

THE VICTORY AT SEA

By ADMIRAL WILLIAM SOWDEN SIMS

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RETURN OF THE MAYFLOWER

Britain Welcomes Our Men—Sinn Fein Demonstrations Against U. S. Sailors Cause Reaction of Leave—Citizens of Cork Keenly Disappointed.

Another officer who contributed greatly to the efficiency of the American forces was Capt. E. R. G. R. Evans, R. N., who was detailed by the British Admiralty to act as liaison officer with our destroyers. No more fortunate selection could have been made. Captain Evans had earned fame as second in command of the Scott Antarctic expedition; he had spent much time in the United States and knew our people well; indeed, when war broke out he was lecturing in our country on his polar experience. A few days before our division arrived Captain Evans had distinguished himself in one of the most brilliant naval actions of the war. He was commander of the destroyer leader, Broke—a "destroyer leader" being a destroyer of unusually large size; and in this type fought six German destroyers. Captain Evans's ship sank one German destroyer and rammed another, passing clear over its stern and cutting it nearly in two.

Second Destroyer Flotilla Arrives.
On May 17 a second American destroyer flotilla of six ships arrived at Queenstown. From that date until July 5th, a new division put in nearly every week. The six destroyers which escorted our first troopships from America to France were promptly assigned to duty with our forces in Irish waters. Meanwhile other ships were added. On May 22 the Melville, the "Mother Ship" of the destroyers arrived and became the flagship of all the American vessels stationed at Queenstown. The repair and supply ship practically took the place of a dockyard, so far as our destroyer forces were concerned.

Queenstown had been almost abandoned as a navy yard many years before the European War and its facilities for the repair of warships were consequently very inadequate. The Melville relieved the British authorities of many responsibilities of this kind. She was able to do three-quarters of all this work, except major repairs and those which required docking. Her resources for repairing destroyers, or for providing for the wants and comforts of our men, aroused much admiration in British naval circles. The rapidity with which our forces settled down to work, and the seamanship skill which they manifested from the very beginning, likewise made the most favorable impression. By July 5th we had thirty-four destroyers at Queenstown—a force that remained practically at that strength until November, 1918. Much of the work of patrolling the seas to the west and south of Ireland and of conveying ships—the area which, in many ways, was the most important field of submarine warfare—fell upon these American ships.

The officers and crews began this work with such zest that, by June 1st, I was justified in making the following statement to the Navy Department: "It is gratifying to be able to report that the operations of our forces in these waters have proved not only very satisfactory, but also of marked value to the Allies in overcoming the submarine menace. The equipment and construction of our ships have been admirable, and the efficiency and the personnel has shown an unusually high degree of enthusiasm and ability to cope with the situation presented."

It is impossible to exaggerate the enthusiasm which the arrival of these vessels produced on the British public. America itself experienced something of a thrill when the news was first published that our destroyers had reached European waters, but this was mild compared with the joy which spread all over the British Isles. The feeling of Americans was immediate and of pride; our people had not yet suffered much from the European calamity, and despite the fact that we were now active participants, the war still seemed very far off and unreal. For this reason those American destroyers at Queenstown immediately became a symbol in the minds of the British people. They represented not only the material assistance which our limitless resources and our almost inexhaustible supply of men would bring to a cause which was really in desperate straits, they stood also for a great spiritual fact, for the kinship of the two great Anglo-Saxon peoples, which, although separated politically had now joined hands to fight for the ideals upon which the civilization of both nations rested.

The Return from the West.
Almost instinctively the minds of the British people turned to the day, nearly three hundred years before, when the Mayflower sailed for the wilderness beyond the seas. The moving picture film, which depicted the arrival of our first destroyer division, and which was exhibited all over Great Britain to enthusiastic crowds, deeply suggested this idea. This film related how, in 1620, a few Englishmen had landed in North America; how these adventurers had laid the foundations of a new state based on English conceptions of justice and liberty; how they had grown great and prosperous; how the stipidity of certain British statesmen had forced them to declare their independence, how they had fought for this independence with the utmost heroism; how out of these disjointed British colonies they had founded one of the mightiest nations of history; and how

now, when the liberties of mankind were endangered, the descendants of the old Mayflower pioneers had in their turn crossed the ocean—this time going eastward—to fight for the traditions of their race. The whole story appealed to the British masses as one of the great miracles of history—a single miserable little settlement in Massachusetts Bay expanding into a continent overflowing with resources and wealth; a shipload of men, women and children developing, in less than three centuries, into a nation of more than 100,000,000 people. And the arrival of the British people that all this youth and energy had been thrown upon their side of the battle.

One circumstance gave a particular appropriateness to the fact that I commanded these forces. In 1910 I had visited England as captain of the battleship Minnesota, a unit in a fleet which was then cruising in British and French waters. It was apparent even at that time that preparations were under way for a European war, on every hand there were plenty of evidences that Germany was determined to play her great stroke for the domination of the world. In a report to the Admiralty commanding our division I gave it as my opinion that the great European war would begin within four years. In a speech at the Guildhall, where 800 of our sailors were entertained at lunch by the Lord Mayor, Sir Ezezy Strong, I used the words which got me into a good deal of trouble at the time and which have been much quoted since.

"If the time should ever come," I said, "when the British Empire is menaced by a European coalition, Great Britain can rely upon the last ship, the last dollar, the last man, and the last drop of blood of her kindred beyond the sea." It is not surprising that the appearance of American ships, commanded by the American who had spoken these words seven years before, strongly appealed to the British sense of the dramatic. Indeed, it struck the British people as a particularly happy fulfillment of prophecy. These sentences were used as an introduction to the moving picture film showing the arrival of our first destroyer division, and, for weeks after reaching England, I could hardly pick up a newspaper without these words of my Guildhall speech staring me in the face.

Respect for the American Uniform.
Of course, any American admiral then commanding American naval forces in European waters would have been acclaimed as the living symbol of Anglo-American co-operation; and it was especially so the representative of the American people and the American Navy that the British people received me so appreciatively. At first the appearance of our uniforms aroused much curiosity; our tightly-fitting blouses were quite different from the British ones, and few people in London, in fact, knew who we were. After our photographs had appeared in the press, however, the people always recognized us on the streets. And then something quite unusual happened. That naval and military men should salute my staff was to have been expected, but that civilians should show this respect for the American uniform was really unprecedented. Yet we were frequently greeted in this way.

There were many evidences of interest in the "American Admiral" that were really affecting. Thus one day a message came from Lady Roberts, widow of the great soldier, Field Marshal Earl Roberts, saying that she was desirous of meeting the "American Admiral." I was very glad to go out in the country and spend a Sunday afternoon with her. This charming, white-haired old lady was very feeble, and had to spend most of her time in a wheelchair. But her mind was as bright as ever, and she had been following the war with the closest attention. She listened with the keenest interest as I told her all about the submarines, and she asked innumerable questions concerning them. She was particularly affected when she spoke about the part the United States was playing in the war, and remarked how much our participation would have delighted the Field Marshal.

The King as a Human Being.
I have already given my first impressions of Their Majesties the King and Queen, and time only confirmed them. Neither ever missed an opportunity to show their appreciation of the part that we were playing. The zeal with which the King entered into the celebration of our Fourth of July made him very popular with all our men. He even cultivated a taste for our national game. Certain of our early contingents of soldiers encamped near Windsor; here they immediately laid out a baseball diamond and daily engaged in their favorite sport. As our sailors and soldiers arrived in greater numbers, the interest and friendliness of the royal family increased. One of the King's most delightful traits is his sense of humor. The Queen also showed a great fondness for stories and I particularly remember her amusement at the famous remark of the Australians—perhaps the most ferocious combatants on the Western Front—about the American soldier—"a good fighter, but a little rough." Of all the anecdotes connected with our men, none delighted King

George so much as those concerning our colored troops. A whole literature of negro yarns spread rapidly over Europe; most of them, I find, have long since reached the United States. Indeed, the most lasting impression which I retain of the head of the British Empire is that he is very

friendly toward the realization of their project. I have great admiration for the mass of the Irish people, and from the best elements of these people the American sailors received only kindness. I have therefore hesitated about telling just how some members of the Sinn Fein party treated our men. But it

seems that now, when this same brotherhood is attempting to stir up hatred in this country against our Allies in the war, there is a certain pertinence in informing Americans just what kind of treatment their brave sailors met with at Sinn Fein hands in Ireland.

The people of Queenstown and Cork, as already described, received our men with genuine Irish cordiality. Yet in a few weeks evidence of hostility in certain quarters was apparent. The fact is that the part of Ireland in which the Americans were stationed was a headquarters of the Sinn Fein. The members of this organization were not only openly disloyal; they were openly pro-German. They were not even neutral—they were working day and night for a German victory; in their misguided minds a German victory signified an Irish Republic. It was no secret that the Sinn Feiners were sending information to Germany and constantly laying plots to interfere with the British and American navies.

At first it might be supposed that the large number of sailors—and some officers—of Irish extraction on the American destroyers would tend to make things easier for our men. Quite the contrary proved to be the case. The Sinn Feiners apparently believed that these so-called Irish Americans would sympathize with their cause; in their wildest moments they even hoped that our naval forces might champion it. But these splendid sailors were Americans before they were anything else; their chief ambition was the defeat of the Hun and they could not understand how any man anywhere could have any other aim in life. They were disgusted at the large number of able-bodied men whom they saw on the streets, and

the offending priest by assigning him to new duties at a considerable distance from the American ships.

But even more serious trouble was brewing for our officers discovered that the Sinn Fein were making elaborate plans to protect themselves. Had this discovery not been made in time, something like an international incident might have resulted.

No Leaves at Cork.

Much to our regret, therefore we had to issue an order that no naval men, British or American, under the rank of Commander, should be permitted to go to Cork. Ultimately we had nearly 8000 American men at this station; Queenstown itself is a small place of 6000 or 7000, so it is apparent that it did not possess the facilities for giving such a large number of men those relaxations which were necessary to their efficiency. We established a club in Queenstown, provided moving pictures and other entertainments and did the best we could to keep our sailors contented. The citizens of Cork keenly regretted our action. The great majority had formed a real fondness for our boys; and they regarded it as a great humiliation that the rowdy element had made it necessary to keep our men out of their city. Many letters were printed in the Cork papers apologizing to the Americans and calling upon the people to take action that would justify us in rescinding our order. The loss to Cork tradesmen was great; our men received not far from \$200,000 to \$300,000 a month in pay; they were the spenders and their presence in the neighborhood for nearly two years would have meant a fortune to many of the local merchants. Yet we were obliged to refuse to accede to the numerous requests that the American sailors be permitted to visit this city.

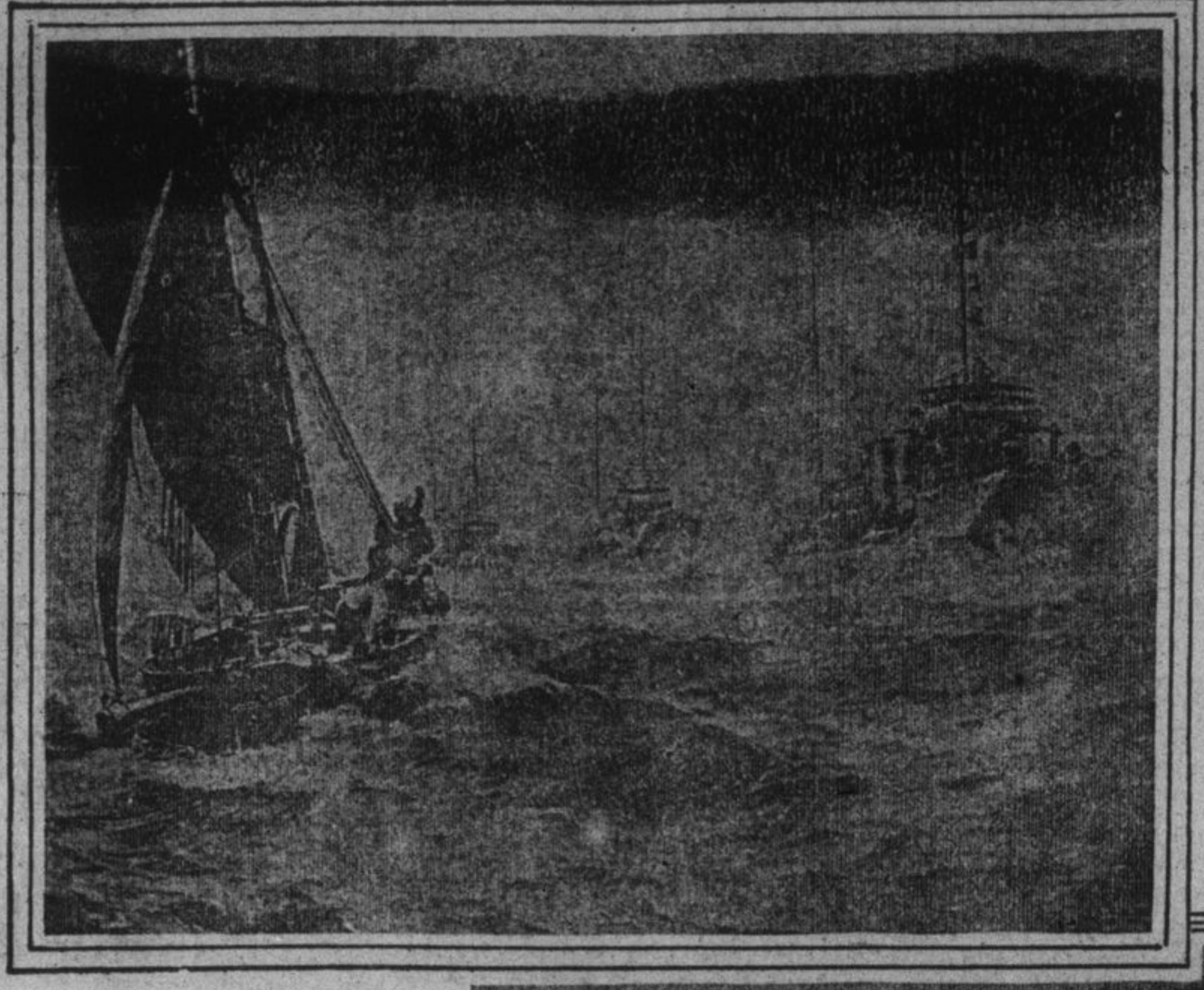
A committee of distinguished citizens of Cork, led by the Lord Mayor, came to Admiralty House to plead for the rescinding of this order. Admiral Bayly cross-examined them very sharply; it appeared that the men who had committed these offenses against American sailors had never been punished.

Unless written guarantees were furnished that there would be no hostile demonstrations against Americans, Admiral Bayly refused to withdraw the ban and to fully concur in this decision. Unfortunately the committee could give no such guarantee. We knew very well that the first appearance of Americans in Cork would be the signal for a renewal of hostilities, and the temper of the people was such that the most deplorable consequences might have resulted. We even discovered that the blacksmiths on the U. S. S. Melville were surreptitiously manufacturing weapons which our men could conceal on their persons and with which they proposed to sally forth and do battle with the Sinn Fein! So for the whole period of our stay in Queenstown our sailors were compelled to keep away from the dangerous city. But the situation was not without its humorous aspects. Thus the pretty girls of Cork, finding that the Americans could not come to them, decided to come to the Americans; every afternoon a trainload would arrive at the Queenstown station, where our sailors would greet them, give them a splendid escort to the station and send a happy crowd on their way home.

But the Sinn Feiners interfered with us in much more serious ways than this. They were doing everything in their power to help Germany. With their assistance German agents kept our men from landing in Ireland. At one time the situation became so dangerous that I had to take experienced officers, whose services could be spared from our destroyers and assign them to our outlying air stations in Ireland. This, of course, proportionately weakened the war, and did its part in prolonging the war. (Copyright, 1919, by the World's Work. The copyright of these articles in Great Britain is strictly reserved by Pearson's Magazine, London; without their permission no quotation may be made. Published by special arrangement with the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

Where the Straw Came From.
A commercial traveller on leaving a certain hotel, said to the proprietor: "Pardon me, but with what material do you stuff the beds in your establishment?" "Why," said the landlord proudly, "with the best straw to be found in the whole country." "That," returned the traveller, "is very interesting. I now know whence the straw came that broke the camel's back."

Prediction Disproved.
He (after popping the question)—Why are you crying, dearest? Did I offend you by my proposal?
She—Oh, no, dear, it's not that, I am crying for pure joy. Mother has always told me that I was such an idiot that I wouldn't get even a docky for a sweetheart, and now I've got one after all.



RETURN OF THE "MAYFLOWER."

By B. F. Gribble, the English marine artist, purchased by the American Government. It portrays the arrival of the first American destroyer division at Queenstown.

much of a human being. He loved just about the same things which the normal American or Englishman loves—his family, his friends, his country, a good story, a pleasant evening with congenial associates.

As an evidence of the exceedingly cordial relations existing between the two navies the Admiralty proposed, in the latter part of May that I should assume Admiral Bayly's command for several days while he took a little vacation on the west coast of Ireland. Admiral Bayly was the commander-in-chief of all the British forces operating on the Irish coast. This command thus included far more than Queenstown; it comprised several naval stations and the considerable naval forces in Irish waters. Never before, so I was informed, had a foreign navy officer commanded British naval forces in time of war.

On May 27, therefore, I went to Queenstown and hoisted my flag on the staff in front of Admiralty House. I had some hesitation in doing this, for American Navy regulations stipulate that an Admiral's flag shall be raised only on a ship afloat, but Admiral Bayly was insistent that his flag should come down and that mine should go up, and I decided that this technicality might be waived. The incident aroused great interest in England, but it started many queer rumors in Queenstown. One was that Admiral Bayly and I had quarreled—the British Admiral, strangely enough having departed in high dudgeon and left me severely in control. Another was that I had come to Queenstown, seized the reins out of Admiral Bayly's hands, thrown him out of the country, and taken over the government of Ireland on behalf of the United States, which had now determined to free the island from British oppression! However, in a few days Admiral Bayly returned and all went on as before.

Hostility of the Sinn Fein.
In the nearly two years which the American naval forces spent in Eu-



F. H. POTEEL, Lieut. Commander (Now Commander) of the U.S.S. Walwright.



THE ENTRANCE TO QUEENSTOWN HARBOR.

This pretty little Irish town has been a naval base since the Napoleonic Wars. The Admiralty House, used as headquarters in this war, was used also as a headquarters in Nelson's time. Until the Germans began their submarine warfare, however, it had had little importance in the recent war. But in May, 1917, with the arrival of the American destroyers, it became one of the great outposts for the protection of merchant shipping.

QUEENSTOWN FROM THE HARBOR.

did not hesitate to ask some of them why they were not fighting on the Western Front.

Some of the Scuffles.
Occasionally an American sailor would be brought from Cork to Queenstown in a condition that demanded pressing medical attention. When he regained consciousness he would relate how he had suddenly been set upon by half a dozen rough and beaten into a state of insensibility. Several of our men were severely injured in this way. At other times small groups were stoned by Sinn Fein sympathizers and there were many hostile demonstrations in moving picture houses and theatres. Even more frequently attacks were made upon the American sailors, but upon the Irish girls who accompanied them. These chivalrous pro-German agitators would rush up and attempt to tear the girls away from our young men; they would pull down their hair, slap them and even kick them. Naturally American sailors were hardly the type to tolerate behavior of this kind, and some bloody battles took place.

This hostility was increased by one very regrettable occurrence in Queenstown. An American sailor was promoting the main thoroughfare with an Irish girl, when an infuriated Sinn Feiner rushed up, began to abuse his former sweetheart in vile language, and attempted to lay hands on her. The American struck this hooligan a terrific blow; he fell backwards and struck his head on the curb. The fall fractured the assailant's skull and in a few hours he was dead. We handed our man over to the civil authorities for trial, and a jury, composed entirely of Irishmen, acquitted him. The action of this jury in itself indicated that there was no sympathy among the decent Irish element—which constituted the great majority—for this sort of tactics, but naturally it did not improve relations between our men and the Sinn Fein.

The importance of another incident which took place at the cathedral has been much exaggerated. It is true that a priest in his Sunday sermon denounced the American sailors as vandals and betrayers of Irish womanhood, but it is also true that the Roman Catholics of that section were themselves the most enraged at the absurd proceeding. A number of Roman Catholic officers who were present left the church in a body; the Catholic Bishop of the diocese called upon Admiral Bayly and apologized for the insult, and he also punished

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ALL KIDNEY DISEASES
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