

The BOWLING GREEN

Off the Deep End, II.

CENTRAL WHARF in Halifax is a pleasant place for idling. I shall always think of it with affection as the scene of one of the best loafing days I ever enjoyed. There was plenty to be done, our little fleet of six boats were an apiary of business, but the thousand minutiae of rigging those craft for sea was a specialized affair for experts in which I had no hand. To go to the Vendors' Stores and help select the liquor for the voyage was almost the only task I was entrusted.

After previous days of deluge this was a clearing weather, at first hazy, then warm and bright. There is something magical, as many have learned, in Nova Scotia air. It is far enough north to have in it the whiff of evergreen balsam and great untainted woodlands, the birthright of the Canadian nostril. There is the cleanness of salt-washed rocks, the iodine of seaweed, the douce vapor of not far distant fog, and (in Halifax, at least) a delicious almost European fragrance of bitumen, the soft-coal exhalation of breakfast chimneys. And in this diapason of fragrance one sitting at ease on the stringpiece of the wharf could discern small savory grace-notes and minors: the woody tang of new packing-cases burst open, new creaky cordage, sparvarnish, rusty anchors, fish, the strong soupy gush from the galley of the rusty old *Andalusia*, a Swedish tramp just in from Jamaica. With it all was mingled the memory of two other sunny days when I had visited Halifax—once in 1910 when a boy who seems now almost unrecognizable was pleased by flower-boxes in her windows (they seem to have given that up) and once in 1927 when the *Caronia* tarried there for Sunday luncheon and the hotel waitress was shocked by our asking for a bottle of beer. But let me add that though beer is not available (except as Ships' Stores) there is a sparkling Nova Scotia cider that is as good as champagne.

So one loitered and watched our little tribe of argonauts make ready for sea. There were six in the flotilla: three 12's (*Iris*, *Tycoon*, *Isolde*), two 8's (*Whippet* and *Margaret F. IV*) and one very tiny cockleshell, the *Robin*. *Robin's* curator was a Russian skipper, a charming fellow who had enchanted me on the voyage up by tales of his hardships in the Revolution. He looked a little solemn as he went about the job of fledging his small bird for voyage; and indeed I think no troubles of his homeland can have been more dangerous for him than setting out in that graceful toy. But man is always at his most winning when preparing for argument with Poseidon, who accepts no excuses. A convention of clergymen assembled in synod or eucharistic congress could not have been graver in legislating the inscrutable than our yachtsmen as they tallied rigging and stores. Not quite believing, the observer watched the tall masts of the 12's hoisted by the derrick, lowered into place. This was a day when all ligatures were cut. Nothing to do but fill one's pipe and light it, to study pensively all these oddments of gear and to think that on this or that much might depend. Friendly Mr. Warren, the Halifax shipping agent, whose approval puts the whole town at your service, took the idler members of *Iris's* crew to lunch at a peaceful old clubhouse. Here Y.G. was first introduced to British condiments, such as pickled walnuts, which brought tears to his eyes.

The angled bastions of the Citadel make a good polygon for afternoon stroll. The fortress seemed almost deserted, as fortresses ought to be on fine days. We peered into the deep moat, considered that its cool strong cellars would make admirable vaultage for wine, and were pleased by the sparrows that nest in niches of the masonry. It is worth while to build great strongholds if in after years they afford good lodging for sparrows, green slopes for rolling children, starry ceiling for summer love. Certainly that broad hill is excellent for flying kites. And far below in the harbor the masts of the three 12's reminded us that all this was mere interlude. At this very moment the adjuster was calculating *Iris's* compass deviation. It was a good time for considering one's own devia-

tions. Sunny air was round us like crystal. An afternoon of pure nothingness, cast off from familiar duty, new routine not yet begun. Surely there should have been some valued thought to deduce from this. Some analogy that the whole of life itself will some day have to be so regarded, as the mere flutter of a sparrow's wing in and out of a hole in the wall? Y.G. and I felt about in our minds for an idea and found only a large torpor. We abandoned philosophy and went to buy fleece underwear and rubber boots. That was better than philosophy, it was wisdom.

The quiet Halifax Hotel seemed specially solid and gratifying that evening. With a secretly testamentary tenderness we wrote some post-cards; we laid out and reckoned our provision of lumbermen's socks, woollen mitts and sweaters and oilskins. It amuses me to recall that we grumbled a little because the bedroom was warm, for Halifax keeps its steam going well into June. PR, who has a taste for bedtime gossip, kept me awake by telling me news about these racing sloops that he had not mentioned before. Of these 80-foot masts he remarked that they were hollow, built in longitudinal sections and glued together. Glued together! a merry thought in a moist climate, I reflected. I fell asleep hoping that the German industry in adhesives was an honest one.

Tycoon had the outside berth, so we couldn't cast off until she did. *Iris* was ready; we had borrowed *Tycoon's* nail-clipper and all hands had trimmed their fingers, always the amateur's final gesture to civilization; not mere delicacy I assure you, but preparation for dealings with tough canvas. But still we must linger (to tell you the truth) because *Tycoon's* case of beer was late. So we lost those early airs from NW. It was towards noon before we got off. The weather was a warm hazy calm. We had to beg a tow from the tug *Togo*, to start us down the harbor. "Light Sly air" was the first entry in the log. "Sly" meant Southerly, but it might also have meant what it said. There was gentle insinuation in that weather and in the low barometer. Through milk-white banks of fog the *Togo* hauled us rapidly. She cast us off north of Neverfail Shoal. Our canvas was up. Now we were alone, the two of us, and could look at each other. Pearly haze thinned and thickened about us. We could see *Tycoon's* blue hull, with white waterline stripe and green underbody, leaping like a mackerel in the long swell. The high spires of canvas leaned amazingly upward; when the mist thickened we could not see the top. Running side by side we took stock of ourselves, tightened shrouds, compared chronometers. *Tycoon*, a tilting phantom of beauty, crumbled swiftly over the gray slopes. By her we could judge our own profile. Breeze came fresh from SW. *Iris* set a course for Halifax Light Vessel, a dozen miles out. *Tycoon* turned westerly along the coast. They did not see each other again until Long Island Sound.

So with magical swiftness we were on our own. A tug, in a hurry to get back to another appointment, had rushed us down the harbor and cast us off—it seemed a little heartless—into a blanket of fog. Land was almost instantly out of sight, and our consort also. A long belly-wabbling sea came rolling under our bronze bottom. The chime of the Neverfail bellbuoy sounded like a summons to lunch, and from the cockpit one kept an eye on the swingtable in the main cabin. I had watched the stores going aboard. There, I said to myself, a large and frolic meal will be set out, such as yachtsmen enjoy. This was not like old days in the ketch *Narcissus* where I myself had to do the cooking. There was a steward, seasoned by years at sea, to ration us. I thought (though a little dubiously) of the lobsters I had seen going aboard. But the corner of the table, visible from the cockpit, remained bare. No one said anything about food. I was much on my good behavior. This was my first experience of real yachting. But, in the odd way one divines things, I felt that to say anything about food would (somehow) be amiss. I kept to looard of the Commodore, for I was taught young that one does not go to windward of the skipper. But his pipe (which, waking, he is never seen without) was very strong. Until about 2 o'clock I feared that perhaps there was not going to be any lunch. After that time my apprehension was different. I began to fear that perhaps there was. But about half past four (meanwhile nothing having been said) YG appeared with some slices of

raisin bread. Then the truth came out. Our steward, the hardened seaman, was ill.—We did not see him for four days.

So, without disaster, the first corner was rounded. The Commodore, of course, nothing can touch; he has the entrails of Gibraltar. But the rest of us, if we had had to face a generous meal, might have been troubled. As it was, only the captain (another lifelong salt) and the steward were ill. But I noticed, in my own secret reckonings with myself, that tobacco seemed to have lost its charm that afternoon.

Fog came down thick, and there was a steamer whistling not far away. She was inward bound round the lightship, we supposed; but the sound of her blast might have come from anywhere in an arc of nearly ninety degrees. A small fisherman's horn, pumped by hand, seems inadequate answer to that deep thuttering groan of a high-pressure steam-pipe. You get a very different sense of proportion when you hear a big ship's foghorn not from her own deck but from a small craft plunging from sea to sea. Suddenly the water seems very wrinkled and gray. Those waves are slate color, even when broken they are not white but granite; they roll you in wet wastes of fog to teach you the blessings of being warm and steady. Put your foot down now, wherever you are, and verify the good sensation of firm solidity beneath you! Such are the thoughts of the first evening, when you put from snug harbor into wind and fog and low barometer. Soon you adapt yourself; after a day or so the tumbling that bothered you becomes the perfection of all rhythms, the joyous composition of all movement. But you are not sentimental the first day out.

The surprised faces of the lightship crew, as we passed close by them, might have suggested some surprise in our own minds. Our rig was evidently uncanny to them, and I was a little grim to remember how I had last seen that vessel, from the warm forward deck of the good old *Caronia* a level August morning. For now we were bundled up in all the half dozen layers of wool and oilskin, and chilly even so—always excepting the Commodore exempt from all human weakness. And my testimony of the rest of that afternoon, as we zigzagged (roughly speaking) SW and NW, must be, if honest, mostly of sleep. Such drowsiness as I have never known came down upon me. I fell loglike into a bunk and lay like one drugged and shanghaied. It was the miracle and quintessence of slumber, for one was dimly self-aware and knew how much one was enjoying it, yet too far gone for any shame or desire. One was as passive as a participle. If the voyage of the *Iris* had granted me even nothing else than that first period of swooning I should be sufficiently grateful. It was an experience. There are some of us who, in civil life, sometimes have difficulty in getting to sleep. I found myself, in this sea-stupor, chuckling at the notion of a sailor ever complaining of insomnia. There was no instant, in the first two days, when I could not have immediately gone Rip Van Winkle by just closing my eyes. Along about dusk that evening, the weather being dubious, the Commodore decided to take down the mainsail and put a trysail on her for the night; a very reasonable precaution with a new and untried vessel on a bad coast. I believe I made some meagre pretence of activity when all hands were called on deck, but whatever I did was done in pure hypnotism. I feel the less embarrassment in this confession because I noted in the long-salted PR signs of the same delicious lethargy. His bright eye, an orb as clear and humorous as a hen's, closed its lid as nesciently as any other's. Not food nor drink nor any lure of life had the faintest appeal. One did not even unbutton an oilskin nor remove a hat. One collapsed where one was. Only the sailor, I conclude, knows how to take sleep seriously.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

(To be continued)

The following item recently appeared with the appended comment in an English paper:

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Books of Special Interest

German Policy

THE WORLD POLICY OF GERMANY, 1890-1912. By OTTO HAMMANN. Translated by MAUDE A. HUTTMAN. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927.

Reviewed by THEODORE LORENZ

FOR a former Prussian official, the author of this book has a singularly unbiassed mind. Hammann was chief of the Press Department of the Foreign Office under the old régime and thus stood at the fountain head of political news and information. The spirit in which he writes is fittingly indicated on the frontispiece by a reproduction of Linley Sambourne's "Out in the Cold," one of the series of famous Bismarck cartoons in *Punch* that was ushered in by Tenniel's "Dropping the Pilot," picturing the self-complacent indifference with which the young Kaiser, in his overweening conceit, dismissed the weather-beaten and storm-tried navigator of the ship of state.

In the light of all documents recently made accessible, there can be no doubt that, when Bismarck was thus forced into retirement, the keystone of the German foreign policy which he had been building up with infinite patience was still missing, and that this was nothing less than an alliance with England. Could they but have known it, the sane men on both sides of the Channel, whose endeavors to promote friendship between the two countries never ceased throughout the Kaiser's reign, might have claimed Bismarck's authority for their own conviction that the future of European civilization could not be better provided for than with the two great and kindred nations marching side by side in its van! To be sure, England was not ready for that in Bismarck's time: she still prided herself on her "splendid isolation." But one's heart seems to miss a beat, as one tries to visualize the happy course which European events might have taken, instead of the carnage and destruction we have witnessed, if Bismarck could still have been in office when, not so many years later, England approached Germany on the same quest, and this time herself in the rôle of the suitor! The story of what his epigones made of England's three successive offers of an alliance is told in some of the most fascinating pages of Hammann's book.

It will always remain one of Germany's greatest misfortunes that, in those fateful years, during which, instead of allies, England and Germany became the protagonists of the two hostile camps of Europe, the German foreign policy was directed by Prince Bülow, who lent a willing ear to the advice tendered by the notorious Herr von Holstein, the oldest councillor in the Foreign Office. Once Bismarck's trusted underling, Holstein had afterwards lost the confidence of the first Chancellor, who emphatically warned the Kaiser in his younger years against this "man with the hyena eyes." It was in vain that William II. passed the warning on to Bülow; and thus, we see this "Eminence grise" moving in the background like an uncanny gray specter and (without ever having to assume any personal responsibility!) thwarting the endeavors of those who wanted to see England and Germany come to terms. We get a sample of Bülow's high-minded statecraft in his comment that it "would be a masterstroke, if we could keep England hoping without binding ourselves," and we see the two political master-minds in unison, when we find them both insisting that it was mere bluff and claptrap on England's part, when she plainly intimated, at the time of her third offer of an alliance, that, if she could not come to terms with Germany, she would approach France and Russia. As late as April, 1903, Holstein gave renewed utterance to his comfortable conviction that the British statesmen would never be able to accomplish this.

Only a few months went by, and the English capital was gaily beflagged in honor of the visit of the French President, which preceded the consummation of the Anglo-French entente by less than a year! The present reviewer witnessed these festivities as one of the hapless German residents in England who were destined to be caught, eleven years later, in the infernal whirlpool of 1914. In those earlier years, he had been, in conjunction with men like Friedrich Paulsen in Germany and Karl Breul in England, adding his humble efforts to the futile endeavors of those who were working

for friendship between the two great nations. It was interesting to listen to the comments on the part of members of the German colony in London, who had seen the carriages with the distinguished French visitors roll by. They were all fully alive to the evident fact that England was on the point of definitely joining Germany's potential enemies. But in most cases, this realization was coupled with bitter resentment of "Albion's proverbial perfidy," although quite enough had leaked out, especially in the English press, about England's long-continued efforts towards an alliance with Germany, to show that this attitude was as reasonable as that of a girl who flies into violent tantrums because a man, whom she has refused on three successive occasions, has the impertinence to go and marry some one else!

Nevertheless, that attitude remained the keynote of Germany's relations with England for years to come, and especially during the stormy times of the Morocco affair. Here again, as Hammann shows, Holstein's sinister influence was mainly responsible for the unenviable rôle which Germany played and for the humiliation which she suffered. His policy was as inept as that of the Kaiser in his puerile endeavors to bring about a continental alliance against England, which were, of course, as futile as the much more dangerous efforts of Edward VII. to detach Austria from Germany. Even Bülow could no longer shut his eyes to the pernicious character of Holstein's influence, and the day came when he advised the Kaiser to accept one of Holstein's periodical offers (or should one say "threats") of resignation. The fact that he suffered a severe fainting fit immediately afterwards during a session of the Reichstag gives one food for reflection as to the personal relations between the two men. Some pertinent suggestions are to be found in Emil Ludwig's book on William II.

Even before Bülow's retirement, efforts were instituted to place the Anglo-German relations on a more tolerable footing, and they were vigorously continued under Bethmann-Hollweg. All these endeavors were largely doomed to failure owing to the fact that Tirpitz, supported by the Kaiser, prevailed against all wiser councils of moderation in regard to the naval competition with England. But even so, and although these belated efforts could never have achieved anything comparable with "what might have been," if the earlier chances had not been deliberately thrown away by the German statesmen, they were far from remaining altogether sterile and might have led to better things, if peace could have been maintained a little longer. For, as Hammann reminds us, the Treaty concerning the Bagdad Railway, which had been a bone of contention between the two Governments since the beginning of the century, was lacking only the signatures of the two contracting parties when they were rudely torn away from the conference table by the outbreak of hostilities.

We have taken up here only one of the numerous threads of German foreign politics which Hammann analyzes and traces down to the time when they had formed, under the hands of the German statesmen, the tangled web in which they found themselves enmeshed. But the sample thus presented must suffice to show the reader what he may expect to find in the pages of this book, which may be strongly recommended, as a first introduction and orientation, also to those who wish to delve deeper into these matters at the hand of such guides as Bernhard Schwertfeger and Erich Brandenburg.

Lion Feuchtwanger's forthcoming book is, like his earlier novels, a historical tale, only its history is as of recent making as the last few years. It is a story of the Bavaria of our own times—the Bavaria of the Hitler *Putsch* and recent political happenings. The hero is a political figure who has been wrongly condemned for his supposed part in a post-war complication, and the heroine is the woman who espouses his cause in a hostile world. The book has a large number of figures and is said to be a vivid piece of work.

In his "Santa Cristina e il Lago di Bolsena" (Milan: Treves) Corrado Ricci has gathered together legends of Etruscans, Popes, and artists as well as of Santa Cristina, whose martyrdom is commemorated every year at Bolsena.

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