recital.

'Twas I who lead the forty-nine,
The resolute, the tireless!
That famous escapade was mine,
The Taking of the Wireless.

'Neath fair Samoa's verdant palms,
I filled the world with wonder,
With fifty lusty men-at-arms
I won the priceless plunder.

The troopers loved me to a man,
They never thought of disobeying.
Here—stop that laughing, if you can,
And lend an ear to what I'm saying.

Our march was made through dark and heat,
From dead of night to midday sun,
With boiling thirst and swollen feet,
Advancing at a steady run—

Twenty miles we left behind
'Twixt the hours of twelve and two.
When I have a task assigned,
I'm the man to see it through.

Two till daybreak on we went;
Then I let them rest a spell,
Our Samoan guides were spent,
Said we British marched like—well—

Then out swelled my mighty heart,
I it was who'd made the pace,
So I made another start
In that grand heroic race.

I would not let them slake their thirst,
However much they pleaded,
'Twas comfort second, duty first,
And that's why I succeeded.

I know what drinking water means
When marching under tropic skies;
So stern I issued the command,
Who quaffs his water-bottle—dies.

Fifty miles we marched again—
Eighty miles and going still—
Mighty product of my brain,
My indomitable will.

There's the Wireless! On we press,
No man thinks of holding back;
No man lives who'd dare confess
He was last in the attack.

Hooray for me, for I had won
With as little loss as may be;
We petrified the garrison—
Two old women and a baby.

Before the Wireless was put under an armed guard the Germans hid a goodly number of the essential parts of the machinery. The apparatus thus lay idle for some time after the occupation, and the offer of rewards for

the missing portions was ineffectual. An expert, however, was procured who made shift with some parts obtained, the troops said, from Honolulu, and thenceforth the most extraordinary bulletins began to arrive. They came from Honolulu, Suva, New Zealand, and Sydney. They were generally connected with some wholly unimportant phase of the war, and inasmuch as some news of a big action sometimes crept in, it was flatly contradicted in the next paragraph by the news from another station. Many words were misspelt, more were omitted altogether—either censored or not received—and the whole production was badly typed and worded. The hoardings where these valuable tidings were published were placed in the camps, to prevent the Germans getting the news. There was no need to take any such precaution. They could read a page of wireless and get no news.

"Them blinkin' wireless noos," said Stumpy, "'nd be all right if they didn't use words that Webster 'imself couldn't understand."

"Yes, it's a wonder to me," answered Poulter, "how they cram so little news into so many words."

"And that stuff from 'Onolulu, it's the dizzy limit. There must be some class liars in 'Onolulu."

"Well, I'll read it and you can make what you can of it.

"SUVA, 20 *Sept.* 15. General French with 50,000 men engaged the enemy at . Divisional Commandeers proceedings on the banks of the xxxxx were forced to xgpyhylt without coming in touch with the enemy.

"SYDNEY, 20 *Sept.* 15. General Frrench with 150,000 men fought an xxxxxx on the banks of the Aisul and

repul—— the enemy. Hairy losses were encountered. Divisional Commanders retired after a sanquineg with the (Copywright).

"Honolulu. There has been no activit along the Axxxxxxxx. Commander heavy losses special to-day jypqnt½87§. Important success on the Consols xxxx Somme Sictol."

"I'm glad about that," said Stumpy, "that 'Onolulu dope always does cheer me up."

"Yes, one might gather a hazy impression there was a war on. Those divisional commanders seem to have been playing fast and loose too."

"Wot's a divisional commander?"

"That's a question that gives the cynic ample scope. Suffice it to say the Wireless about sums up the situation," said Poulter, tapping significantly the awful array of letters, ciphers, dashes, and gaps that went under the name of news from Honolulu.

So wonderful were the products of the news factory on the hill that the troops were not at all surprised that she broke down. It appears that the governors on the engine became jammed, the machine went faster and faster till the fly-wheel, a very heavy piece of metal, broke away, dashed through the roof, hurtled hundreds of feet in the air, struck the edge of the tower top, glanced off, and descended through the roof of the sergeant's mess. Luckily no one was killed, but a fragment struck a Samoan working in a field hundreds of yards away, and rumour hath it he was badly injured. The receiving gear was unimpaired, and Honolulu still babbled unutterable incoherent contradictions that soon no one attempted to unravel.

The Wireless later became the scene of many a heated

hour put in by the Auckland Regiment and the Battery. Some one got the idea that it was urgently necessary to build fortifications in the shape of stone walls all around the station. Had this inspired individual actually stated where the walls were to be, built them, and had done with it, all would have been well. The detail of the scheme, however, was left to the caprice of whomsoever happened to be in charge of the fatigue parties. So the walls were built and rebuilt, altered and moved, demolished and taken away, only to be set up again. When an impenetrable combination was achieved, with much talk and ceremony, they tried a fifteen-pound shell on it, and like Jericho and Liége, the fortifications collapsed. So another scheme was tried and then another. No one can say that the troops at the Wireless did not have sufficient exercise, and one day perhaps the walls may be of some use.

The Wireless tower made an admirable look-out. There swaying aloft a man sat from daylight till dark, perfectly happy in a little shelter he had made for himself. He could ascend the swinging rope ladder with the agility of a monkey, and came down only for meals. No one seemed to know who he was, and he remains to this day an enigma to the writer. He was one of the troops, of course, and as brown as a berry from lying in the sun.

Oh, and we must not forget the concerts in the Mission Hall. The Mission folk gave this hall to the troops, as a dry canteen, and in return the Battery decided to give the Mission a lift by holding a concert and giving the proceeds to the Mission Fund. Did we say the Battery decided? Then we must retract. It was Happy who decided. Happy happened to be a gunner in the Battery, and that is why it was the Battery who moved. We

venture to suggest that had Happy been in Headquarters, it would have been Headquarters who gave the performance, with the Governor cast in the principal part. Wherever Happy was, things moved. If ever there was a man of unbounded energy, limitless enthusiasm, and genius for organization, it was Happy. Besides this he was a diplomatist. He had the God-given trick of eliciting from people the very suggestion he wanted them to act on. He persuaded men that they had originated his schemes, and he merely suggested the way they should carry the schemes out. Being in three places at once was the breath of life to Happy. He could do an ordinary day's toil while he smoked a cigarette. And when he really worked! Well, listen.

Happy decided to produce a musical comedy. When Happy made a decision his personality became a maelstrom, and all about him were drawn into the vortex. Such things as scenery, orchestra, book of words, costumes and cast, he sucked in as soon as he began to think. He took Poulter by the nape of the neck, flattered him into believing him he could write a farce, and what was more, write it quick. He tied Hanna to a canvas, along with a brush and paint, and said, "Paint scenery." Hanna painted like the devil. He waylaid some musicians, and had them at suitable lyrics practising for dear life. He caught up a likely cast from the Battery, swore them off drink and on to work. He coaxed and stole costumes, properties, mechanical effects by the dozen, and carried on a vigorous publicity campaign the while.

Poulter scribbled while Hanna daubed, and as the draft scheme of the comedy appeared, Happy caught the still wet manuscript and hurled it at the typist.

Clickety-clack, ding, and it was in the hands of the actors. They learned it, Lud! *how* they learned it. Scenery arose as by magic, costumes fell from the clouds, the score appeared from nowhere, and Happy was the centre of it all. He threatened and cajoled, he censored and improvised, he organized and rehearsed, till he had a show that far excelled the combined merits of the author, composer, scenic artist, or cast.

At last the great night came. Happy had a dinner to celebrate it, and presided at it simultaneously with a dinner he superintended at the Officers' Mess.

What matter to Happy if the orchestra did not turn up: what did he care if the actors were drunk: what even if the Colonel did cut down the time allowance for the performance by half. At the last moment Happy dragged up other musicians, sobered the actors with soda-water and curses, cut down the performance to suit the Colonel. He rang up the curtain and he pushed on the cast. He prompted the nervous and conducted the band; worked the mechanical effects, cut off his moustache, and in the middle of the show he did a Maud Allan turn. (It would have made her turn too, I tell you!) He thought out the show, he organized the show, he acted the show, he conducted the show, he *was* the show. And a mighty good show it turned out, and cleared a goodly sum for the Mission.

Meanwhile the drill and discipline of the troops were steadily improving. The authorities were very tactful. They did not put on the break too suddenly. They realized that volunteers, especially Colonial volunteers, would not readily forgo their liberty of action. Kitchener himself said it took at least six months to turn a civilian into a soldier. The Colonials knew something of infantry work; but their Territorial camps had been

more a picnic than a campaign, and they did not understand what discipline really meant. In truth the adjutant readily saw that except within certain limits he would never get blind obedience from his men. A definite order for a single act was obeyed readily enough. Men would fetch and carry eagerly. The best method of getting an unpleasant job done was to state its nature and call for volunteers. The whole platoon came forward. It is in matters of policy involving not an isolated action but a long line of conduct that your Colonial is difficult to handle. He wants to be convinced of the necessity of the policy. He wants reasons. For instance, an order was given, without any explanation, that no man should go out in daytime without his hat. The troops could see no reason why, when the sun was behind a cloud, they should not go bare-headed. The order was consequently disobeyed. There was much trouble, and it continued till it was explained that in those latitudes the actinic ray is very active, and is not stopped by a cloud. Hence in India the proportion of sunstroke is greater in dull days than on the bright ones. The men were satisfied then and were very zealous in observing the rule. A man appearing hatless was sent back by his messmates to comply with the order.

And so it was with the standing order for all troops to be in at 10 P.M. or not to dine at an hotel without a pass. The troops saw no reason for the arbitrary restrictions, as they considered them, and refused to obey them. So also it was with saluting. Wherever Colonials are, a very burning question is that of saluting.

"I refuse to salute," said Brenson one day, "a man I feel to be mentally, morally, and physically my inferior."

"Aren't you satisfied with the explanation that it's

the King's Commission you salute and not the holder?" asked Poulter.

"A fine logician you are," sneered Brenson. "You merely shift the question farther back. Why should I salute the King's Commission?"

"Would you not salute the King?"

"Certainly," said Brenson, "and cheer till my throat burst, I dare say. But that is a matter of sentiment. I would salute the King probably because I couldn't overcome the desire to. I would simply take the path of least resistance. That is a very different thing from saluting because I am ordered to. Then I should begin to object."

"In the Army," said Poulter, "one cannot get on without discipline. You are not entitled to reasons. If they are given they are pure gratuities and usually totally inadequate. What says the bard—

Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die."

"Remarkably well put," said Brenson. "That's the position in a nutshell. Don't reply, don't think, just do as you are told, and, as Tennyson said, you'd die. Either way you'll die. If you don't obey you'll be shot for insubordination, and if you do obey you'll die just because you aren't allowed to think of an escape. The poet should have italicized the *and* in 'do and die.'"

"But you must have obedience, you idiot," said Poulter irritably.

"Of course you must," answered Brenson, "in matters military. But such things as saluting I don't count as military. It's a purely arbitrary rule fixed on at random by some old dotard in the Middle Ages and dubbed

discipline. It has no military significance whatsoever. He might as well have said that we should crawl on hands and knees past a sentry,"

"Many of us frequently do," said Poulter.

"Of our own volition, however," Brenson went on. "Salute the King from sentiment, then salute him by law. So salute the King's Commission. What do you do when you salute? Lift your hand to your ear and the officer does the same, only more languidly. He is not benefited; you are not benefited. As for the King, he knows nothing about it. You don't even get a chance to scratch your ear, which would be of some use."

"Don't you think you are more likely to obey the officer you habitually salute, and in that respect improve discipline?"

"No. I *salute* the Commission, as you point out. Now I *obey* the man. If I am to differentiate between the man and his Commission when I salute, I am entitled to do the same thing when I obey. I obey an N.C.O., and he has no Commission. Come now, have you ever seen me insubordinate to a non-commissioned officer or a sentry?"

"No, to do you justice, you are rather docile."

"Is my temperament a docile one?"

"No, certainly not," hastily assented Poulter with perfect truth. "It must cost you a wrench to do as you are told."

"Not at all. I simply make up my mind that their control is military, and in matters really military I obey and take a pride in it."

"Well," said Poulter, "a prettier string of fallacies I have seldom heard strung together. You are a man of some education and possibly can differentiate between the Commission you don't salute and the man you do obey. But will that do for the rank and file?"

"The rank and file can look after its own views. I am not my brother's keeper."

"Which amounts to an admission that you are setting a bad example to men of lesser fibre."

"I don't see that."

"I do. You are arguing the case of the Colonial in general, and you attribute to him all the mental arcana of a lawyer. Think! Isn't the real cause of his not saluting partly the fact that his officers don't insist on it, partly the fact the man half feels he is lowered by it, and partly the fact that the great significance of the salute has been very imperfectly explained."

"Maybe," said Brenson. "Anyhow, what are you talking about? You never salute yourself."

"Oh, yes, I do," said Poulter, "sometimes."

"When?"

"When there is any one looking."

"And when there isn't?"

"No, I admit I don't. When I meet on the quiet a man I know who holds a Commission, I say 'Hallo, Bill,' tell him its a fine day, which he knows already, and leave him."

"Without saluting?"

"Without saluting. And what is more, I don't attempt to justify myself. I know I do wrong. But if he doesn't like to enforce it, I am not going out of my way to do it."

"Then do you really think its the officer's fault?" asked Brenson.

"Most certainly! If they all insisted on being saluted from to-day onward, in a week the trouble would be over. Let them give out a few reasons. Work the Commission yarn for all it's worth, tell how bad it looks if men don't salute, thrash the sentimental side a bit and

harp on discipline a bit; but, above all, let the officers insist."

"Perhaps you are right. The fault may lie on both sides. The officers are no more keen on being always saluted than the men are to salute. Now I come to think of it, I have heard a chap tell his men to salute him only once a day, first thing in the morning."

"Yes, and did you ever see a man not salute the adjutant?" asked Poulter.

"Yes, once I did, but only once. The adjutant curled him to a crisp. That man salutes every one now."

"That simply proves my position. While the officers do not stick out for it, you will never get good saluting. That is the cause of the trouble. Your objection and the other men's objections would be overcome in a week if they were properly handled. Your quibble over what is military and what is not military isn't worth the breath you waste upon it. It is a matter of definition, and the definition is found in King's Regulations, and they are issued on statutory authority and are final in such matters.

"Well," said Brenson, "Here comes the adjutant. Shall we salute him?"

"Not on your life," said Poulter. "Let's shamble under cover. The farther I get from authority the better I'm pleased."

The adjutant, by the way, was one of the finest types of officer there is to be found in the world. He had been in the Irish Regulars for some fourteen years. He was possessed of an acute intelligence, and in that period he had mastered every detail of the soldier's profession. Fortunately for the Colonials he had left the army some time before the war, and was sheep-farming in New

Zealand when war was declared. He offered his services, and to him was entrusted the adjutancy of the Wellington Regiment.

The man who disciplines an undisciplined body of men does not gain any popularity in the process. Nor did the adjutant make any attempt to be popular. He was not employed to curry favour with the troops, and he did not intend even to run it as a side line. He was a very tall, thin man, and as he strode about with his keen face well thrust forward he looked the very impersonation of efficiency. Men quailed as he came near and breathed again only as he stalked away. They called him Pullthro' because of his long body and habit of going through everything, cleaning up as he went. He was without doubt, for many a day, the most cordially hated man in Samoa.

In time, however, the men began to recognize that he was keen for them, not against them. His severity was for their good. He worked long hours so that their business might be transacted. They saw that his integrity and firmness was a thing not to be afraid of but to regard as a protection. Above all, they recognized how he had improved them as a regiment. It became a fashionable thing to defend Pullthro'; to tell little anecdotes showing the human, even humorous, side of his character. Once this movement set in a rapid transformation occurred. They worshipped the ground beneath his feet. We say so deliberately. There was not a man in that regiment who at the end of his stay in Samoa would not have gone through fire and water for that captain. He left Samoa a little earlier than the troops. He slipped out to the ship unknown to the regiment, as he did not want a sensational farewell. The band tracked him down, got into a barge and went out

to his boat lying in the harbour. The adjutant stayed in his cabin, so they played the regimental air of his old regiment, and that brought Pullthro' up from below quick enough. He tried to say a few words, and could not speak, and as they rowed away he waved them good-bye. There was not a man who did not feel he had lost in Pullthro' a true friend. As Brenson said, "We hated him at first—him!—the man who dragged us from a rabble to a regiment!"

This, however, is by the way. There was many another very fine officer in Samoa. We do not wish to cast into shadow any of these through throwing Pullthro' into relief. We could write a book on the officers alone.

We must beg leave to quote, however, an anecdote of a certain officer who in his day had been a schoolmaster of great reputation for learning and benignity. The strongest weapon he ever employed against the recalcitrant was to administer a mild reproof before the company on parade. On one occasion he had a hardened son of Adam out in front of the lines, and after speaking with some heat thought perhaps he had been too vehement. The schoolmaster spoke through the officer in the kindly words:

"That'll do, my lad; *go back to your seat.*"

His kindliness was often used by the men to his discomfiture. He felt keenly the monotony of their lives, and when one man complained that if they were not given more liberty some of the troops would be going mad, he viewed the situation with great alarm. He urged the men to take hold on sanity with a vim, make up their minds to fight off the insidious evil of lunacy. This was a chance not to be missed, and when the good-natured old party went along the lines he was continuously

encountering pathetic scenes, such as men playing "Bedlam Joy"—that is, making the right hand attempt to grab its own forefinger before the finger disappeared through a ring formed by the other hand. He might frequently come upon parties conducting funerals on mice, and a man would walk with detached and moody demeanour gasping at intervals, "Death! Blood! Vengeance!" and such-like. And all this worried the poor old major. The cause of the trouble really lay in the fact that under the name of discipline the men's leave had been very much cut down. There was no interesting work for them to do, and the stopping of leave in the evening was a very real hardship. One man up before the Colonel averred that there would be trouble breaking out shortly if things were not bettered.

"You must be careful," said the Colonel, late of the Gurkhas. "You'll be up for inciting a mutiny."

"Incitin'! I'm not incitin' anybody," said the accused with a flourish. "I'm only telling yer."

The Colonel, however, took the hint and asked for more lenient restrictions on the men. He was refused, and then said he would not be responsible for further developments. The further developments occurred with startling rapidity. Leave was stopped on Christmas Eve. All ranks decided to take leave. They took it *en masse* and were mightily enraged to find the hotels closed by order of the authorities. It was a short business to knock down the doors of one hotel, and after a first taste of the joys of loot, the troops, long kept under close restraint, proceeded in a systematic manner to smash things up. By the next morning there was not an hotel or grocer's shop containing liquor which was not rifled.

Four enterprising boys employed at the Wireless Station building walls, happened down what time the liquor

flowed in the streets. They got a bottle of whisky from a passing Colonial who was distributing the elixir from a case, and found also from whence he had procured his spoil. They followed up the clue and purloined a case for themselves. With tender care they lifted it shoulder high, and trudged all those eight long weary miles back to the Wireless. They were very virtuous. They were not the men to befuddle their judgment by drinking by the way—save from the original bottle. That noble spirit breathed its last at the final halt before the spurt that took them hot and exhausted to the hiding-place they had decided on. They buried all but two of the case; then out came the corkscrew and they sat down to the business of the evening.

Alas, when they drew the cork, it was vinegar! Mortification set in bad, very bad.

In compliance with a general order, a Court of Inquiry was assembled to inquire into the occurrence of the "grog riots," ascertain the cause, and assess the damage.

The court sat itself down before A.F. A II and proceeded to take evidence. The damages were calculated and divided *per capita* among the troops and stopped out of pay. The causes were inadequately determined, but the incidents of the riot were carefully investigated.

A sapper captain was president of the board and his strong common sense was of great value in the ensuing inquiry. He made it clear to all witnesses that they need not be afraid to give names, as it was not a trial, and the story they told was inadmissible as evidence against the teller or any one else. It may be said that the court of inquiry was successful in getting the information it wanted, but it occasionally had a set-back. It often happens that when an inexperienced tribunal

examines a man far cleverer than they, he can make them look pretty foolish.

The man whom they had in as evidence stated that he had been taking a walk along the strand in the moonlight listening to the waves when he was attracted by a noise as of men shouting. He drew nearer the town and found he was right. Men were shouting. He was accosted by an individual who offered him a drink.

"There was no harm in taking a drink was there, sir."

"Oh, no, no! Who offered it?"

"Well, sir, I don't know that it is exactly fair to say."

"Oh, don't worry about that. It won't be used as evidence against him."

"Well, sir, it don't seem like playing the game."

"My good fellow," said the captain, "I give you my word you can do him no harm."

"Well," said the witness, "it was Sergeant ——," naming at random the captain's best N.C.O.

The captain swallowed hard.

Then he grunted, "Proceed."

Witness proceeded. It appeared he and a friend collected about a case of liquor, and they wended their way, with an ever-increasing following, towards the camp.

"You went towards the camp?" came in happier tones from the captain.

"Yes, sir. We held a picnic at the roadside. We collected a few Samoans and made them sing. Then we got a few Chinamen—we had a lot of trouble catching them, sir; wonderfully active Chinamen are—and played ring-a-ring-a-rosie and a few other innocent little games."

"Yes, and kiss-in-the-ring," sneered the captain.

Witness deposed he did not know the game. Probably it was played exclusively by officers.

o

"Get on with your evidence and none of your impertinence."

"Well, sir, we picked up the luggage and came into camp."

Now it was an offence punishable very heavily to bring liquor into camp. The captain's eye gleamed. "Who were the rest of the party?"

He obtained the information and noted the names carefully.

"What did you do then?"

"Gave the sentry a drink."

The board began to be really interested. This thing was much worse than they had thought.

"And then?"

"Then we went down to our quarters and had a tea-party."

"Who were there?"

"The orderly officer amongst others."

"Orderly officer! Who was it?"

But the witness was firm. He would not give his officer away. Anyhow, it did not matter: they could easily find out who the slacker had been who had permitted these irregularities.

The board was very pleased. Here was a nice little scandal they had unearthed. As an after-thought the captain said:

"Which was it, beer or whisky?"

"Neither, sir. It was lime-juice."

Tableau!

It was probably quite true. A great deal of the liquid that was carried off in the dark and excitement of that night eventually turned out to be very innocuous food-stuffs. Some men even secreted a large consignment of pickles! Others buried the genuine giggle-juice, but

in their semi-tipsy cunning they concealed it so carefully that later on, when sobriety and thirst again overtook them, they were unable to locate their plant. They managed, however, to reduce the store of liquor in the island very materially, and decided that the great religious festival, Christmas Eve, had been kept in a manner in strict accordance with the best traditions of Christendom.

In justice to officers and men it must be said, however, that this was the only occurrence of the kind that ever eventuated. When one realizes the abnormal conditions under which they were soldiering, with illness decimating their ranks and disappointment goading them to anger, it is a wonder that the men were so docile.

It is high time that we make some further mention of the regimental paper, the *Pullthro'*. But a matter of this consequence deserves to commence on a new page.

CHAPTER XIV

THE *PULLTHRO'*

On a balmy Sunday afternoon, in the early days of the occupation, a gay little party had gathered at the Mission Hall canteen. The Church of England and Roman Catholic Padres assisted at the function, and paid for the tea consumed. One of the Sisters from the hospital presided at the teapot. There were three young journalists present, Hill of the Aucklands, Barcham of the Wellingtons, and Daniell of the R.A.M.C. Happy was there, looking very smart in a white gunner uniform bedecked with ultra-shiny buttons and badges. Mr. Baile, the warrant officer of the Aucklands, also graced the company. So did Hanna and Poulter and Barney O'Shea. They were all talking and drinking tea. Casual strangers drifted up to the party, only to be sent off by Mr. Baile. Casual strangers were not wanted. Evidently this party had met for a purpose.

What should they call it? That was the question. There was no doubt about their capacity to write it, edit it, illustrate it, print it, or sell it; but to name it was a far mightier task. So they talked till they were dry, and drank tea to talk again. They made a list of suggestions; they eliminated the less appropriate titles, and reduced the number to four. Round these four the controversy raged. These were folk of weighty intellects these were, and when they talked they made

Webster work double shift, you bet. They were never stuck for a word. They were often stuck for a hearing. And with it all, the matter was still in the air. Then a bright spirit, with strong lungs, gave voice to a real bumper super-notion, and talked the others down. They must call it by all four suggestions. And so was born *The Pullthro'*, with which is incorporated *The Noumean Nightmare*, *The Suva Sendoff*, and *The Samoan Sun*.

There! And they had another cup of tea (also at the Padres' expense). And the matter was settled. And the journalists talked of type—of brevier, of pica, of long primer, and of blocks. And Poulter and the Padres talked of poetry and prose, and weighed their popularity. And Happy talked to Hanna of processes and illustrations, of nitric acid and of stipples. And Barney buttonholed the sergeant-major, and gave it as his opinion that Jimmy at the *Zeitung* could do the job they wanted. And the Sister kept the balance, ordered eatables, and went on pouring the tea the Padres paid for.

Well, the upshot of it was that after many false starts, postponements, and disappointments, the rackety old printing-press of the *Zeitung* wheezed out Vol. I, No. 1, of the *Pullthro'*, the regimental journal. It was retailed for the consideration of threepence per copy (as can be seen from the cover), and it was dated October 14, 1914 (which also can be seen in the same place). It contained an inaccurate roll of the members of the Samoan Expeditionary Force, and miscellaneous contributions in prose and verse of varying merit. But for the Herculean efforts of the journalists aforementioned it would have been a sorry production indeed. When it was printed they found that the funny old machines could not

fold it. So the editors and contributors, financial managers and printer's devils, rolled up their sleeves and put in odd hours folding up *Pullthro's* till they hated the paper, had blackened their hands, and had drunk more beer than was good for them. And they breakfasted at the office and dined there, sometimes above the office with the owner and his spectacled German wife—who was a good cook—and ate sausage and chicken, and thought a journalist's life was a gentleman's; more often with Jimmy below, and ate the tinned ration they had brought from the camp, and thought journalism a very poor game indeed. But there was always the beer, always the beer! Yet if you examine a copy of the first edition of the *Pullthro'* you will find it quite well folded. Wonderful people, the Colonials. Great capacity!

All the later editions of the *Pullthro'* were done on water. Why? You may well ask why! It is because they were done at the Mission-house ten miles out at Malua, where the machines did their own folding and the compositors could read English. Where, in short, Mr. Griffin, the Mission printer, presided, and where, therefore, there was no need for the constant attendance of editors, poets, essayists, and financial managers, and where the only beer on the premises had to be brought all the way from Apia. Some of these worthies did go out occasionally to the printing-house, and a beautiful ride it was; but there was practically no need for their doing so, as Mr. Griffin gave such enthusiastic attention to the production of the paper, not to mention some able contributions to its pages later on, that it was only a matter of giving the copy to his messenger. Anxious editors could rest content.

We have quoted elsewhere examples from the *Pull-*

thro's pages. Unfortunately a great many of the allusions, however pointed, were quite local in application, and far from being appreciated at this distance in space and time, they often needed some explanation among the Colonials themselves. The 3rd did not see the 5th's jokes, and *vice versa*. The camps were two miles apart, and many other units contributed who were in neither camp. Consequently each unit, seeing references to people it did not know, was very irritated accordingly, and while chuckling at the toasting of its own celebrities, resented other people thrusting their seemingly pointless whimsicalities into a journal that purported to belong to every one. The editors managed to maintain a fairly even balance in the matter, however, and we do not know of any one who was horsewhipped.

We cannot resist the temptation of including within these pages a few articles from the paper. While we express our great indebtedness to those writers whose works we have taken the liberty of quoting, we should like to state that there are many more whose contributions we would fain insert—contributions the quality of which would go far to make this book, as they made the *Pullthro'*, a highly reputable publication. Obvious reasons, however, preclude their copious insertion.

The D Battery, encamped on the foreshore, would have made an excellent target in the case of a hostile craft entering the harbour. The men were practised in striking their tents at a moment's notice. On one occasion, there was espied in the distance an unknown ship bearing full speed ahead towards Apia. The alarm was immediately given and the Battery tents, so nattily fitted up inside and made so comfortable, were razed to the ground. The glee of the infantry was great on learning that the

supposed German warship was none other than the *John Williams*—the Mission ship.

The following appeared in the *Pullthro'*:

MEN
LEARN TO STRIKE YOUR TENTS
By Latest Methods.
Signal John Williams
THEN WATCH BATTERY POSTS

The Chinaman was, as we have indicated, the most hated man in Samoa. Hounded out of the town, herded on the plantations, unpaid and unwashed, he had a pretty unsavoury time of it. However, even under these circumstances the yearning after the ideal was not wholly crushed, and he on one occasion gave vent to the aspirations of his soul in an opera. The *Pullthro'* told a tale about it.

"CHINESE OPERA

"I had the unique privilege of witnessing a Chinese play on New Year's Day. The entertainment was held in a barnlike structure near Vaea Camp, with seating accommodation for about one hundred persons, but when I drifted in there were at least five hundred Chinese packed into this small space. The atmosphere of the 'theatre' was impregnated with tobacco-smoke, flies, dust, and that peculiar effluvium that is like unto nothing earthly, but savours more of a fertilizer factory. The audience included, in the words of the immortal Omar Khayyám—

Shapes of all sizes, great and small,
That stood together ranged along the wall—
And some loquacious vessels were, and some
Listen perhaps, but never talked at all.

Some wore smiles that were childlike and bland, whilst others had a settled look of melancholy and gloom which the most ludicrous antics of the chief comedian failed to dispel. The audience was one that would have delighted the heart of Rudyard Kipling, while an analysis of the atmosphere would have kept a dozen bacteriologists busy for months. The show had started at 10 A.M., and it continued without interval until 4 P.M. when a short adjournment was called for tea, after which it went on uninterruptedly until 2 A.M. the following morning, at which time the first act was concluded. The orchestra was weird, wonderful, and awful. It was composed of tom-toms, drum, cymbals, whistles, a one-stringed fiddle emitting sounds like an ungreased wheelbarrow, a set of clappers, and a peculiar oboe-like instrument with two keys. The orchestra played all through the dialogue, and at times the noise was so deafening that not one word could be heard from the players. The hero or lead appeared to be taken by a Celestial made up to represent the venerable Confucius. He wore a silken robe and about £10,000 worth of jewellery distributed liberally over his capacious person. A rather amusing incident occurred during a duel between the two soldiers. One of the duellers made a swipe at his antagonist who side-stepped, and Confucius got the end of the sword under his venerable ear. The hoary old deity promptly responded with a half-hook (*à la savate*), and the show took sides, and a riot seemed imminent. The chief comedian, however, with great

presence of mind, stepped in and saved the situation with a comic song in a high falsetto voice, and peace was restored. I was invited to take tea with the Chinese through the good offices of a half-caste friend of mine, who had obtained permission for me to be present at the function. The meal was composed of roast duck, pork, taro-root, breadfruit, jelly made of a peculiar kind of seaweed, and salad made from raw potatoes, cabbage, and coco-nut beetles. The mixture was served up with layers of dried minced shark uncooked. There were several varieties of drinks, the most popular being a concoction composed of French brandy, kava, gin, and methylated spirits. After a Chow had partaken of about three spots of this mixture he would crawl away to some sequestered spot to die, or else he would be seen chasing heliotrope dragons through the surrounding plantations. There was also a 'soft' drink for the ladies composed of gin and brandy and water, in which some Irish roll tobacco had been steeped overnight. It was for those whose stomachs were not seasoned. I saw a man standing on his head in a water-hole after having partaken of this mixture, and my friend explained that the man probably imagined he was a water-lily. The play ran for thirty-seven consecutive hours with brief intervals for meals."

Another contribution that caused considerable amusement among the troops was a murderous adaptation of Longfellow's "Hiawatha," descriptive of the experiences of the dysentery patient. It is quite patent from the context that the "Yellow Pennant" referred to is the emblem that marked the areas dedicated to camp sanitation.

HIAWATHA

Samoan Adaptation

Hiawatha wasn't feeling
What you'd call distinctly healthy.
Ever since he reached Somoah,
Ever since he left Nuzeelan,
His digestion gave him trouble.
He had kept his lonely vigil
Thro' the small hours of the morning
Right until the tropic sunrise.
He was not on sentry duty,
Nor was he engaged in cooking
Coffee for an early route march.
It was just the pain inside him
Kept him groaning, always groaning,
Kept him always on the qui vive
Made the whole of his existence
Centre round the Yellow Pennant.

And the noble Hiawatha,
Daily, hourly growing weaker,
Went to see the great Witch Doctah,
He who wore the magic Redkroz
And who smelt of weak Karbolik
(*Nothing stronger I assure you*),
Went into the great man's presence,
Made a noble low obeisance,
And was suddenly ejected.
This was done because he hadn't
Got his name upon the parchment
That the Doctah *had before him.*
So he went again at even,
As the sun was slowly setting,

Groaning, groaning, always groaning,
Got his name upon the parchment,
Found his place among the others
Who were waiting for the Doctah.

After waiting twenty minutes,
No, an hour and twenty minutes,
He was summoned to the Marquee,
Gave his name as Hiawatha
And his Regimental Numbah
Wun-bar-twenta-six *his numbah.*
Asked if he were wed or single,
Said he really didn't know quite,
Said he'd left a squaw at home like,
But he'd sojourned in Samoah
Such a Blazes *of a long time*
Minni *might have snuffed the candle,*
Passed-her-checks *or* Kicked-the-bucket.
Anyhow he said he cared not,
All he knew he had the Kolik.

Several other things he mentioned,
Which were written down on parchment,
And the Doctah *said the watchword,*
Talisman or incantation.
Sodi-Sulphate *was the word he*
Said unto the Boddi-Snatchahs,
And they made him drink a phial,
Told him that his Mess *was* Tapu,
He must dine on what they gave him,
Every morning, noon, and evening;
Sent him out upon his business,
Groaning round the Yellow Pennant.
Every morn and every evening,

Yea and every midday also,
Went the noble Hiawatha,
Groaning, to the Boddi-Snatchahs.
Forcing down the stuff they gave him,
Arrorute *was what they called it.*
Hiawatha, being simple,
Asked them why the straws were in it?
Also if the brownish colour
Was intended by the Doctor?
He was told to Cloz his Claptrap
Told to go unto the devil.
Thus was Hiawatha learning
Not to question Boddi-Snatchahs.

But the day was fast approaching,
When the noble Hiawatha
Was unable to stand upright,
Simply lay and groaned his heart out;
And the great Witch-Doctah *saw him,*
And he pitied Hiawatha;
Thought it time to try and cure him
So he called in at the Wigwam
Of the chief of the Witch-Doctahs,
Found a bed for Hiawatha,
Sent him there to live on nothing,
Nothing, nothing, always nothing,
Was the food of Hiawatha.

And the pain died down within him,
And the groaning stopped within him;
And he waked and looked around him,
Saw old Flanni, *ginger, radiant,*
Standing at his bed and smiling,
Listened to the mighty Baka

Cracking classic jokes and laughing,
From the evening to the morning,
Saw the charming kindly Sistahs
Moving round and shedding sunshine
By the radiance of their presence,
Felt his inside getting hungry,
Knew that he was being cured,
Begged that he might have his dinner.
Mistah Baka the facetious
Said he would be most delighted,
Then he brought—a glass of water.
Then the chiefest of the Doctahs,
He who rode the noble war-horse,
Came around to Hiawatha,
Tapped him gently on the Tummi,
Said they could "increase his diet."
Then the Sistah fetched him something,
Arrorute she also called it;
But it lacked the brownish colour,
And the straw and little lumplets.
Hiawatha didn't like it,
Said it lacked in bulk and flavour,
But he swallowed and grew stronger.
Great the joy of Hiawatha.
He could go a day and never
Worry Flannigan or Baka.
Hiawatha soon recovered:
One day in the great Chief's Wigwam
Can do more by way of curing
Than a dozen in the open.
Hiawatha sends his greetings
To his patrons of the Pennant;
And adjures them, if they love him,
To essay to reach the Wigwam

Of the Chief of the Witch-Doctahs.
There where Flannigan and Baka,
And the careful quiet Sistahs
Work their wonders to restore one.

The last excerpt from the *Pullthro'* we shall include in these pages is a tribute paid by the Colonials to Lord Roberts. From those early days when as children, dressed in turkey twill field-marshal's uniform, they had lisped words of command to toddling brothers and sisters, to them Lord Roberts had always been held up as the ideal of soldierhood. To be a man like "Bobs" was the dream that had set their baby hearts athrob. And so his death was to them now a heavy blow, the heavier indeed since they had grown unconsciously to regard him as the very starting-point of all things military.

THE HERO OF ENGLAND

Heroes of England, ye Kings of Humanity,
Revere we your names on our History's page,
Often we've quoted you, often we've boasted you,
Lauded to fame by the bard and the sage.

Heroes of England—acclaim we as one of you
Roberts the soldier, the fighter, the brave,
Magnificent veteran who, for his countrymen,
Youth and his latest age gallantly gave.

Need we relate his achievements in Hindustan,
Victories in Africa, Northern and South?
Endless the praise we should have to reiterate
Praise that is always in every one's mouth!

Nay, let us sing him a pæan far different,
We from New Zealand a tribute shall send
To a noble example we knew and we reverenced,
Where honour and courage with kindliness blend.

Here in the ranks of an isolate Army Camp,
We ne'er saw the man and heard seldom his name,
Yet felt we his Presence, an emblem of soldierhood,
And now he has gone—it is here, just the same.

A man who impressed, through the thousands of miles between,
On a young generation far later in date
An image of manhood, of honour, humanity,
Does he not merit a place with the great?

Hero of England—bear ye him tenderly,
Lay him beside England's greatest and best;
Place ye the ferns from the far-off New Zealanders
As the soldier of soldiers is laid to his rest.

CHAPTER XV

THE *SCHARNHORST* AND THE *GNEISENAU*

It was a standing order of the Wellington Regiment that three scouts should go out an hour before sunrise, and take up a position on a prominent point to the side of the harbour. Upon the appearance of anything suspicious, especially an enemy vessel coming to make an attack at dawn, they were to double back and give the alarm. Meanwhile the regiments, yawning and cursing, were standing to arms. At first the scouts were very zealous over this performance, and reported fishing-boats and so forth with great diligence; but the novelty soon wore off, and beyond a cursory glance at the horizon every now and then, they did not trouble themselves overmuch. When day broke, as it did with great suddenness, and the sun rose almost immediately afterwards, they would leisurely husk a coco-nut or so with their bayonets, and having drunk the milk, stroll home to breakfast.

One morning, to be precise the morning of September 14, they arrived on the beach, looked at the lights in the canoes on the reef, and while two of them were wandering along the strand, Poulter was playing billiards, with coco-nuts for balls and the major's telescope for a billiard cue. Finding this an unsatisfactory sport, he focussed the glass on the horizon and swept it slowly round. When he reached extreme left traverse, he uttered an

exclamation. There standing out menacing and ill-defined was a huge grey vessel. He called the others to him and they peered at the stranger through the ever-lessening murk.

"What on earth's the *Australia* come back for?" asked Soult.

"I don't know that the *Australia* is back," answered Poulter. "I don't like the look of this bird at all."

The chief scout seized the telescope.

"I don't give a dang wot she is," he said; "that ain't the British flag. Soult, you go back, an' report strange warship, an' go quick."

Soult started off at a run along the coco-nut-lined road, past the swamp full of red crabs, towards the camp.

Poulter had the glass up again.

"There's another—much bigger ship—the other side of her. And I'll swear she's flying the German Eagles."

That was enough for those two. All thoughts of coco-nuts and a quiet laze were gone now. The foe had come. Back they ran as never they had run before. They overtook Soult, dashed in to the adjutant, and jerked out the alarm. As that officer had grasped the purport of their message, it was confirmed over the telephone. Things moved. Out came extra ammunition, and the troops, breathless and breakfastless, seized it up in handfuls, and went off in their platoons down to the beach to resist the expected landing.

They were no longer men with a grievance. The sick parade vanished as a mist before the sun. The convalescents in the hospital broke bounds and swarmed the rifle-rack; even the bedridden tottered to the door, collapsed, and were carried back to bed again. Happy little chuckles ran along the ranks. At last they were to

justify their existence, and they loosened their bayonets and fingered their cartridges in anticipation.

When they had recovered breath, Poulter and the chief scout found themselves left in the deserted camp.

"Wasn't no use goin' with the boys," said Ocott. "We'll be more use 'anging roun' to see wot 'appens."

The twain thereupon proceeded back to their look-out point. There was no mistaking the warships now. They were the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, the swashbucklers of the Pacific. They had evidently known nothing of the New Zealanders' occupation of Samoa, and the first inkling they had that anything was amiss was to see the British Flag flying on that Court House where for years the German Eagles had flaunted. They thereupon reversed their engines, and to the two men watching on the point, the consequent slowing up of the ships made them look as if they were staggering with astonishment.

"A blinkin' narsty jar that was for Fritz," remarked Ocott. "Thet little bit o' bunting on the Court 'Ouse don't look too like a friendly song and dawnce do it?"

"We'll get all the song and dance we want," said Poulter, "if Fritz is hard up for coal and makes a blackguard rush for the beach. Hadn't we better move along to rejoin the company.

This last remark was prompted by Poulter having noticed the troops coming down on to the beach road, and beginning to march to their prearranged positions. The column was exposed in its entire length to the enemy, and even as the scouts watched, the Germans in the ships took in the situation. Like clockwork all the great eight-inch guns on both vessels swung slowly round and pointed direct at the Colonials as they marched along the water's edge.

"Here's where you thank heaven you're a scout," said Poulter. "The range is under three thousand yards and that makes dead shooting."

"Garn," said Ocott. "One shot an' all the boys 'op it inter the bush."

"Yes, but it's not a case of one shot," said Poulter with pursed lips. "It's a broadside they're in for, and we're going to be the only survivors."

One could see with half an eye that a salvo from those guns would produce terrible havoc on shore. Yet the thought seemed strange and forced that their comrades were any instant going to be done to death. The sun was well up by now, and the scene was surpassingly lovely. Stretching away to their left was the rounded curve of the Apia water-front, and the long straggling township peeped out from the soft verdure that framed each building so caressingly, toning down the bold lines of human architecture with the deft touch of nature. There the scouts could see the little landing-stage low down on the blue water to which the troops were marching with a view to its defence. The reef which surrounds the island precluded landing at any other place. On the right front stood out the great German ships, their hulls outlined against the fair morning sky, and the little ripples, stirred up by the slowly moving screws, were chasing one another about as if in play, and making the sunbeams dance with the very fun of it. This was not the scene for the enactment of a tragedy. One could not imagine that landing-stage a shambles, and the blue Pacific tinged with the red blood of friend or foe.

And yet the grim reality of those eight-inch guns was not to be denied. As the troops moved on, the guns followed them in their progress. The scouts watched,

fairly rooted to the spot. The columns too could see the danger. On they marched placidly, showing no signs of hurry. True, they were all looking intently at the guns, and with good cause. Think of it! A range of three thousand yards—absolutely point-blank shooting—and enough pieces to annihilate a body of men ten times their size. In face of this, they kept perfect step, and the only excitement they showed took the form of fingering the puny rifle-bullets they carried—all they had to oppose the impending avalanche of death.

It may be that the Germans took pity on those Colonials. It may be that they were conserving ammunition. It may be that they were afraid of wounding natives who would in turn make reprisals on the German residents. At any rate, the five hundred lives they held in the hollow of their hand were spared. After finding "the Pearl of the Pacific in the hands of the vile invader," after realizing that the coveted coal was far beyond their reach, and after seeing a chance of annihilating a regiment by the mere pressing of a button, the German withheld his fire. The agonized scouts, sweating copiously with anxiety, gasped blasphemous exclamations of relief as their comrades disappeared behind the substantial walls of the Protestant Mission Church.

When they had reached the stage of normal conversation Poulter remarked:

"Methinks there's something rotten in the State of Germany. Why doth the ruthless one commence to ruth?"

"Somethin's wrong somewhere," agreed the Hell-babe.

"A nice scandal for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to expose," Poulter went on. "How would old Von Triplets or whatever his name is, chewing his breakfast sausage, like a spicy little par. headed: 'The Hun *H*underdoes It,

or How Von Spee Spared the Spups who Spoiled Samoa.'?"

"You're a blinkin' fool," asserted the Hell-babe.

Poulter took no notice of this remark. The relief from the suspense of the last ten munutes was so great that he began to giggle and make facetious remarks much to his chief's irritation.

"I don't think we're goin' ter be any good on this 'ere point. I vote we go along ter the church."

"It's the first time I've ever heard you express that pious sentiment."

"If yer don't close yer grinnin' gap," said Ocott fiercely, "I'll move it round be'ind yer ear-'ole for yer."

"While you're meditating these gentle measures I'll take to the bush," said Poulter. "I'll be out of your way for one thing. For another, Fritz may wake out of his trance any minute and empty out on to the road with his eight-inch."

Ocott was somewhat pacified at the disappearance of Poulter's levity. Truth to tell they were both feeling the need of their breakfast. They had taken to the bush, and were crossing more barbed-wire fences than they had ever imagined to exist in Samoa. This did not improve Ocott's temper. He kept a surly eye continually on Poulter. He was not at all reassured to see Poulter suddenly dash forward to the right, kneel down and fire round after round of ammunition out to sea.

"Stop that blinkin' shootin'," he roared. "They'll think the Germans is attackin'."

"Well, go and tell them they're not. This is my business."

Ocott by this time had grasped the situation. There, paddling for dear life out to the ships, was a man in a canoe. The Hell-babe's rifle spat, and between them

both some effective shots must have been dispatched. The German changed direction, made for the shore, landed a good deal higher up and took to the jungle.

"I know that man," said Poulter; "our job for the rest of the day is to catch him. His name is Kohler. You wait here and watch that canoe. Meanwhile, I'll report the German residents are attempting to communicate with the enemy, and get some shadow of authority to shoot."

Meanwhile the natives were aware that something might go off with a bang any minute. Streams of Samoans were proceeding inland as fast as their legs and the household furniture they carried would let them. Fathers of families, who for years had slept on bamboo pillows to prevent their hair from being crushed, bundled up mats and pans and hoisted them on to their heads. Women with armfuls of brown babies waddled up the Vailima Road, and even the Samoan girls deserted for once their beloved bathing-pool and fled chattering and frightened into the interior.

Fritz the civilian on the island was getting busy. All the arms had long been collected. He could not offer any great assistance to a landing-party; but the information as to the strength and dispositions of the troops he had been patiently collecting for weeks, he decided to place at Von Spee's disposal. Poulter and Ocott had frustrated one attempt, but before Poulter could get his report home to the major, another boat suddenly shot out from well down the harbour and made for the ships. What information the admiral received, the troops never knew. At any rate, it seemed sufficient to persuade Von Spee that Samoa was a good place to be away from. Shortly afterwards he backed out of the harbour and steamed direct for the horizon. It was by now ten or

eleven o'clock. The New Zealanders had had no breakfast, and were very hungry. While there had been a hope of some excitement they were happy enough. They saw that it must be the coal heaped up on the shore that the ships were after, and they hoped Fritz was in sufficiently desperate straits for fuel to render a landing a necessity. Meanwhile they had saturated the coal with paraffin with a view to lighting it if the Germans got sufficiently close to make such a measure worth while. The picture of Fritz playing snapdragon with tons of burning coal, peppered the while with shrapnel from the Battery's fifteen-pounders and the ·303's from their rifles was a pleasant enough reflection to keep down the pangs of hunger; but when the ships decided to get out and leave bad alone, the disgust of the Colonials was intense in proportion as their anticipation had been keen. They broke forth into lamentations over Fritz's lack of sporting instinct, their indefinite confinement to the island till the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* should be destroyed, and disgust at losing for ever, as they thought, a chance of killing a few Huns.

"Wot I wanter know is, why didn't our Battery 'ave a dig at 'em as they was that close?" said Stumpy. "They could 'it 'em right enough, they was big enough."

"Presumably," said Podger, "because the Battery did not want to disclose its position—even if the light field-pieces could penetrate the German armour. The Battery was on the foreshore to resist a landing—not to fight a naval engagement."

So the regiments trooped back to their belated breakfast. Not so the two scouts whose adventures we have been following. They went breakfastless and dinnerless

too. Poulter gave a roseate account of their doings to the major, and got instructions to follow up the clues he said he had, and to apprehend the culprit.

Well and good. Poulter collected Ocott and Stumpy and set out. His idea was to go to the man's house, and see what he could find there. Transport difficulties presented themselves. The man Kohler lived some four miles out of Apia. Poulter was too good a scout to walk that distance. He thought it would be a good move to search the hotels, and if that proved fruitless, commandeer any German conveyance he could find, and ride to Kohler's house.

The search of the hotels was thorough, but served no good purpose. The sale of liquors had been prohibited, and in consequence the Germans had not congregated there. They found a party of "square-heads" drinking kava in an upper story of one "pub.," but the man they wanted was not among them.

So they hid behind some shrubbery just outside the town and waited for conveyances. The road was strangely—suspiciously—deserted. After a quarter of an hour of precious time wasted, Poulter, Ocott, and Stumpy were just about to give up the game and walk, when a German youth appeared on a bicycle. It was the work of a moment to spread-eagle the cyclist, lift him gently from his machine, and tell him to go away. He went. It was the wiser course.

Bicycle and scouts disappeared behind the bush. Five more minutes' wait brought two Germans along on horseback. They were cantering at a good long stride and were seriously discomfited by three apparitions suddenly jumping out from the bank. By means of a good deal of arm-waving and shouting and Stumpy incidentally sprawling full length over

the bicycle, the horses were brought to a terrified standstill.

"Dismount!" said Poulter.

"Vot you vant?"

By this time Ocott had one bridle and Poulter the other.

"Get off," said Ocott.

"Nein, nein!" vociferated the fatter German of the two.

"Pass 'im one in the eye," suggested Stumpy. This invaluable suggestion was soon acted on. A bayonet-prod from Poulter and a well-aimed blow from the sinewy arm of Ocott brought Fritz and Karl down from their perches with gratifying speed and force. The scouts then mounted and turned the horses facing inland.

The Germans protested wildly. The horse-flesh was good and their pride was wounded. The Hun is nothing if not pompous.

"Ta-ta!" called Poulter. "Call round at Malifa Camp to-morrow and ask for the scouts. We'll trade then."

With this the Boche had to be content. It was not a long ride to Kohler's place. Of course Kohler was out. But his half-caste Samoan wife was in—so were his multitudinous quarter-caste offsprings. On learning the nature of the mission, mother and children set up a combined yelling that Stumpy took for fright, and Poulter was half inclined to regard as a signal.

In her confusion she forgot the obvious course of pretending she knew no English, and Poulter as he searched the house kept up a running fire of questions which she answered readily. Yes, Kohler had been out most of the morning. Yes, he had been back. No, he was not still here yet. He had gone off.

"Where is he?"

"I do not know."

Ocott put in, "If yer lie to us we cut 'is throat when we catch 'im."

Renewed yells from the family.

"All right," said Poulter, "leave her alone. She has told all the truth she can, I think. We must be off. My good woman, don't be frightened, we won't hurt your man—unnecessarily," he added under his breath.

The quietening effect of this speech was somewhat marred by Stumpy making a very creditable imitation of the gurgle a man is supposed to give when his throat is cut, accompanying the same by appropriate gestures with his bayonet. During the pandemonium which thereon arose Poulter caught sight through a half-open door of clothes strewn about as of a man hurriedly changing. Further inspection revealed the fact that the clothes obviously intended to be put on were untouched. Had Kohler then taken fright at the sound of approaching horses and disappeared into the jungle? The search was then for a naked man.

This deduction he imparted to Ocott.

"You oughter have been a Boy Sprout," observed that worthy.

"Yes, perhaps. Meanwhile we will search the thickest clump of trees hereabout."

The house stood a little detached from the surrounding vegetation. Before the heavy jungle commenced there were several large clumps of trees, and into these the scouts launched a search.

Poulter reasoned that Kohler would not have gone far in his scanty attire. He had probably been changing to get rid of the clothes he would be identified as wearing when he had set out in the canoe, and was intending to take cover till the scouts had gone. His wife—unaware

of the game he had been playing—had then told the truth as to his movements.

The surmise proved correct. The second or third clump they searched revealed a man in canvas shoes and an undervest sitting among the thick branches of a tree.

"Mornin', Kohler," said Poulter laconically.

Kohler scowled down through his leafy retreat and said nothing.

"I observed it was a fine morning. It's no use pretending you don't speak English because I've heard you speak it often."

No answer.

"The gen'leman thinks 'e's a bird," said Stumpy. "Tweet, tweet," said he, imitating a canary. "Polly want a cracker? Offer 'im a biscuit, Poulter."

"The game's up, Kohler," said Poulter. "Come down and get a few clothes on."

Kohler remained perched in his probably uncomfortable, certainly indecorous, attitude, and gave no sign.

"Wot a rowdy 'ole brute 'e is," said Stumpy.

"I reckon we'd better pump a little lead into 'is 'ide," suggested Ocott.

"Yes," said Stumpy; "shoot off odd bits wot don't matter."

"I doubt if you have the marksmanship," said Poulter. "Anyhow, it hardly seems a sporting proposition. Better cut down the tree."

No sooner said than done. It was a great joke. Stumpy ran to the house for an axe. Ocott, who was a master of the axeman's craft, had given but two preliminary swings to mark the upper and lower limits of the cut he would make, when their bird above showed manifest signs of uneasiness.

"He's wakin' up and takin' notice," said Stumpy. "Well enough ter take a little refreshment, Fritz?"

"I'll give 'im all the refreshment 'e'll want," said the Hell-babe, taking out with each lithe swing a chunk of wood nine inches long and about five across.

Kohler soon signified his intention of descending.

"No, stop there!" said Stumpy. "We want ter see the smash."

The bare legs, however, began to appear from their leafy retreat, and notwithstanding the sizable chips they aimed at him to keep him in the tree, Kohler eventually dropped from the branches on to his feet. Three pairs of willing arms promptly had him on his back. He offered no resistance worth the name and when they let him up he tried his best to look dignified. That the effort was unsuccessful may be gauged from Stumpy's next remark.

"'E do look a trick in 'is little short shirt," he said.

"Watch him," said Poulter, "he's a slippery customer."

"Come along, laddie," said Stumpy, "come to where the wee wife's waitin'."

The roar that went up from wife and children when the procession returned bringing husband and father in Arcadian costume back to the bosom of his family, would have done credit to a herd of bulls. Under the tender ministrations of Stumpy, Kohler clothed himself, and Ocott got out his horse and trap to drive him into town. Poulter meanwhile was telling the woman that she need have nothing to fear; that her husband would not be shot; and that the horse and trap, over which she seemed to evince decidedly more anxiety than over her husband, would be returned. In fact, she could drive in and take it back herself.

So Kohler, who had made extensive additions to his wardrobe in anticipation of some little stay with the military, got into the conveyance beside Poulter, while Mrs. K. and some half-dozen of the brown brats swarmed up in the rear.

Stumpy jettisoned the bicycle and mounted Poulter's horse. It was a pleasant little ride in for the scouts. Quite what K., Mrs. K., and family thought of the proceeding they did not state. It was a sad enough journey for them. As Stumpy told her, "The Kaiser has a lot ter answer for, me dear."

Kohler was handed over to the P.M., his wife drove home, and the scouts never saw or heard of him again. Probably he was released on parole. Or, again, he may have been deported to New Zealand to languish on Soames' Island till the end of the war. That island, by the way, has been rendered mildly famous by the English Press. It was stated that, situated as it is in Wellington Harbour, it is a perfectly safe place to leave the Boche unguarded; that the interned prisoners cannot swim ashore because of the sharks that infest the harbour. As a journalistic effort this is good. As a statement of the truth it is lamentable. There are practically no sharks in the Wellington Harbour, and there is a large guard and a military governor of the island. But this is by the way.

On returning to camp the scouts reported their doings to the major. He was very well pleased. Then they turned their massy intellects to the solution of the problem of what to do with the two fine bay mares which they found left on their hands. When they came out they found that the mares had solved the question for themselves. In New Zealand every horse is taught to stand tied by the reins. Assuming that these nags were

well-mannered, the scouts had fastened the reins to a fence, and had not had a moment's hesitation in leaving the animals. On coming back they found one horse had broken her bridle, and the other had decamped with half the fence.

"Well, that's that!" said Stumpy. "I was just thinkin' where we could plant these mares fer a ride once in a w'ile."

"I'm wondering what will those Fritzes say to-morrow when they call round for the mares," said Poulter.

"Give it up, Emma," said Stumpy, "I ain't no good at riddles."

They had had nothing to eat since early morning, and it was now well past four o'clock. The pressing matter of the moment was to fill the void within. This accomplished with some difficulty, as regimental cooks look with disfavour on men dropping in at odd hours for a snack, they went to spend the evening at a birthday party that was being held by one of the boys at the Custom-house.

The next day two excited Germans were conducting a palaver with the military policeman outside the race-course camp. Poulter and Ocott were driving out on a transport wagon and swore vigorously as the Germans got in the road of the vehicle. Mutual recognition brought frowns to the faces of Fritz and Karl and smiles to those of the scouts.

"Vere are dose horses vot you took?"

"Here they are," said Poulter, indicating the wretched transport weeds in the wagon. He had named them Beauty and Dewdrop and everybody admitted that the names were good.

"*Nein!* Yesterday dose horses we gif you, where are dey?"

"You said that before," said Poulter. "You can search me; these are all I have."

Well, they would tell the Kommander.

They could tell the blinkin' Commander for all Ocott or Poulter cared. They had signed for no horses, and they felt that their own lies should be as good as the German's truth. Still, in justice to Fritz and Karl, they explained that the horses had probably died overnight.

Fritz and Karl did not believe it. They explained at some length that they did not believe it.

Nor yet would they give any weight to Ocott's asseveration that the said horses had been eaten for breakfast by the troops.

"Well, as you gentlemen seem so deuced unreasonable, I'm afraid we must move on. I have offered you all the horse-flesh I have. You refuse. Very well then, gentlemen, remember there *is* a war on. Good day!"

With this Poulter cracked his whip and Beauty and Dewdrop shambled off into Apia. The scouts heard no more of the matter. In all probability the horses arrived out at the plantations that afternoon, and when the indignant Germans arrived home, nursing their wrath, they found the animals awaiting their return.

Many many weeks later the news came through the Wireless Station (for once uncontradicted by Honolulu) that the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* had been destroyed. It was fairly late in the evening when the rumour was confirmed, but it was not too late for the troops to turn out *en masse*, collect flags, and make a triumphal procession to their C.O.'s quarters, where they cheered and sang and made speeches. Surely now that the Pacific menace was destroyed, they would be getting away from Samoa—getting away to do a little fighting. So they cheered and sang all the more lustily, and

made more speeches and waved flags all the more vigorously.

Yet still the weeks dragged on and no definite word of departure. The nectar of the news of the end of the two battleships began to sour in the after-taste, until finally it became another grievance against Fate that now that all good reason for their staying on was gone they were held fast indefinitely.

"Still," said Poulter one evening, "we owe a great deal to these ships."

"Wot do we owe?" asked Stumpy.

"A good many of our lives probably. I think it was very sporting of them not to fire that day."

"I got a letter from me brother on one o' Sturdee's ships," said Stumpy, "tellin' me all about the Falkland Islands fight."

"What did he say?"

Stumpy cleared his throat. Although a whimsical enough character, he did not fancy himself on the stump. Still, he had a good story to tell, and the little gathering grew closer to listen.

"Well, it seems the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* after they had took a look at us, went off and dumped a few shots into Papetee or some sich place, just by way o' whippin' the cat. Then they picked up a few o' their cobbers wot was cruisin' about—their names was," here Stumpy consulted the letter, "the *Nuremburg*, the *Dresden*, and the *Leipzig*. Then they all went off on the wallaby, nosin' around fer anything worth while. Well, Bill says that Sturdee—that's the bloke wot was in charge o' Bill's ship the *Invincible*, an' the *Inflexible*, an' the *Canopus*—I forget the rest——"

"I think the *Kent*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Otranto*," said Brenson.

"Yes, that's right. The *Glasgow*, Bill says, is a civilian ship wot was turned inter a battleship. Well, Sturdee an' 'is pack was coalin' in the Falkland Islands. They was workin' like 'ell ter git it done, an' the *Canopus* was lyin' out in the open sea. Von Spee and 'is crew comes up an' seen the 'ole *Canopus* squattin' down doin' nothin'.

"'Ullo,' says Von Spee, ''ere's the *Canopus*. B'hoys, we've got the *Canopus*. Won't grandpa be pleased.'

"So the 'Uns plunked a couple into the *Canopus*. Ole Sturdee was just lickin' 'is chops round the corner arter a good feed o' coal and 'e 'eard the racket and come round ter see the *Canopus* 'avin' a un'ealthy time. So he signalled the '*H*england *h*expects' signal, which means, 'Go 'ell fer leather,' and Von Spee seen 'is triflin' mistake. He'd picked a lemon fair enough and scooted. But Sturdee 'an 'is pack was on to 'im an' they 'ad a deuce of a fight. The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* died very game, Bill sez, and the *Nuremburg* escaped altogether."

"Where did she get to?" asked some one.

"Gawd knows! She's still 'angin' round. Some mornin' she may turn up 'ere. But not the *Scharnhorst* or 'er lady friend. *Never no more.* They're very dead."

CHAPTER XVI

"TOFA MA FALENI"

THERE is an air, very popular with the natives in Samoa, which was known to the troops as "Tofa ma Faleni." These were the words of its opening bars. We know not if we have the spelling rightly. We are not even sure of its correct interpretation; but, if we may hazard a guess, the phrase means "Good-bye, my dearest." The regimental band took up the air. Bandmaster Cole wrote the score, and the band, whose playing, by the way, reached a high degree of finish on the island, took delight in playing this tune to the natives at their fortnightly Sunday concert. The Samoans came from far and near to these open-air concerts on the water-front, and their appreciation was distinctly marked of this little tribute the white-man band made to their national music.

The air is a plaintively haunting one, suggestive of sorrow at parting. Really to appreciate its beauty one should hear the Samoans sing it themselves. We have already told of their genius for harmony; and a goodly concourse of these dusky musicians could get more meaning out of these simple little harmonies than could forty regimental bands—however great their skill.

And so when at last, on quite short notice, the bald fact was announced in orders that the troops were to

embark for New Zealand, the familiar tune became invested with a new meaning. The men, who for months had been grumbling at their imprisonment on the island, who had come to believe they hated the green palms and the bright sunshine, now suddenly realized how much they loved the place and the people. How men longed for one more dip in the warm blue Pacific, for one more prowl in the jungle. It was good-bye to bully-beef and flies; but it was good-bye too to the happy community they had made together, good-bye to their friends the warm-hearted Samoans.

In that last twelve hours there was so much to be done. Their own kit was easy enough to remove; but a regiment is a different matter. All the impedimenta they had spent six months in strewing around them they had to gather in and put aboard ship in as many hours. It was hard work to get away to say good-bye to one's friends. Hanna felt he could not leave Samoa without one last powwow with Malietua. So he betook himself off in the unobtrusive way he had brought to a high pitch of perfection, and went to see the son of the chief whose name Stevenson has made historical. Unlike Tamassisse, Malietua speaks excellent English. Hanna met him in Apia, and they strolled along the water-front, and then sat down a little along past the water-front picket at a spot where Hanna had been used to sit for hours watching the limpid Pacific and the shoals of fish rippling the water.

"Well," said the chief, "you are really off this time."

"Yep; we're off all right."

"The word didn't come from Honolulu?" laughed Malietua.

"No! Them fish-tales is scrapped for ever. You know, Malietua, I'm fiercely sorry we're goin' away."

"Really?" replied the chieftain, "after so many disappointments?"

"Oh, it isn't that I don't want ter quit and do a little Hun hunting. New Zealand won't hold me very long. But at the same time it's a dear old spot is Samoa."

"Surely the authorities will not leave Samoa unprotected? There is a lively possibility of the Germans here rising and taking the place back."

"Well, I understand," said Hanna, "that there is a party of men over the age for active service—some five hundred—coming here shortly to take over."

"It's just as well. Do you know there's something I've got to tell you which I think might interest you?"

"What is it?" asked Hanna.

"Well, you know my pater and I have always led the pro-British element here," said Malietua.

"That ain't no special secret," put in Hanna facetiously.

The young chief laughed. "Thank you—I'm glad it's acknowledged. The point is this. You know that when the Germans definitely took over Upolu after the termination of the Three-Power rule in Samoa, it was only too apparent that Tamassisse's star was in the ascendant."

"Yep; you'd be having a pretty thin time."

"Well, Admiral Sturdee was here at the time, and when my fortunes seemed in such low water he made me a solemn prophecy."

"Did he?" said Hanna. "I didn't know he did that for a livin'. They don't pay 'em too well in the Navy."

"Don't be frivolous."

"Sorry," said Hanna. "I'm really very interested; do go on."

"Well," said Malietua, "Sturdee said that although

the British were going away now, they would come back. He pointed to the sun as he spoke, and said that as surely as that sun would rise to-morrow, so surely would the British—maybe soon, maybe late—come again to claim Upolu as their own. Don't you think that a remarkable prophecy ? "

"I don't wish to seem inquisitive," said Hanna, "but are you really telling the truth ? "

"Oh, yes, I'm not joking," answered Malietua. "I give you my word on it. He probably knew that sooner or later the break must come, and guessed that one of the British captures would be Samoa. That thought has cheered me through many a dark experience during the German occupation."

"Well, I'd like to have a long yarn to you about it," said Hanna; "but I must bung off. This won't buy the captain a new frock."

"Good-bye, Hanna," said Malietua. "Some day when I pay a visit to New Zealand I shall look you up. I am really very sorry you are off now, but quite appreciate how you must long to go."

"Good-bye, old sport," answered Hanna, warmly shaking his hand.

"Tofa."

"Tofa," answered Hanna, and followed a circuitous route back to the camp, pondering the while the extraordinary story the chief had told him.

At last all the regimental gear is aboard the transport, and the men themselves march off down to the waterfront. Many a time has such a scene been enacted before. Each returning mail-boat brings back a few of the worst cases from hospital. Great has always been their send-off. The regiment is excused parade and lines the route. The band goes first, playing the regimental march :

When we go out
We always shout:
We won't be beggared about!

Then limp the happy sick who are going back to home and mother. Then follows the transport wagon, carrying the kit and the thousand and one parcels that the returning men are commissioned to deliver. Good-byes are called and handshakes given, and off go the invalids, the envy of all.

But to-day the scene is changed. The regimental band still leads, and plays as ever the regimental march; but instead of a few sick men limping out of step in its rear, there swing along the proud battalions of now well-trained Colonials; it is the Samoans who line the road and who do the cheering. They will never see their good friends again, the men who have given them bully-beef, have eaten their bananas, have visited them in their huts, run their races, played their games, swum with them, and sung with them. The glad Talofa of yesterday is changed to the sad Tofa of to-day. And as the band reaches the water-front and breaks forth into the strains of "Tofa ma Faleni," the disconsolate natives, tears streaming down their brown cheeks, join in the music and wave farewells to the troops.

There is not a man in the ranks who is not affected by the genuine sorrow of the Samoans at his leaving. There is not a man there who does not vow that some day, "when the war is over," he will come back. Ah! Many of them will never come back. Almost to a man they revolunteered. Egypt saw them a while; then Gallipoli; and now France. As he goes to-day along some road out there behind "the ditch" and meets a platoon of New Zealanders, the ex-Samoan calls aloud "Talofa."

He is in bad luck indeed if at least one man does not break ranks and give him the grasp of comradeship. And as the now Imperial officer and the Colonial trooper go together into some *estaminet*, the Provost-Marshal has to be satisfied with the explanation that when in the ranks of Samoa they robbed the same pine-apple plantation or fished from the same palolo boat.

As the transport goes out through the reef, and the township of Apia grows smaller, and the cheering and crying of the natives grow fainter in the ever-increasing distance, a grim little figure, whose trousers do not fit him, is standing in the stern watching the sunlight dancing in the wake of the ship. Stumpy is very thoughtful. He gazes wistfully at the shores he knows so well. He is thinking of Heaven knows what—perhaps of the bathes or fruit raids now over for ever, perhaps of some dear little Samoan maid to whom he has not had time to say good-bye. He heaves a prodigious sigh, shoves his hands to the elbows into his pockets, and expectorates thoughtfully over the side.

"Well," says he with an air of reluctant finality, "that's that!"

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