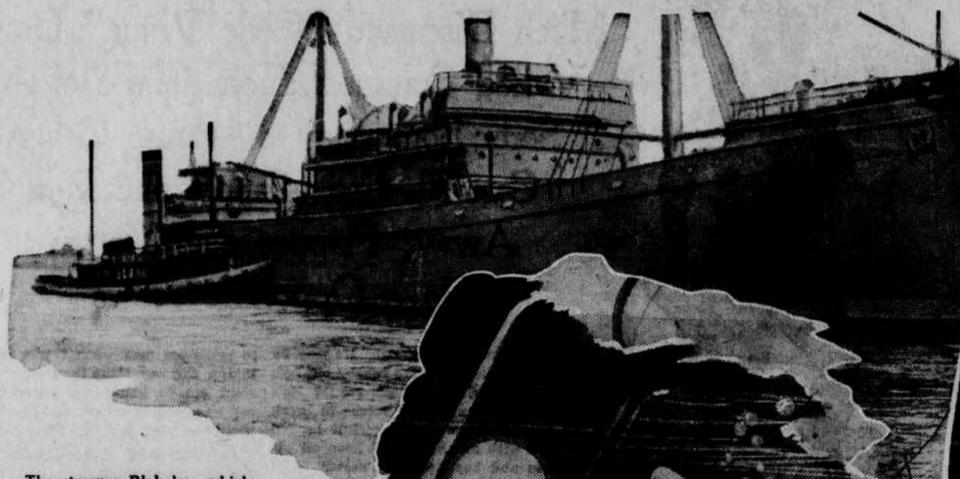


Treasures of Lusitania Still Lure Divers

Daring Adventurer to Brave the Terrors of Ocean Floor in Armored Diving Suit in Quest of Gold and Jewels Lost on Ill Fated Liner



The steamer Blakeley, which has been comfortably equipped for the treasure quest.

SINCE the sinking of the Lusitania there has been a great deal of discussion of various plans to raise the ship. The lure of the sunken ship with vast treasure aboard is still one of the most potent influences in the life of the adventurous spirits of all the Seven Seas. Sailors before the mast, engineers in their workrooms and dreamers on the benches in the city parks—all have visioned the possibilities of bringing to the surface the great ship which the enemy sunk near the Irish coast, and which went down with a treasure aboard much greater probably than any ever before taken to the ocean floor.

However, none of the plans which have been spoken of so enthusiastically in the past have ever amounted to anything. Now, however, the subject of not only salvage of the ship itself, but recovery of its treasure is broached again, this time in a very businesslike, promising way. It seems as if, after all, a real and encouraging effort is to be made to bring up from the Lusitania's resting place whatever the waters have left of her that is worth while to recover.

This time it is by the simple process of diving that it is hoped to reach the ill-fated ship. At Cramps Shipyards, just outside Philadelphia, the steamer Blakeley is being prepared for this salvage expedition. It will carry all the modern equipment necessary for the attempt to reach a hulk almost three hundred feet under water. In charge of these preparations, among others, is Benjamin F. Leavitt of Philadelphia, who has won considerable fame as a most daring diver. Within a few weeks the steamer Blakeley will be at anchor eight miles off Kinsale Point, Ireland, as nearly as can be determined, directly over the hulk of the sunken Lusitania, and Benjamin F. Leavitt of Philadelphia will be dropped over the side at the end of a steel cable to locate the sunken liner and her reputed hoard of \$15,000,000 in gold and precious stones.

It is not for oaken strong boxes, brimming with Spanish doubloons, that Leavitt and his associates will seek. Theirs, if they are successful, will be a more modern hoard.

When the Lusitania was sunk by the enemy off Ireland seven years ago she carried treasure to incite the cupidity of the most prosaic. Not a treasure ship, as were the most historic marine losses, she carried a fortune probably greater than that carried in any of the so-called "treasure ships" of tradition. And where the treasure in these galleons of old has grown in the telling through hundreds of years, the treasure on the Lusitania can be reckoned with some accuracy and without the fear that traditions of years have multiplied a perhaps moderate number of doubloons.

The Lusitania carried \$5,000,000 in specie alone. She is also known to have carried an almost equal amount in cases of silver and valuable jewelry. There, if there were no other treasure, would be a satisfactory "haul" for any treasure seeker.

But undoubtedly the Lusitania carried more than this. Among her passengers were many men and women of great wealth. Without question they carried with them jewels and other articles of great value. A single passenger is reported to have deposited \$75,000 with the purser. Mme. Antoine de Page, wife of the director of the Belgian Red Cross, is said to have carried more than \$100,000. The purser's strong box held, without doubt, jewels of great value, property of wealthy passengers of the ill-fated liner.

The total value of the treasure, virtually all in specie and jewelry, which would defy the action of the water, is estimated at close to \$15,000,000. It is for this fortune that Leavitt and his associates will seek.

An armored diving suit, invented and patented by Leavitt some years ago and since then constantly tested and improved, has made possible this venture. In an actual salvage test in the Great Lakes Leavitt made the world's record for depth, going down 361 feet in locating the Pewabic, sunk after a collision in 1865. Copper and other material valued at \$26,000 were salvaged from that wreck in 1916.

From this test, and from later ones made in special high pressure tanks,



"For the ocean floor is covered with treasure trove, which until now has defied all adventurers."

Leavitt asserts that his suit can stand the tremendous pressure of 200 pounds to the square inch, to which any object is subjected 500 feet below the surface. The Lusitania, however, lies at a depth of only 285 feet.

Leavitt's suit is armored from head to foot. The main section is a heavy manganese bronze casting, covering trunk and head. Leg and arm pieces are made of a specially constructed copper coil, planned to give the utmost possible protection while permitting comparatively free movement of the limbs.

Leavitt's only communication with the surface will be by means of a telephone wire, strung through a specially constructed steel cable, built to lift twenty tons. The inventor believes that the cable and the suit will be strong enough to withstand any pull necessary to free the diver if he becomes caught in the wreckage.

His air supply will be carried in the form of oxygen, a cylinder being fixed into the back of the main casting. It is equipped with a reducing valve that will supply one and a quarter feet of oxygen an hour, properly mixed with hydrogen. That is the amount required by a normal adult while at work. The poisonous carbon dioxide from the diver's lungs will be absorbed by a can of caustic soda fixed in another niche in the casting.

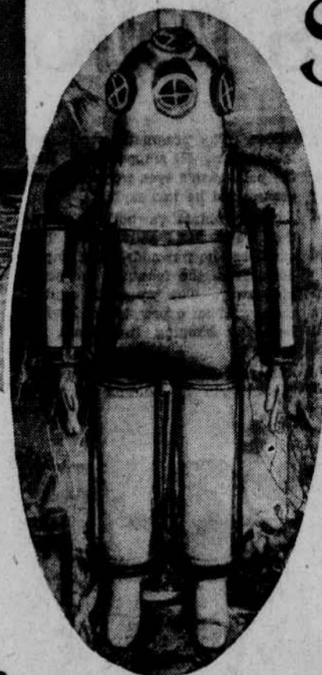
Dynamite will be used by the Leavitt expedition to create a pathway to the strong rooms, and a clam shell bucket to lift the treasure. If valuables are found that cannot be reached by that

method they will be loaded into buckets by hand. Leavitt and his associates, however, believe that they can get the bulk of the bullion that is said to be in the hold of the great liner by means of the usual dredgers' clam shell and other familiar dredging equipment, once they have forced their way to the strong rooms.

Besides the enormous pressure exerted by the water at a great depth, Leavitt had other difficulties to overcome. Probably the greatest of these secondary difficulties was that of providing light for the work.

Darkness increases rapidly with depth under water, and the inability to get light has been one of the greatest stumbling blocks in salvage work heretofore. Leavitt experimented for some years and finally constructed a huge glass bulb of great strength. It has been tested to more than 200 pounds pressure without showing the slightest sign of a crack. Leavitt will need three of these lights, each of 300 candle power. Even with that equipment he will be able to see only a few feet in any direction.

Marine experts differ as to the probable success of Leavitt's attempt. Many, basing their belief on his success in the salvaging of the Pewabic, which lay at a depth of 361 feet, and upon the apparent completeness of the preparations made by the expedition, look for his success. Others, pointing out the enormously greater difficulties presented by



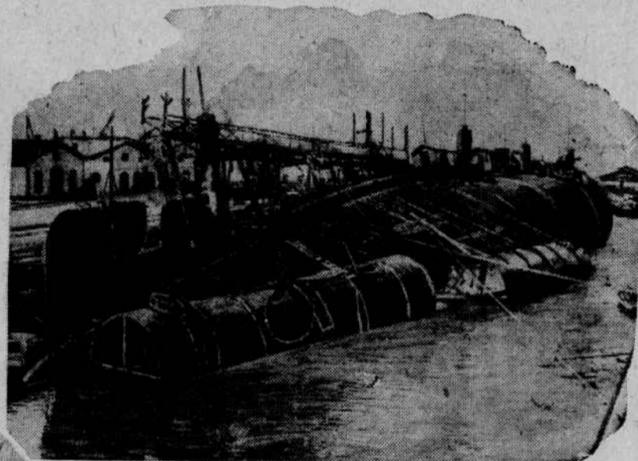
Capt. Chas. S. Rickards of the Blakeley, who will supervise the salvage operations.

the Lusitania because of its great bulk and of the currents which sweep around it, are skeptical. There are even some who doubt that the Lusitania, as a ship, now exists, arguing that she has long since disintegrated under the pressure of the water. As long ago as February, 1918, H. Ensor, a widely known expert, speaking before the Engineering and Scientific Association of Ireland, made that assertion.

Despite the pessimistic views of this latter group, however, Leavitt is not alone in his belief that the Lusitania may be salvaged. In fact, an even more ambitious project than his is being fostered by the British Salvage and Towing Syndi-

cate, of which Count Zanardi Landi is managing director. In a recent interview Count Landi told of his plan to raise the ship by her own buoyancy. He believes that, because of the strength of her construction, she will be found to be intact and not damaged too badly to make raising her impossible. He also plans to begin his

chieftains in exchange for needed supplies. Hearing of the offer the leader of the other clan laid his plans. Filled with a loyalty which thought nothing of sacrifice, a youth of this latter clan stole on board the galleon and fired the magazines. The ship was torn to pieces and sank with her treasure hoard.



The salvaged wreck of the Leonardo da Vinci, showing the effect of its burial in the sea for many years. It was brought to the surface by inflated tanks. Above on the left is the armored diving suit in which Benjamin Leavitt, famous diver, will trust his life.

attempts shortly. It is said that much interest is being excited by his attempt in Germany, where it is hoped that an examination of the hulk will disclose the fact that she was carrying munitions when torpedoed. It is the German belief that such a discovery would justify her sinking.

If, as now seems quite within the range of possibility, the Leavitt expedition is a success, boundless possibilities for salvage are opened up. For the ocean floor is covered with treasure trove, which has up until now defied the best efforts of adventurers for many centuries.

In 1588, when the shattered Spanish Armada was scattered and fleeing before the British, a mighty galleon, the Florencia, sought refuge in Tobermory Bay, off the coast of Scotland. She is rumored to have carried the paymaster's chest for the fleet, containing in gold and silver an amount variously estimated at from \$30,000,000 to \$70,000,000. Doubtless exaggeration here takes a part, but it is certain that she carried vast treasure when she sailed into the bay where she was to leave her rotting timbers. Capt. Peruru, commanding the Florencia, promised aid to one of two rival Scottish

Since 1641 attempts have been incessant to recover the treasure, but they have met with little success. In 1903 some fifty doubloons were recovered from the silt bank in which the scattered fragments of the once proud ship are buried. A few weapons were also found. In 1907 another attempt was made, the search directed by a diving rod in the hands of a famous uncovers of buried money. The rod found much that the dredgers could not find, however, and only a few scattered coins were uncovered.

Here a diver clad in Leavitt's suit might succeed where diving rod and dredgers failed. At the bottom of Vigo Bay, on the coast of Spain, lies an enormous treasure in gold and silver bullion, the cargo of a fleet of plate ships destroyed by the British and Dutch navies in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Its present value is estimated a \$100,000,000.

There were forty sail in the fleet which set out from Mexico for Spain, bearing gold and silver from the mines of the New World to the coffers of old Spain. Seventeen of the ships were bullion carriers, the others French men-of-war to protect the tremendously valuable cargo from the British. The fleet, constantly alert, made its way across the Atlantic, reaching the apparent safety of the Spanish coast. Before they could reach Cadiz, however, the report of a powerful British fleet frightened them into Vigo Bay. Here, because of some difficulty with the customs officers, who were without instructions to pass the bullion, the ingots were not unloaded. While the debate between the officers of the fleet and the officials of the port was in progress the combined British and Dutch fleet swept in and, after a hot engagement, burned and sank almost all the vessels. One captured by the British gave indication of the enormous treasure which went down. It contained hundreds of thousands of dollars in gold and silver ingots.

Shortly after the battle Spain began to fish for her lost treasure, but without success.

Instances might be enumerated for pages. Hundreds of heavily freighted vessels, loaded with gold and silver and precious stones, have sunk in all parts of the world, sometimes under the guns of enemy craft, often under the buffeting of the wind. In many cases their locations are known with accuracy, but the depth at which they lie has made impossible the recovery of the hoard beneath. If Leavitt's expedition is a success millions of dollars in gold and silver may be added to the coffers of the world.

Why Cocoanuts Are So Hard to Produce

AS many planters know to their cost, few trees have more enemies than the coconut, or, as some call it, the cocoanut, on the products of which so many millions of the white and colored races depend.

Monkeys and wild elephants rob the plantations and work great damage. The monkeys, with almost human intelligence, place sentinels to give the alarm of danger and form long lines or queues to hand along the fruits or nuts, that are disposed of with astonishing quickness. The elephants are so fond of the young tender leaves that often it is necessary to guard the trees by lighting fires and firing guns during the night.

Wild hogs and porcupines also eat the roots of the invaluable palms. They do immense hurt to the trees, like the Malay bear, or coco bear, that is so ravenous of the tender leaves. The shaggy little animal, which climbs the palm very nimbly, seldom attacks the natives of the Malay Peninsula. Indeed, it is said that the coco bear, instead of attacking the women and children it meets astray in the jungle, has on several occasions found them food and helped them.

Insects certainly effect havoc on the coco tree and its fruit, but animals are the chief foes of the coco planter, both in the Pacific and Indian islands. One queer enemy is the so-called marten of the palm trees—a strange animal that climbs the coco and drinks the milk in the nuts. The marten is about nineteen inches long, and is as thick in the body as the average cat. It is found in Java and in southern Asia, and is one of the most fearless and ferocious fighters. Its head and teeth are like a wildcat's.

Every season this very odd looking animal spoils countless cocoanuts. In Java the natives declare it does this out of sheer hatred to human beings, whom the marten of the palm tree attacks with even less hesitation than the most savage weasel.

Frequently the palm squirrel is to be seen frisking on the trees on the East Indian shores. When it can, this squirrel makes use of the holes gnawed in the green nuts by the marten to drink what is left of the milk. Yet it also can tap the nuts and sip its fill of their delicious fluid.

Many are the enemies of the coco palm and its

nut; and among the worst are birds. Beautiful and interesting it is to see the parrots climbing and chattering, all gorgeous in their plumage and sucking the pollen of the splendid golden flowers that rise above the green leaves of the coco palms; they and the macaws destroy the fertility of many, many cocoanut trees. However, they are not as destructive as a kind of sea swallow—the black noddy. It builds its nest among the stalks of the leaves, and when stormy weather prevents it from flying out to sea it passes its time pecking the flowers of the palm, and in this way causes at times a very poor yield of nuts on certain of the East Indian islands.

Insects also prey on the coco palm. The termites, or white ants, build their nests on the tops of the trees and kill them from their crowns, and the species that find a home at their base roots poison them. Among many others, the rhinoceros beetle, that is very like a miniature model of the unicorn rhinoceros, cuts his way into the leaves and eats the topmost sprout, while his wife bores holes in the trunk to lay her eggs in it and kill the tree.