

GRAND FLEET DAYS

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Grand fleet days by Montague Thomas Hainsselin

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Grand Fleet Days

BY THE AUTHOR OF
IN THE NORTHERN MISTS
NAVAL INTELLIGENCE, ETC.

M.T. Haineslin

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TO THE
LIBRARY OF THE
ARMY AND NAVAL
COLLEGE

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I. Brooches

ALL over the country now, but especially in the big naval ports, you may meet on your walks abroad many a pretty lass wearing one of our brooches.

No, we don't make them on board. Multifarious and astonishing as are the things produced from the various departments of a man-of-war, they do not include brooches. Our needs in this respect are supplied by an enterprising firm ashore, which knows exactly what sort of lure to spread before the simple sailorman and how to cater for his tastes.

Now I will describe to you what our brooches really are. You can get them in three forms: silver ones, at quite a small price; enamel and gilt—the style favoured by the vast majority of buyers; and, for the moneyed aristocrats of the lower deck, such as E.R.A.'s, or for any who may happen to be *very* deeply in love, there is the brooch-de-luxe, in nine-carat gold!

The design is that of the ship's crest, an appropriate emblem which at once reveals the ship's name even to a casual beholder. Naval crests, it should be remarked, have no official sanction,

NO. 100
ANNALS OF THE
Grand Fleet Days

and are usually the outcome of deliberations conducted when the ship first commissions by a select committee of wardroom officers, assisted by Smith's Classical Dictionary and such flights of fancy as are reached by the more imaginative brains. There is, for instance, a ship which has adopted as its crest a Scythe; you would never guess why, unless you were told that it was held imperative to work into the motto the words *vincit omnia*; and, since *amor* as subject of the sentence seemed inappropriate and *labor* was thought to be rubbing it in too hard, a compromise was effected on *tempus*. Hence the scythe.

In our own case, too, there was some slight discussion as to the choice; pedants and purists insisting that of two main alternatives the one favoured by the majority laid the ship open to the charge of being of a lesser breed. However, the lower deck took the matter out of our hands, and adopted the questionable crest, which has, at any rate, a fine blustering air about it.

The purpose for which brooches exist is, of course, that we may have Something to Send Home. Our battlefield is not like that of the soldiers, where helmets and fuses and other common objects of the countryside may be collected; consequently we are obliged to rely on base merchandise for our trophies, contenting ourselves with this reflection—that while our gifts represent no deeds of derring-do, they can at least be worn as articles of feminine adornment; whereas no really smart girl would