

that we cant understand here as well as we done the French.

Yesterday we was out going through bayonet drill and we had one of the English gents and he would stop about ever twenty secunds and give everybody hell-fire and nobody could understan what he was talking about.

"Oi soi, ould chappies, 'it im ard, doint pet im, it im," this bird would say. "It the bloody begga. Get is wind up, it im ard."

"Poison gas," Steve whispered and we all started luffing then and this non-com got kind of sore and made us go through the drill seven times more.

"Perfectly rottin," he said when we got done. "Perfectly rottin!"

Can you beat that Barney. And I guess most of us know more about drilling right now than that bird will know even if he lives until Bryan gets to be President.

Well our revore. BENNIE.

Chosen for Special Duty.

Friday.

DEAR BARNEY: Well in about an hour I got to go out on all night guard and stand out all night in the rain, while there is a lot of suckers back in the Old U. States that is sleeping in nice warm beds and wondering when there is going to be another parade down Fifth avenue. I guess if them birds buy a fifty buck Liberty Bond and do a lot of cheering they think they got a rite to start some more wars any time they want to.

Of course I want to do my share walking guard but I dont see why they dont let some of these new birds that we took just before we left the states go most of

this kind of work. It dont take no intelligence to be a guard only of course once in a while they got a bad dangerous post that they got to have a good man for and then of course they have to pick out some of us old solders who been in the game since last September and was among the first to volunter for the draft.

I gues that is the real reason they picked me tonite because the Captain said to me, "Bennie we are going to try you on guard tonite and we want you to be especully careful because we understand the Germins might drop some gas bombs from airplants and we dont want nobody gassed. Then it is going to be good practice if we do have an alarm so ware your gas mast at Alert and be ready."

So you see Barney that I am a speul chose man and for that reason I aint going to say nothing but go out and do my duty. We got a Clakon horn nailed to a post near where I walk guard and if any of them gas bumbs drop around there I will make that old Clakon talk in about seven languages.

Bone jure,

BENNIE.

They Didn't Shoot Him.

Saturday.

BARNEY: I gues when I get done writing you this letter that I will write a letter to Generil Persshung and tell him that I would like to be sent back to the states with some commision or something like that becaus all I get now is doble crossed and treted like I was some kind of a Germin simpthiser. And if I was you Barney I would hurry out right now and merry that widow and her four year old kid and then I would adop a couple more so that when they tried to make me go into the army I would show them all them

kids and ask them what they was going to do about that.

Well as I wrote you last nite I had to walk guard and according to all of the army rules I only had to walk two hours and then I was off for four hours. Well to start with they had to pick me because it was a bad rancy night and as black as a pictur show with the lights all turned off. Then they give me a double French pass word that nobody in the world could have remembered. It was something like Francoy Chostinel, and I couldnt even pronounce it.

Well right away when I took my post I kept walking around saying this pass word over and over again and then something come up and I didn't think no more about it until after while the Major came riding up and said, "Where are you, guard?"

It was dark and I stepped out and said, "Here I am Major."

"What's your pass word," he says.

Well of course getting me quick like that I couldnt remember it very well and I told him that just for the secund it had escapt my mind.

"You aint got no mind," he said. "This is a fine business—you out here wandering around and not even knowing the pass. Call the corporal of the guard."

So I called the corporal of the guard and then the Major give me some more hells fire before him and then he told the corporal to instruct me in the pass. Then the Major rode away and the corporal give me some more hells fire and told me the pass and then he walked away.

Of course I was pretty sore but I didn't say nothing but just stood there in the edge of the little town in the dark wishing I was back in the States. Then pretty soon I heard that gas alarm go off and

I dropped my gun and held my breath while I put on my gas mast.

And the thing wouldnt go on very good and of course I thought there was real gas and I got a little scared and I was working trying to get my mast on. Then when I got it on I couldn't see nothing at all it being so dark and I got wandering around there and the first thing I knew I was off of the road and in some big woods that was near there.

Well of course I was afraid to take off my mast so I had to walk around there with that darn thing on and I couldnt find the rode again and I guess I must have been out there about five hours and finally I found a road and walked down it and pretty soon somebody hollers, "Halt, who goes there."

Well I had that mast on and he couldnt hear me and brung up his gun to his sholder to shoot and then I pulled that mast off and I hollered, "For Gowds sake don't shoot, its Bennie."

"Advance and give the pass word," he said.

So I went on up close but I couldnt remember the pass and then this bird he called the corporal of the guard and they took me to the guard house and this morning they took me up to the Majurs on the charge of deserting my post, which means you get shot.

Well I put up an awful line of argument to the Major and told him about wearing my gas mast out there all night and then he said, "Well if you wore that gas mast five hours strate I guess you been punished enouf. I told you we might have a practise Alert."

Well I didn't say nothing but just saluted and walked out. I only wish I knew President Wilsin personally.

BENNIE.

Christening Ships Is a Ceremony Ages Old

"SUFFERING tonsils! Just think of it, old top, ninety-five quarts of sparkling wine spilt on the stems of that many ships to-day, and not a drop to drink here!" So bewailed the resident of one of our dry towns on July Fourth, and so may many other thirsty souls cry before the last of our emergency fleet leaves the ways. Never in the history of shipping have so many craft taken the water in a single day, and never in any year have so many bubbling bottles been smashed on prows of cargo carriers.

Since the start of the shipbuilding drive some months ago, the Emergency Fleet Corporation has launched more than 300 craft, and not one has been denied baptism from the traditional bottle. Up to April 30 120 vessels were named; in May 44, in June 52, and in July 123 received sprituous tribute to the sea god. Three hundred and thirty-nine ships in all and substantially 85 gallons of wine scattered broadcast, when self-denying throats are suffering.

But this is not the whole story of the tragedy of the erstwhile tippler. Scores and scores of lesser craft are leaving building blocks for the water, and all are launched with due ceremony and the accustomed bottle. True, some may be water, some highly charged cider, but most of the libations are champagne.

One enterprising New York wine merchant has foreseen the inevitable, and has prepared for the "speed up campaign" in shipbuilding, and supplies bottles decorated for the occasion. Once it was considered essential to the success of a vessel to shed human blood at her launching. To-day this is deemed unlucky. Therefore the baptismal bottle must be cloaked in a mesh of gilt wire so that the shattering glass shall not wound the hand of the sponsor. There must also be fluttering ribbons of red, white and blue, and the name of the ship is printed on one ribbon, the name of the builder on another and the date of the launching on a third, all in gold.

Craft of the sea can no longer lay claim to the exclusive spilling of wine at launchings. When the great bombing airplane, the Langley, was named a few weeks back, a bottle of wine was smashed on the steam of its fuselage, and so the ship of the air demands that this survival of an ancient votive offering propitiate the spirits aloft.

How long ago the launching ceremony had its origin is not known, but an Assyrian tablet dating back 2,100 years before Christ, describes the building of the Ark and the religious ritual at its completion. One line runs: "To the gods I caused oxen to be sacrificed." Records tell how the ancient Egyptians blessed their ships at the launching, and the



Greeks and the Romans are known to have done likewise—using both wine and water.

When the Sovereign was launched in 1488 at Humble in the presence of Henry VII, the vessel was renamed and ceremoniously blessed. "A mitred prelate with attendant train of priests and choristers, croziers in hand, with candle, book and bell, and holy water stoup" performing the benediction. In 1610, when the Prince Royal was launched at Woolwich, the launching was performed by Prince Henry. According to Phineas Pette, one of King James's master shipwrights: "The noble Prince, accompanied with the Lord Admiral and the great lords, were on the poop, where the standing great gilt cup was ready filled with wine to name the ship so soon as she had been afloat, according to ancient custom and ceremony performed at such times."

During the dominance of the Catholic faith in France in the eighteenth century and early in the nineteenth century, the launching ceremony was much akin to the baptismal service for an infant. This was especially so where merchant craft and

fishing vessels were concerned. The practice lay close to the hearts of the simple people, and the parish priest, a godfather and a godmother, were the principal figures. Not infrequently the godparents were mere children. No wine was used, but holy water was sprinkled on the bow with the giving of a benediction.

It must be evident that using wine or water in secular hands at the naming of a ship is only a parody on a custom of long standing which first was purely religious. To-day the spilling of wine or water is an unthinking tribute to tradition and gala-day subscribing to the superstition of mariners. Even the most modern of us would not be satisfied in our minds if a vessel were put overboard without this symbol of paganism or Christianity.

A bottle of choice old Madeira, broken at the heel of the bowsprit by Commodore James Sever, gave the final touch to the launching of the U. S. S. Constitution in 1797. When the U. S. S. Hartford was launched at Boston in 1858, she had three sponsors. The two daughters of distinguished naval officers, Commodore Downes and Commodore Stringham, and

the third sponsor was George H. Preble, then a young Lieutenant in the navy. Miss Stringham broke a bottle of Connecticut River water on the figurehead, Miss Downes followed with a bottle of Hartford spring water and Lieut. Preble finished by emptying a bottle of ocean brine on the vessel's bow. As history testifies, each ship performed valiant service at critical periods in the nation's life and it would seem that Neptune and Boreas were equally propitiated by wine and water and favored both craft.

Philip Hone, Knickerbocker Pepys

(Continued from Fourth Page.)

Hone house in New York and the host wrote:

"The lion, Capt. Marryat, is no great things of a lion, after all. In truth, the author of 'Peter Simple' and 'Jacob Faithful' is a very everyday sort of a man. He carries about him in his manner and conversation more of the sailor than the author, has nothing studentlike in his appearance and savors more of the binnacle lamp than of the study."

And again: "It would have been better for both parties if the sailor author had been known on this side of the Atlantic only by his writings . . . he has evidently not enjoyed the benefits of refined society or intercourse with people of literary talents."

The Knickerbocker Pepys grew mellow as he advanced in years. There is a marked change in the tone of the diary dating from the very time when he himself suffered financial reverses. It was the test of the man that misfortune did not embitter him, but made him more kindly in his judgments of those about him. The smug self-satisfaction belonged to the early days.

In the closing years of his useful life there was but one thing that disturbed him greatly. He foresaw the deluge that was to come. December 12, 1850, was his last Thanksgiving. He wrote:

"The annual time honored Thanksgiving day throughout the State. No nation, ancient or modern, ever had more causes for thanksgiving and reasons to praise the Author of all good than the people of the United States. Yet there are many at the present time ignorant and unworthy of the blessings they enjoy, who would throw all things into confusion, break up the blessed Union which binds the States and should bind the individuals forming their population, who would destroy the harmony and condemn the obligations of Constitution and law. Factionists, traitors, madmen—the Lord preserve us from the unholy influence of such principles!"