

MR. BURFITT.

All who read these lines will regret to hear that Mr. F. H. Burfitt has left the "Conway." All who hear the news will share our sorrow. Not since the resignation of Mr. Tozer has a more popular figure departed from our midst.

The great value of "Birdie" lay in his fatherly but firm dealings with all and sundry and his kindly words of advice and ready helping hand to the "Conway" fledgling—the rather forlorn and very last new chum. Many are there of us who can well remember many little acts of fatherly understanding that came to us when all seemed otherwise lost. A hard nut to crack was Birdie, and among his many values was his instantaneous suppression of the grouser.

Wilfred has elected to remain, though the parting with his master was a sad one. On the occasion of Mr. Burfitt's speech to us on the main deck we were told that Mr. Lawrence would take Wilfred into his keeping and that the instructions were that he—Wilfred—should be treated tenderly and with the respect due to his importance in the general scheme of things. So Wilfred remains "behind."

As a token of the affection and respect we all feel for Mr. Burfitt a handsome presentation was made by the Chief Cadet Captain on behalf of the Cadets. The presentation took the form of a silver salver bearing a suitable inscription. Ormerod, in very well-chosen words, handed Mr. Burfitt the gift, and Mr. Burfitt replied saying how deeply he felt the parting of the ways—and so indeed did we all. His instructions with regard to Wilfred were embodied in his speech of farewell.

We add to these parting words the description of the Falkland Islands battle which appeared in the *Cadet* of April, 1915, for there are many "Conways" past and present who have listened spellbound to his wonderful stories. This one that we reproduce will recall very vividly his own particular—and not to say inconsequent—way of telling them.

One can almost hear him saying—

"The German squadron came round the Horn after sinking the 'Good Hope' and 'Monmouth,' with the intention of occupying the Falkland Islands, but we just arrived here in time to prevent this. The two Dreadnought

cruisers had started coaling, and the remainder of us were waiting for our colliers to arrive, when we suddenly had the signal to weigh, and then we saw the enemy steaming for the entrance to Stanley Harbour. The old 'Canopus,' acting as guardship, opened fire with her 12 in. guns over the land, but when the Germans saw the tripod masts of our battle cruisers they were off. They were never so much surprised at anything in their lives, as they didn't know they were with us.

"We, in the 'Kent,' were the first ship out, and then came the little 'Glasgow,' followed by the Dreadnoughts, by which time the enemy were nearly hull down. Our big cruisers soon settled down to the chase and left us behind. Presently they opened fire and were replied to by the enemy, whose shells, however, fell short. We were still out of range, but all the crew collected in the fore-castle and in the rigging, cheering the big ships. Meanwhile the 'Glasgow' had got within range of the 'Leipzig' and was barking at him like a little terrier. Now and again she would get a salvo from the enemy, sheer off out of range and then close again.

"All this time it was fine sport for us in the 'Kent,' but it soon began to get more serious. We sounded action and started with our bow guns. The shells began to splash and burst close to the ship and we got hit a couple of times. By this time we had singled out our opponents. We took the 'Nürnberg,' the two Dreadnoughts took the 'Scharnhorst' and the 'Gneisenau,' and the little 'Glasgow' and the 'Cornwall' the 'Leipzig.' The 'Dresden' got away but we hoped to bag her soon.

"Well, we started business then, and we let one another have it hot, and no mistake about it. It took us two hours and forty minutes to finish him, from the time we started. Our casualties were six killed and six wounded. We got the most punishment of all our fleet and were simply riddled above the water line, though fortunately no serious damage was done.

"The carnage on board the German was awful. All the fore part was on fire, and she began to settle down with a list to starboard. We went in as close as we could with safety, but she would not surrender then, although nearly all her guns were torn out of the deck and her deck ripped up. She ceased firing for a few minutes, and we did the same, and thought

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she would haul down her colours : but no, she opened fire again with a couple of her after guns. The Captain then ordered us to give her another dose of lyddite, and that fixed her off.

By that time all who were left alive were gathered on the quarter deck, and I put four lyddite shells into her from my gun. The last one cleared the quarter deck and ripped the deck open, and, one of the prisoners told us afterwards, killed about fifty men. She hauled her colours down then, and one of them waved them in his hand as the ship went down. We picked up seven.

"We had several Old 'Conways' on board, Lieut.-Comdr. Redhead, Lieut. Dunn and Mr. Valentine, Midshipman."

Mr. Burfitt joined the "Conway" on 1st April, 1908, and left us owing to the necessity to reduce the numbers of the Staff on February 28th, 1934.

On the outbreak of war Mr. Burfitt was called up and returned to us on 1st March, 1917.

We all join in wishing him a happy and peaceful retirement, hoping that the day will soon come when he will come and visit us.

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