

Will You Enlist?

By Lucy White

ARE there any prospects of war? I'm afraid not.

How would you like a fight? Pretty well; they say it's almost as exciting as target practice.

What other navies could defeat the American navy? They have forgotten to build any navies of that sort.

What is the purpose of this cruise? Do you think I am a clairvoyant?

Will a big fleet remain in the Pacific? No, but a small detachment may be left at the Asiatic station, and after the big fleet has completed its cruise to the east and back to New York through the Suez canal, the first squadron will be returned to the Pacific.

Do you intend to re-enlist? How can I tell?

What about sailors marrying? Where do you think we'd stop the wives?

If you had a son would you want him to enter the navy? Sure.

The thousands of white capped heads that bobbed in unison through our streets in the great parade can think and their thoughts keep better step than their feet. The navy, so far as the sailor is concerned, thinks as a unit.

If you have an idea that a tough American sailor is a fool or a scoundrel, you should interview him as I did, and you will recover from such a delusion with remarkable rapidity.

I went with the crowds of visitors that took possession of the defenseless ship. I waylaid detached parties upon the streets; I fell upon them at divers sundry and unexpected places, loosed my rapid fire of questions upon their unprotected heads, recorded their ready answers and took a general average.

From the expressed opinion of from three to six intelligent men, each from fourteen different battalions and cruisers, the above are the average answers. The questions were compiled that the composite opinion of the navy as to the future of the navy as a whole and the general condition of its individual members might be arrived at.

Most of the opinions of the composite mind of the navy are clearly defined. Nobody thought there were any prospects of war, and everybody seemed to regret it, not from bloodthirstiness or ill will toward any nation, but as one boy put it, "What does a fellow enter the navy for—to sleep? Not much. We're ready for anything on fifteen minutes' notice."

He went on, "but nothing will happen on this cruise. We're all together and too strong."

But when I asked them which other navies could defeat the American navy they would not take me seriously.

When I intimated that the English navy was considered the strongest in the world the American sailor as a unit glared at me incredulously, and when I undertook to comment upon the absence of ships of the Dreadnought type in the fleet I took up my life in my own hands.

"This true," I remarked to three bluejackets from the Louisiana, "that you have out here 16 pretty fair battalions of the second class, but what would you do with them?"

A tall young Irish-American knocked up his sleeves,

then caught himself and regarded me gravely. "It's a lucky thing for you that you are a woman," he said. "I never struck a woman in my life, but if you were just a little bigger—Wou'd you please ask some man around here and get him to say what you just said?"

"What?" I asked, naively. "That about 16 pretty fair sec—?" His voice broke; he could go no further.

One boy asked me, "I hadn't been reading anything by that fellow Reuter-dahl. From his tone he didn't think much of 'that fellow.'" As to armor plate, they volunteered to inform me, "we've got the best in the world, made in Philadelphia—better than Krupp's. And we've got Krupp's, too, on some of the ships, but Krupp is so hard it is brittle, and the Philadelphia make is more pliable and tougher."

"What about this cruise?" I asked them. "Don't you think it's foolhardy, this parading around the world, showing all the other fellows your hand?"

The navy again expressed its unanimous opinion in language too varied and picturesque to be repeated here that whatever the purpose of the administration was that purpose was good and sufficient.

"But what is the purpose of this cruise?" I asked. About 60 per cent were reticent and would express no theory. 35 per cent thought it was to show the world the strength and practicability of our fleet and a very small per cent thought it was a stately demonstration of protection to a threatened coast.

No one advanced the theory that it was to threaten war in anticipation of war.

But when I asked how large a fleet would remain in the Pacific, my answers were so many and different that I lost all count some trail of them.

If any two sailors advanced the identical theory I failed to make the tally. Everybody agreed that the fleet as a whole would remain on the Pacific coast until July 7, and then 16 battleships and auxiliaries would sail for Honolulu, the Alabama and Maine to remain at Seattle, and the Wisconsin and Nebraska taking their places in the fleet.

After the fleet reached Honolulu, opinion began to scatter. Some took the fleet as a whole to Sydney, then to Manila, then to Hongkong and Japan, then through the Suez canal to New York, leaving eight cruisers and the two battleships mentioned above on the Pacific.

Others stated that these two ships would join the cruise later, and 18 ships would go through the canal. A small percentage thought the fleet would separate at Manila, but several intelligent boys who seemed to understand the subject very well, insisted that the only detachment probable would be that of four first class battleships, which would be left at Manila.

Over 50 per cent of those I interviewed emphatically expressed their opinion that the 16 ships would complete the cruise through the Suez canal, and after reaching New York, the first squadron, consisting of the Connecticut, Kansas, Louisiana, Vermont, Georgia, Rhode Island, New Jersey and Virginia, would make a return cruise around the Horn again and remain permanently on the Pacific.

Whether this last theory is probable or not, it seems to be the most prevalent among the sailors. This would place eight ships of the very flower of our navy on the Pacific coast some time in the spring or summer of 1909, as the fleet expects to reach the Atlantic coast after the end of its long cruise in February of that year.

But as to the sailors individually, only three expressed their intention of re-enlisting, and these were men who had already been in the service for more than six years.

The truth of the matter, as I could arrive at it through those to whom I talked, is that our navy is composed of boys—and they are young healthy Saxons most of them—whose main motive in enlisting is usually some form of wanderlust.

The majority of enlisted men are beneath 25 years of age. We have practically a new navy in the course of every three years.

These boys come from the farm and the village and the city. They are just the boys you used to meet in grammar school—high school—if you were lucky enough to attend public school anywhere in America.

They serve their three years and leave the service healthier and no doubt wiser men, to make room for other youngsters who want to see the world.

"It's not much for a man who wants to be anything big in the world," they told me, "but for three years it's all right."

As to marrying, no sailor unless it be a chief petty officer, they told me, can afford to marry, unless he be lucky enough—as one boy put it—"to get a girl who is willing to support herself, or whose parents will support her."

The Irish American told me he was leaving the navy in a month to marry and settle down and go back to his old trade, that of a railroad man. He was the only man I met who either had matrimonial incumbences or the intention of forming any connection of the kind.

But if practically none expressed their intention of re-enlisting, everybody expressed his lack of sorrow of having been in the navy as long as he had, and none seemed to have any objection whatever to committing their posterity to the same service.

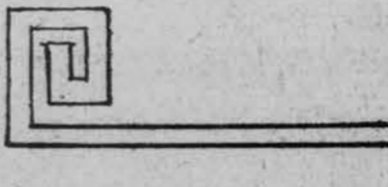
It was an interesting and gratifying experience. Many were the petitions made to me. I was asked several times, "When you write this up, please don't call us 'jackies.'" I call them to witness that I have not done so a single time.

Another boy asked me to "please tell them editors when they write about us sailors to cut out the slang." The same petition was made by two others who used more grammar and less of the slang they wanted eliminated.

One out of every two boys I talked to informed me in one way or another that "everybody seemed to think sailors were tough, but they are not." I agree with them. They are not. They are just plain boys from home.

I have played marbles with their counterparts many a time, and a nation that could be ashamed of them would have to begin being ashamed of itself.

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Little Stories From the Big Ships

By Will Scarlet

TO get a right idea of Jack it is essential to have a clear conception of the life that Jack leads.

Mr. Businessman, Jack is very different from you and his life is very different from your life. You spend some six or seven hours each day in the company of a "fuffy haired young lady, who takes your letters down in shorthand and writes them for you on her typewriter, and an elderly gentleman with the scholar's hump, who devotes his attention to the prosaic task of keeping your books. These two persons are with you while you are at work, but when office hours are over you see them no more.

The stenographer and the book keeper pass completely out of your life and gang their ain gait until 8 o'clock next morning.

Now, suppose, Mr. Businessman, that things were slightly different. Suppose that, after office hours, conditions demanded that your stenographer and your book keeper should ride home with you and take dinner with you and go to the theater with you and next morning breakfast with you. Suppose that they both should spend Sundays and holidays with you. And suppose that the order of things should keep up for months and months, week in and week out.

If your suppositions have been sufficiently keen and imaginative they will have led you to realize pretty clearly the sort of life Jack leads and the conditions he has to face, whether at home, on the high seas or in a foreign port. He is a gregarious existence. Nobody can accuse Jack of being a monk, yet in a sense his life is as circumscribed as that of the brown robes of the cloister. Jack and Brother Paul both live the common life. They both rise and go to bed at prescribed hours. They both work and eat and recreate themselves in common. And they both pray—each after his own fashion—in common.

Men who lead the common life in times become different from other men. They acquire characteristics of their own. They see things from a peculiar viewpoint. They learn to attach importance to seemingly trivial things and to dismiss what other men regard as weighty matters with a smile and a shrug. Incidentally, they possess a sense of humor which is shaped and sharpened by their environment.

These facts are tiresome enough in the recital, but they are necessary in order that we may appreciate Jack's stories and enjoy Jack's jokes at their keenest and best. If you fail to grasp the significance of the common life as led by the bluejackets you fall assuredly to see much point in the anecdotes with which Jack is willing to regale you on the slightest provocation. On the day of the big naval parade a friend and I fell into conversation with three men on shore leave from the Minnesota and it was not long before the most gregarious of the trio was recounting certain incidents of the cruise

up the coast. He laughed uproariously as he talked, and his companions at 10 second intervals put every tooth in their heads on exhibition. After the sailors had gone on their way my friend pursed his lips and wrinkled his forehead and remarked in the superior sang froid fashion of Mr. John Drew: "Goodness knows, I can't see what those fellows were laughing at. What he told us was ordinary—most ordinary. Such stories wouldn't amuse even children."

There you are! My friend failed absolutely to grasp the humor of Jack's narratives for the simple reason that he failed to realize the conditions of Jack's existence. He has made no study of the philosophy of the common life.

Readers of "The Christian" may remember into what a flurry of amusement the London Monastery was thrown when Brother Paul lost his hat. It was a mere trifle and not essentially funny; yet the brethren regarded the incident as a capital joke. Men who lead the common life are in this respect like children; they make much out of little or nothing at all. And so Jack finds a rattling good joke in a thing that the average landman regards as perfectly and flatly commonplace and obvious.

To illustrate: Everybody who has met any of the officers of the fleet has assuredly heard of "Captain Green."

The big joke of the cruise has been, is and undoubtedly will be, "Captain Green." Should conversation lag for a moment at breakfast Lieutenant A will ask Lieutenant B, "Has 'Captain Green' turned out this morning?" As "Captain Green" is in the course of a stroll about town he is almost certain to inquire, "Have you met 'Captain Green'?" On at least one memorable occasion during the cruise down the South American coast the wardroom of the Ohio was converted into an opera house by a chorus of voices singing in 20 different sharps and flats, "Where, oh where, is 'Captain Green'?"

The genesis of the "Captain Green" pleasantries is as follows: Some time before the fleet left Hampton roads an item appeared in certain newspapers to the effect that "Captain Green" had been commissioned to act as pilot during the passage of the big ships through the straits of Magellan.

The navy men were mystified, and asked one another in all seriousness, "Who is 'Captain Green'?" Nobody knew; and then, by the time the formula of the query was something like "Who in heaven, on earth or under the earth is 'Captain Green'?" the humor of the thing became irresistible. The wags hung on to "Captain Green," as tersely and as comically weekly humorists cling to jokes about automobiles and mothers in law. Even yet, if you want to see a fleet officer smile, just mention "Captain Green."

It is safe to say that, among us sane and conservative landlubbers, a joke of the "Captain Green" species would die a natural death in the course of a single day. That is because we do not lead the common life, because our environment is not Jack's environment. We don't get as much fun out of any one thing as Jack does, because we have so many more things out of which we may extract fun if we please.

The shade of the mythical "Captain Green" confines its gambols to the officers' wardroom and the quarterdeck. The boys forward have certain rib-tickling ghosts of their own. The jackies on the West Virginia grin all over at the recollection of one of their number who bought a dainty parasol in one of the South American ports to protect his black, temperate head from the tropical sun. He meant to preserve the parasol as a souvenir of the cruise and accordingly brought it on ship-board. But, in some mysterious way, the parasol disappeared. Naturally, the owner grew uneasy. His frenzied search of the ship's "lucky bag" proved futile. Then, as his shipmates protested in several tones of insincerity how awfully sorry they were the searching jacky waxed wrathful. He was going to do things to every man in his mess if that parasol didn't show up, and show up soon—that's all things began to look really serious.

"Say," he remarked, "do you want to get your parasol back?"

"Of course I do," answered Jack, with more emphasis than the Hiotype can take.

"Well," pursued the funny man calmly, "I know where it is, but I reckon you'll let it alone."

"Let it alone nothing!" cried Jack, much provoked. "You just tell me where it is—and I'll be quick, too."

"Sure I'll tell you," and the funny man grinned. "Butts" ate it for breakfast.

"Butts" is the black coated, stumpy tailed, camera eyed goat which the "West Virginia" jackies have adopted as a mascot. He is obviously a goat with a past and the funny man's settlement of the parasol difficulty was the initial step in making poor "Butts" the vicarious scapegoat for all on board. Jack forgot his wrath and his threats of chastisement and joined heartily in the laugh which was, of course, on "Butts."

Other funny men among the crew at once corroborated the first funny man's statement. One recalled seeing the goat making scandalous eyes at the parasol when that feminine apparition first came on board. Another remembered how "Butts" had refused food for several hours in order to get into trim for downing the parasol. Still another conjured up a vision of "Butts" tying himself into a knot in his efforts to swallow the handle, which was thick and curved. Her guide was reached when yet another jackie dragged the reluctant "Butts" into the center of the group and pretended to show the brass ferule of the parasol to be within earshot. Her guide was the thin end between two of the mascot's ribs.

The boys of the Rhode Island tell one on a trim, well looking youth enrolled among them. Among some visitors on board the battleship before the vessel left Hampton roads was an inquisitive, garrulous, opinionated elderly lady, whose remarks on men and things nautical were a source of huge delight to all the jackies who happened to be within earshot. Her guide was explaining to her the manner in which the men performed that poetic operation known as slushing down the deck.

"Dear me," remarked the visitor, "I don't see how they can help slipping when it's rough out at sea."

"Oh, well," explained the diceron, "they usually don't wear any shoes."

Just then the lady caught sight of the trim, well looking youth standing a little apart from a group of bluejackets on the forward deck.

"Don't wear any shoes? Dear me! It's a wonder they don't catch their death of cold."

"I've heard of that ever happening," the patient guide assured her.

"Well," sighed the elderly lady philosophically, "I suppose it's all right or it wouldn't be allowed. But"—and she pointed to Adonis forward—"what a pity such a nice young man has to go around in his bare feet!"

Did Adonis bear about it? Well, rather! And it is just possible that he will never cease to hear about it. Almost daily during the long cruise, as Adonis piled his mop, the burden of a sotto voiced but perfectly distinct chorus would come to his ears:

"What a pity, what a pity! What a pity, what a pity! Such a nice young man!"

The story of the "nice young man" illustrates another characteristic of Jack's humor. The fun of the man who leads the common life consists very largely in the gentle art of joshing. Practically no one escapes, but the men who show any singularity bear the brunt of the attack. Let one of Uncle Sam's enlisted men be over particular about the arrangement of his hair or the condition of his fingernails; let him assume anything approaching an unconventional pose, be that pose physical, moral or intellectual; above all, let him acquire the reputation of being a "crutch," a "gouger" or a "right wad," and his reformation is promptly undertaken, and sometimes secured, by means of the gentle art of joshing.

And let this fact be borne in mind: The gentle art of joshing is not confined to their own deck. If possible, it thrives even more among the officers. For instance:

The fleet was rolling along the coast of Chili and, as every revolution of the propellers brought the vessel nearer home, everybody's spirits rose proportionately. In the navy, when everybody's spirits rise, everybody takes a hand in the gentle game of joshing if there is ever so small a chance.

A group of officers on one of the battleships—it wouldn't be quite fair to tell which one—were discussing the pet names bestowed on them by the jackies aboard. Several pseudonyms were revealed to their own deck. It was a great deal of mirth. Suddenly a youthful ensign who thus far had not been mentioned among those distinguished by honorary titles primly remarked:

"I suppose I'm the only officer in the fleet who has no nickname."

There was a moment's silence, in which everybody gasped, and then a brother officer ejected a flood of cigar smoke and glared.

"No nickname," he repeated, speculatively. "Well, I like that! Why, there's not a man on board that doesn't call you 'Willie-of-the-pickle-boat!'"

When the fleet was about to enter the straits of Magellan an old salt who had considerable experience and a constructive imagination combined with a didactic tendency furnished all un-

er generation was skeptical and refused to be terrified. The result was that the williwaw joke proved to be a boomerang which hit Old Jack and hit him hard. On a calm day some one of other of the innocents would quietly call Old Jack aside, and pointing to an imaginary fleck of spray on the horizon, quietly ask:

"Jack, is that a williwaw?"

And then Old Jack would growl and fume and pray that the most skeptical might come and scare those irreverent youngsters half to death. But no williwaw came and the joke is still on Old Jack.

But Old Jack was more successful in a little joke that he worked off somewhat earlier in the cruise. This time the fun was at the expense of the innocents and was all the better fun

because a good many of them never knew about it. Old Jack would elbow into a group of the young 'uns and innocently ask: "Did any of you see the equator yet?" And, of course, no body had. Some of the wiser ones would wag their heads. You couldn't fool them. No one could see the equator, for wasn't the equator an imaginary line? And then Jack would pretend to be very indignant and finally undertake to convince the most skeptical. Out would come a telescope and Jack would sweep the horizon.

"Now, you several species of fools, who says you can't see the equator. Come here, you, and look for yourself."

One by one the innocents would peer through the glass and one by one

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Georgia. Old Jack never wearied of telling the youngsters what awful, awful things the "williwaws" were. "Did you ever see a williwaw?" some headless innocent would ask, and then Old Jack would launch forth and tell of how, all of a sudden, the williwaw rose and came down upon the unfortunate ship like a wolf on the fold and lifted the vessel high in the air and then dropped her on her beam ends and tied lovers' knots in her rigging and smashed her out as flat as a pancake and as broad as a merry widow hat. The williwaw, he always added, was no ordinary storm. It was lots worse than even the fiercest hurricane in the north Atlantic and as for typhoons—oh pshaw!

Old Jack meant, of course, to terrify the younger generation, but the young-