

**IN THE NORTHERN MISTS,  
A GRAND FLEET  
CHAPLAIN'S NOTE BOOK**

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In the northern mists, a grand fleet chaplain's note book by Montagu Thomas Hainsselin

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**MONTAGU THOMAS HAINSELIN**

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NOTE BOOK

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*I. A Mail-Bag and a Messenger*

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**I**F at the time when I was first ordained and about to enter upon a quiet curacy some prophetic instinct had told me that after a considerable number of years I should find myself in my present position I should probably have quoted a few words concerning lying prophets : but then, as someone remarks, you never can tell !

I am " in the North Sea " ; in a battleship in the North Sea ; in an office in the battleship ; in a mail-bag in the office. That is to say, the lower half of me is in a mail-bag, which, being made of stout canvas and drawn up close around the waist, forms a very comforting protection against the cold.

As to what I am doing in the office, the strictness of the censorship forbids me to say ; but it is a certain job for which I have volunteered, as everyone must do his bit in these days. Certainly, the work does not come under the heading of pastoral duties, and according to the terms of the Hague Convention I am probably rendering myself liable to be shot by our friends the enemy if they catch me. Well, they are quite welcome to do it—if they can !

About four feet above my head, as I sit writing, is a steel deck ; and upon this deck there are now

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being dumped down a large number of projectiles, weighing well over a thousand pounds each. As the process of dumping is not conducted with any undue delicacy, the resultant noise can well be imagined. Should one of these huge projectiles by any mischance explode, what death and havoc it would spread around! Of course, there is not the slightest possibility of such a thing happening; the precautions and safety arrangements make certain of that. But—let me spin a brief yarn with a moral. A man was once brought up before the captain for some misdemeanour, and, being a bit of a sea-lawyer, was fully persuaded that according to all the wording of the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions the captain could not punish him. "'E can't do it, 'e can't do it," he kept repeating to himself; and so argued till the last moment—" 'E can't do it, 'e can't do it!—*But 'e 'ave!*"

There is one consolation. If I should prove mistaken in believing that the projectiles overhead cannot explode, I should have no time to exclaim, "*But 'e 'ave!*"

Equanimity remains undisturbed. If I remember rightly, it was a part of the Kultur scheme that we in the Fleet were to be in-the-nerve-shaken and to-a-state-of-collapse-reduced by the fearful mental strain to which we should naturally be subjected, being harried and worried by perpetual alarms and fears. Another miscalculation! I am thinking of writing a book, in imitation of a reverend colleague in the Sister Service, and calling it "*How to be Happy Though Harried.*"