

**THE FIGHT FOR
CONSTANTINOPLE : A
STORY OF THE
GALLIPOLI PENINSULA**

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The fight for Constantinople : a story of the Gallipoli Peninsula by Percy F. Westerman & W. E. Wigfull

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PERCY F. WESTERMAN & W. E. WIGFULL

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The Fight for Constantinople

By PERCY F. WESTERMAN

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The Fight for Constantinople

A Story of the Gallipoli
Peninsula

BY

PERCY F. WESTERMAN

Author of "The Dispatch-Riders" "The Sea-girt Fortress"
"When East Meets West" "Captured at Tripoli" &c. &c.

Illustrated by W. E. Wigfull

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THE FIGHT FOR CONSTANTINOPLE

CHAPTER I

Under Sealed Orders

"Dick, my boy, here are your marching orders," announced Colonel Crosthwaite, holding up a telegram for his son's inspection.

"Marching orders, eh?" queried Sub-lieutenant Richard Crosthwaite with a breezy laugh. "Hope it's something good."

"Can't get out of the old routine, Dick. I suppose I ought to call it your appointment. It's to the *Hammerer*. Why, my boy, you don't look very happy about it: what's up?"

"Nothing much, pater," replied the Sub, as he strove to conceal the shade of disappointment that flitted over his features. "I must take whatever is given me without demur——"

"Of course," promptly interposed his parent. "That's duty all the world over."

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"But at the same time I had hoped to get something, well—something not altogether approaching the scrap-iron stage."

"Yes, the *Hammerer* is a fairly old craft, I'll admit," said Colonel Crosthwaite. "I've just looked her up in Brassey's—"

"Launched in 1895, completed during the following year; of 14,900 tons; has a principal armament of four 12-inch guns, and a secondary battery of twelve 6-inch," added Dick, who had the details of most vessels of H.M. Navy and many foreign Powers at his fingers' ends. "She's a weatherly old craft, but it isn't likely she'll take part in an action with the German High Seas Fleet, when it does come out of the Kiel Canal. Things are fairly quiet in the North Sea, except for a few isolated destroyer actions, and, of course, the *Blücher* business. Aboard the *Hammerer*—one of the last line of defence—the chance of smelling powder will be a rotten one."

"In the opinion of those in authority, Dick, these ships are wanted, and officers and men must be found to man them. Everyone cannot be in the firing-line."

"I'm not grumbling exactly," explained Dick. "Only—"

"Grumbling just a little," added his father. "Well, my boy, you may get your chance yet. War was ever a strange thing for placing unknowns in the limelight, and this war in particular. Now buck up and get your kit together. It will mean an all-night railway journey, since you've

to join your ship at Portsmouth at 9 a.m. tomorrow."

Dick Crosthwaite was on ten days' leave, after "paying off" the old *Seasprite*. The outbreak of war had been responsible for his fairly rapid promotion, and having put in seven months as a midshipman on board the light cruiser *Seasprite*—which had been engaged in patrol work in the North Sea—he found himself promoted to Acting Sub-lieutenant.

His work on the cruiser was, in spite of the dreary and bleak climatic conditions, interesting and not devoid of incident. He had not taken part in any action; his ship had escaped the attentions of hostile submarines and drifting mines. There was a spice of risk about the business that appealed to him—a possibility that before long the *Seasprite* would have a chance of using her guns in real earnest.

Then came orders for the light cruiser to proceed to Greenock and "pay off". Her ship's company were given leave, which after months of strenuous watch and ward they thoroughly deserved, and Sub-lieutenant Crosthwaite found himself once more in his home in a secluded part of Shropshire.

Although he fully appreciated the brief spell of leisure, his active mind was dwelling upon the prospects in store for him. With the certificates he had gained he considered, with all due respect for My Lords' discretion, that nothing short of an appointment on one of the super-Dreadnoughts or