

cruiser of small type. It had done some wonders in discovering mines set for the unwary and in venturing spy fashion, into perilous waters. The craft had extraordinary speed. I did not know if Adele might be with her father. I hoped it and counted on being welcomed by both of them at the seaport town of Vranches, just about 100 miles over the Belgian border.

We steamed away boldly enough and the night passed and the day broke with smooth, unruffled progress our lot. The *Polaric* was worth studying in its superb armament and I was interested in all that I saw. At various points the craft met brother marines and stopped at several ports to disembark soldiers, to land some ammunition. It was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon when we sighted a bounding, speeding marine flying the tricolor.

There was great animation on deck. The officers were in consultation, their subordinates were sent scurrying from point to point.

"Who is she?" I heard one of the officers sing out to the lookout man. The answer came definitely: "The *Seeker*."

I was more than interested. She seemed coming toward us and one of the big guns was trained in readiness for a try at her.

Just then there was a new commotion. Out from a cliff-guarded inlet there set out one of the largest men of war I had ever seen. Her bulk was fairly enormous. She steamed along slowly, clumsily. The officers of the *Polaric* were manifestly troubled. Then I overheard one of them cry out:

"I see the game!"

"What is it?" sharply challenged his companion officer.

"We have headed off the *Seeker* and she is making for the protection of the big marine. Set position to give the little one a shot as she passes in range."

"She is a daring little vixen."

"Yes, and troublesome—a worry to the admiralty, with her quick ways and daring dodgings. It will be a feather in our cap to end her. Get her sure, and the admiralty will see to promotions."

The *Seeker* seemed heedless of peril. She seemed resolute to dart past us. The big cruiser seemed to be her goal. I moved nearer to the swivel gun, mounted and leveled. An officer handed me his glass. I looked once and shuddered.

"Great heavens!" I exclaimed irresistibly.

"What is that?" sharply asked the officer.

"Nothing," I stammered, and handed back the glass. "Thanks!"

I stood electrified upon the gun deck of the *Polaric*. I had made out the commander of the *Seeker*, the vice-admiral, and, fearlessly viewing the outlook of collision or attack, was a girl wearing a bright tri-color knot on her left shoulder, a favorite adornment of the girl I loved.

Then Adele was with her father! It was now a race; the *Seeker* getting to the shelter and protection of the big cruiser before the *Polaric* could half intervene and get a square shot at her. As the *Seeker* neared, neared, neared, the *Polaric* maneuvered. The gunner had his clear poise, for the *Polaric* had shut down steam and was nearly motionless. As the gunner watched and waited, I followed the swift course of the *Seeker* with distended eyes and bated breath.

I saw the *Seeker* come squarely across our bow. The gunner sighted. Then he drew back and his hand reached out for the electric switch which ignited the cap fuse. Aloft the lookout kept the focus of his glass shifting with the progress of the *Seeker*. It was the hazard of a second. A whistle rang out—the signal.

My love! I had but an instant to think. I pretended to slip clumsily. A curse echoed in my ears as the gunner, torn from the electric switch, went flat, I on top of him.