

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Descartes Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Schiller Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Claudius Schilling Kralik Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Raabe Gibbon Tschechow
Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving
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**The Boy Allies with the Victorious
Fleets Or, the Fall of the German
Navy**

Clair W. (Clair Wallace) Hayes

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THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE VICTORIOUS FLEET

CHAPTER I

ABOARD U.S.S. PLYMOUTH

"Sail at 4 a.m.," said Captain Jack Templeton of the U.S.S. Plymouth, laying down the long manila envelope marked "Secret." "Acknowledge by signal," he directed the ship's messenger, and then looked inquiringly about the wardroom table.

"Aye, aye, sir," said the first officer, Lieutenant Frank Chadwick.

"Ready at four, sir," said the engineer officer, Thomas; and left his dinner for a short trip to the engine room to push some belated repairs.

"Send a patrol ashore to round up the liberty party," continued Captain Templeton, this time addressing the junior watch officer. "Tell them to be aboard at midnight instead of eight in the morning."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the junior watch officer, and departed in haste.

There was none of the bustle and confusion aboard the U.S.S. Plymouth, at that moment lying idle in a British port, that the landsman would commonly associate with sailing orders to a great destroyer. Blowers began to hum in the fire rooms. The torpedo gunner's mates slipped detonators in the warheads and looked to the rack load of depth charges. The steward made a last trip across to the depot ship. Otherwise, things ran on very much as before.

At midnight the junior watch officer called the captain, who had turned in several hours earlier, and reported:

"Liberty party all on board, sir."

Then he turned in for a few hours' rest himself.

The junior watch was astir again at three o'clock. He routed out a sleepy crew to hoist boats and secure for sea. Seven bells struck on the Plymouth.

Captain Templeton appeared on the bridge. Lieutenant Chadwick was at his side, as were Lieutenants Shinnick and Craib, second and third officers respectively. Captain Templeton gave a command. The cable was slipped from the mooring buoy. Ports were darkened and the Plymouth slipped out. A bit inside the protection of the submarine nets, but just outside the channel, she lay to, breasting the flood tide. There she lay for almost an hour.

"Coffee for the men," said Captain Templeton.

The morning coffee was served on deck in the darkness.

Lights appeared in the distance, and presently another destroyer joined the Plymouth. Running lights of two more appeared as the clock struck 4 a.m.

Captain Templeton signalled the engine room for two-thirds speed ahead. Running lights were blanketed on the four destroyers, and the ships fell into column.

Lieutenant Chadwick felt a drop on his face. He held out a hand.

"Rain," he said briefly.

Jack—Captain Templeton—nodded.

"So much the better, Frank," he replied.

The four destroyers cleared the channel light and spread out like a fan into line formation.

"Full speed ahead!" came Jack's next command.

The Plymouth leaped ahead, as did her sister ships on either side.

"We're off," said Frank.

Away they sped in the darkness, a division of four Yankee destroyers, tearing through the Irish sea on a rainy morning; Frank knew there were four ships in line, but all he could see was his guide, a black smudge in the darkness, a few ship lengths away on his port bow. Directly she was blotted from sight by a rain squall.

"Running lights!" shouted Frank.

The lights flashed. Frank kept an eye forward. Directly he got a return flash from the ship ahead, and then picked up her shape again.

Morning dawned and still the fleet sped on. Toward noon the weather cleared. Officer and men kept their watches by regular turn during the day. At sundown the four destroyers slowed down and circled around in a slow column. The eyes of every officer watched the clock. They were watching for something. Directly it came—a line of other ships, transports filled with wounded soldiers returning to America. These must be safely convoyed to a certain point beyond the submarine zone by the Plymouth and her sister ships.

On came the transports camouflaged like zebras. The Plymouth and the other destroyers fell into line on either side of the transports.

"Full speed ahead," was Captain Templeton's signal to the engine room.

"Take a look below, Frank," said Jack to his first officer.

"Aye, aye, sir."

Frank descended a manhole in the deck. He closed the cover and secured it behind him. At the foot of the ladder was a locked door. As it opened, came a pressure on Frank's ear drums like the air-lock of a caisson. Frank threaded his way amid pumps and feed water heaters and descended still further to the furnace level.

Twenty-five knots—twenty-eight land miles an hour—was the speed of the Plymouth at that moment. It was good going.

Below, instead of dust, heat, the clatter of shovels, grimy, sweating fireman, such as the thought of the furnace room of a ship of war calls to the mind of the landsman, a watertender stood calmly watching the glow of oil jets feeding the furnace fire. Now and then he cast an eye to the gauge glasses. The vibration of the hull and the hum of the blower were the only sounds below.

For the motive power of the Plymouth was not furnished by coal. Rather, it was oil—crude petroleum—that drove the vessel along. And though oil has its advantage over coal, it has its disadvantages as well. It was Frank's first experience aboard an oil-burner, and he

had not become used to it yet. He smelled oil in the smoke from the funnels, he breathed it from the oil range in the galley. His clothes gathered it from stanchions and rails.

The water tanks were flavored with the seepage from neighboring compartments. Frank drank petroleum in the water and tasted it in the soup. The butter, he thought, tasted like some queer vaseline. But Frank knew that eventually he would get used to it.

"How's she heading?" Frank asked of the chief engineer.

"All right, sir," was the reply. "Everything perfectly trim. I can get more speed if necessary."

Frank smiled.

"Let's hope it won't be necessary, chief," he replied.

He inspected the room closely for some moments, then returned to the bridge and reported to Captain Templeton.

The sea was rough, but nevertheless the speed of the flotilla was not slackened. It was the desire of Captain Petlow, in charge of the destroyer fleet, to convoy the transports beyond the danger point at the earliest possible moment.

The Plymouth lurched up on top of a crest, then dived head-first into the trough. On the bridge the heave and pitch of the vessel was felt subconsciously, but the eyes and minds of the officers were busied with other things. At every touch of the helm the vessel vibrated heavily.

Eight bells struck.

"Twelve o'clock," said Frank. "Time to eat."

The bridge was turned over to the second officer, and Frank and Jack went below.

"Eat is right, Frank," said Jack as they sat down. "We can't dine in this weather."

It was true. The rolling boards, well enough for easy weather, proved a mockery in a sea like the one that raged now. Butter balls, meat and vegetables shot from plates and went sailing about. It was necessary to drink soup from teacups and such solid foods as Jack

and Frank put into their stomachs was only what they succeeded in grabbing as they leaped about on the table.

The two returned on deck.

The day passed quietly. No submarines were sighted, and at last the flotilla reached the point where the destroyers were to leave the homeward bound transports to pursue their voyage alone. The transports soon grew indistinguishable, almost, in the semi-darkness. The senior naval officer aboard the Plymouth hoisted signal flags.

"Bon Voyage," they read.

Through a glass Jack read the reply.

"Thank you for your good work. Best of luck."

From the S.N.O. (senior naval officer) came another message. Frank picked it up.

"Set course 188 degrees. Keep lookout for inbound transports to be convoyed. Ten ships."

Again the destroyer swung into line. It was almost seven o'clock—after dark—when the lookout aboard the Plymouth reported:

"Smoke ahead!"

Instantly all was activity aboard the destroyers. Directly, through his glass, Jack sighted nine rusty, English tramp steamers, of perhaps eight thousand tons, and a big liner auxiliary flying the Royal Navy ensign.

Under the protection of the destroyers, the ships made for an English port. The night passed quietly. With the coming of morning, the flotilla was divided. The Plymouth stood by to protect the big liner, while the other three destroyers and the tramp steamers moved away toward the east.

"This destroyer game is no better than driving a taxi," Frank protested to Jack on the bridge that afternoon. You never see anything. I'd like to get ashore for a change. I've steamed sixty thousand miles since last May and what have I seen? Three ports, besides six days' leave in London."

"You had plenty of time ashore before that," replied Jack.

"Maybe I did. But I'd like to have some more. Besides, this isn't very exciting business."

Night fell again, and still nothing had happened to break the quiet monotony of the trip. Lights of trawlers flashed up ahead. Interest on the bridge picked up.

"Object off the port bow," called the lookout.

"Looks like a periscope," reported the quartermaster.

Frank snapped his binoculars on a bobbing black spar.

"Buoy and fishnet," he decided after a quick scrutiny.

Frank kept the late watch that night. At 4 a.m. he turned in. At five he climbed hastily from his bunk at the jingle of general alarm, and reached the bridge on the run in time to see the exchange of recognition signals with a British man-o'-war, which vessel had run into a submarine while the latter was on the surface in a fog. The warship had just rammed the U-boat.

"Can we help you?" Frank called across the water.

"Thanks. Drop a few depth charges," was the reply.

This was done, but nothing came of it Frank returned to his bunk.

"Pretty slow life, this, if you ask me," he told himself.

He went back to sleep.

CHAPTER II

THE BOY CAPTAIN AND HIS LIEUTENANT

The U.S.S. Plymouth was Jack Templeton's first command. He had been elevated to the rank of captain only a few weeks before. Naturally he was not a little proud of his vessel. When Jack was given his ship, it was only natural, too, that Frank Chadwick, who had been his associate and chum through all the days of the great war, should become Jack's first officer.

In spite of the fact that Jack's rating as captain was in the British navy, he was at this moment in command of an American vessel. This came about through a queer combination of circumstances.

The American commander of the Plymouth had been taken suddenly ill. At almost the same time the Plymouth had been ordered to proceed from Dover to Liverpool to join other American vessels. Almost on the eve of departure, the first officer also was taken ill. It was to him the command naturally would have fallen in the captain's absence. The second officer was on leave of absence. Thus, without a skipper, the Plymouth could not have sailed.

Jack and Frank had recently returned with a British convoy from America. They were in Dover at the time. From his sick bed in a hospital, the captain of the Plymouth had appealed to the British naval authorities. In spite of the fact that he was in no condition to leave when he received his orders, he did not wish to deny his crew the privilege of seeing active service, which the call to Liverpool, he knew, meant.

The captain's appeal had been turned over to Lord Hastings, now connected prominently with the British admiralty. Lord Hastings, in the early days of the war, had been the commander under whom Jack and Frank had served. In fact, the lads were visiting the temporary quarters of Lord Hastings in Dover when the appeal was received from the commander of the Plymouth.

"How would you like to tackle this job, Jack?" Lord Hastings asked.

"I'd like it," the lad replied, "if you think I can do it, sir."

"Of course you can do it," was Lord Hastings' prompt reply. "I haven't sailed with you almost four years for nothing."

"You mean, sir," replied Jack with a smile, "that I haven't sailed with you that long for nothing."

"That's more like it, Jack," put in Frank laughingly. "I've learned a few things from Lord Hastings myself."

"It is hardly probable," continued Lord Hastings, "that your promotion has been unearned, Jack. No, I believe you can fill the bill."

"In that case, I shall be glad to take command of the Plymouth temporarily, sir."

"And how about me?" Frank wanted to know. "Where do I come in, sir?"

"Why," said Lord Hastings, "I have no doubt it can be arranged so you can go along as first officer. I understand the first officer of the Plymouth is also under the weather."

"But isn't all this a bit irregular, sir?" Jack asked.

"Very much so," was Lord Hastings' reply. "At the same time, many precedents are being broken every day, and I can see no reason why two British officers cannot lend their services to an ally if they are asked to do so."

"It is a little different with me, sir," said Frank. "I'm an American."

"All the same," said Lord Hastings, "you're a British naval officer, no matter what your nativity."

"That's true, too, sir," Frank agreed. "I haven't thought of it in just that way."

"Well," said Lord Hastings, "I shall report then that Captain Templeton and First Lieutenant Chadwick will go aboard the Plymouth this evening."

"Very well, sir," said Jack.

This is the reason then that Jack and Frank found themselves aboard an American destroyer in the Irish sea.

Frank Chadwick, as we have seen, was an American. He had been in Italy with his father when the great war began. He had been

shanghaied in Naples soon after Germany's declaration of war on France. When he came to his senses he found that his captors were a band of mutinous sailors. Aboard the vessel he found a second prisoner, who turned out to be a member of the British secret service.

Frank met Jack Templeton, a British youth, aboard the schooner. Jack came aboard in a peculiar way.

The schooner, in control of the mutineers, had put into a north African port for provisions. Now it chanced that the store where the mutineers sought to buy provisions was conducted by Jack. The lad was absent when the supplies were purchased and returned a few moments later to find that the mutineers had departed without making payment.

Jack's anger bubbled over. He put off for the schooner in a small boat. Aboard, the chief of the mutineers refused the demand for payment. A fight ensued. Jack, facing heavy odds, sought refuge in the hold of the vessel, where he was made a prisoner.

During the night Jack was able to force his way from the hold into the cabin where Frank and the British secret service agent were held captives. He released them, and joining forces, the three were able to overcome the mutineers and make themselves masters of the ship.

Now Jack Templeton was an experienced seaman and knew more than the rudiments of navigation. Under his direction the schooner returned to the little African port that he called home. There the three erstwhile prisoners left the ship to the mutineers.

Later, through the good offices of the British secret service, Frank and Jack made the acquaintance of Lord Hastings, also in the diplomatic service. They were able to render some service to the latter and later accompanied him to his home in London. There, at their request, Lord Hastings, who in the meantime had been given command of a ship of war, had them attached to his ship with the rank of midshipmen.

Both Jack and Frank had risen swiftly in the British service. They had seen active service in all quarters of the globe and had fought under many flags.

Under Lord Hastings' command they had been with the British fleet in the North Sea when it struck the first decisive blow against the Germans just off Helgoland. Later they were found under the Tricolor of France and with the Italians in the Adriatic. With the British fleet again when it sallied forth to clear the seven seas of enemy vessels, they had traversed the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian oceans. It had been their fortune, too, to see considerable land fighting. They had been with the Anglo-Japanese forces in the east and had conducted raiding parties in some of the German colonial possessions.

Several times they had successfully run the blockade in the Kiel canal, passing through the narrow straits in submarines just out of reach of the foe. In Russia, they had, early in the war, lent invaluable assistance to the Czar; and more lately, they had been in the eastern monarchy when Czar Nicholas had been forced to renounce his throne.

Once since the war began they had been to America. This was shortly after the United States entered the war. They were ordered to the North Atlantic in order to help the American authorities snare a German commerce raider which, in some unaccountable manner, had run the British blockade in the North sea, and was wreaking havoc with allied shipping. Later they went to New York, and then returned to Europe with a combined British-American convoy for the first expeditionary force to cross the seas.

In temperament and disposition Jack and Frank were as unlike as one could conceive. Jack, big for his age, broad-shouldered and strong, was always cool and collected. Frank, on the other hand, was of a more fiery nature, easily angered and often rash and reckless. Jack's steadying influence had often kept the two out of trouble, or brought them through safely when they were in difficulties.

Both lads spoke French and German fluently and each had a smattering of Italian. Also, as the result of several trips to Russia, they had a few words of the Russian tongue at their command.

In physical strength, Jack excelled Frank by far, although the latter was by no means a weakling. On the other hand again, Frank was a crack shot with either rifle or revolver; in fact, he was such an excellent marksman as to cause his chum no little degree of envy.

Then, too, both lads were proficient in the art of self defense and both had learned to hold their own with the sword.

Up to the time this story opens the combined allied fleets had succeeded in keeping the Germans bottled up in the strong fortress of Helgoland. True, the enemy several times had sallied forth in few numbers, apparently seeking to run the blockade in an effort to prey upon allied merchant ships. But every time they had offered battle they had received the worst of it. They had been staggered with a terrible defeat at Jutland almost a year before this story opens, and since that time had not ventured forth.

But even now, in the security of their hiding places, the Germans were meditating a bold stroke. Submarines were being coaled and victualed in preparation for a dash across the Atlantic. Already, one enemy submarine—a merchantman—had passed the allied ships blocking the English channel and had crossed to America and returned. Some months later, a U-Boat of the war type had followed suit. A cordon of ally ships had been thrown around American ports to snare this venturesome submarine on its return, but it had eluded them and returned safely to its home port.

But soon—very soon, indeed—German undersea craft were to strike a more severe blow at allied shipping, carrying, for the moment, the war in all its horrors to the very door of America. While the United States was arming and equipping its millions to send across the sea to destroy the kaiser and German militarism, these enemy undersea craft were crossing the Atlantic determined to reap a rich harvest upon American, allied and neutral shipping off the American coast.

And the blow was to be delivered without warning—almost.

When the U.S.S. Plymouth, under Jack's command, returned to Liverpool, the captain of the vessel, having somewhat recovered, came aboard and relieved Jack of command.

"I'm obliged for your services, Captain," he said, "but I'll take charge of the old scow again myself, with your leave."

Jack and Frank went ashore, where, at their hotel, they received a brief telegram from Lord Hastings. It read as follows:

"Return to Dover at once. Important."

"Now I wonder what is up," said Frank after reading the message.

"The simplest way to find out," replied Jack, "is to go and see."