

# THE NEW INQUIRY

▼ SUBSCRIBE  
TO TNI



ESSAYS & REVIEWS

FEATURES

BLOGS

&, MEANWHILE

NEWS

MAGAZINE

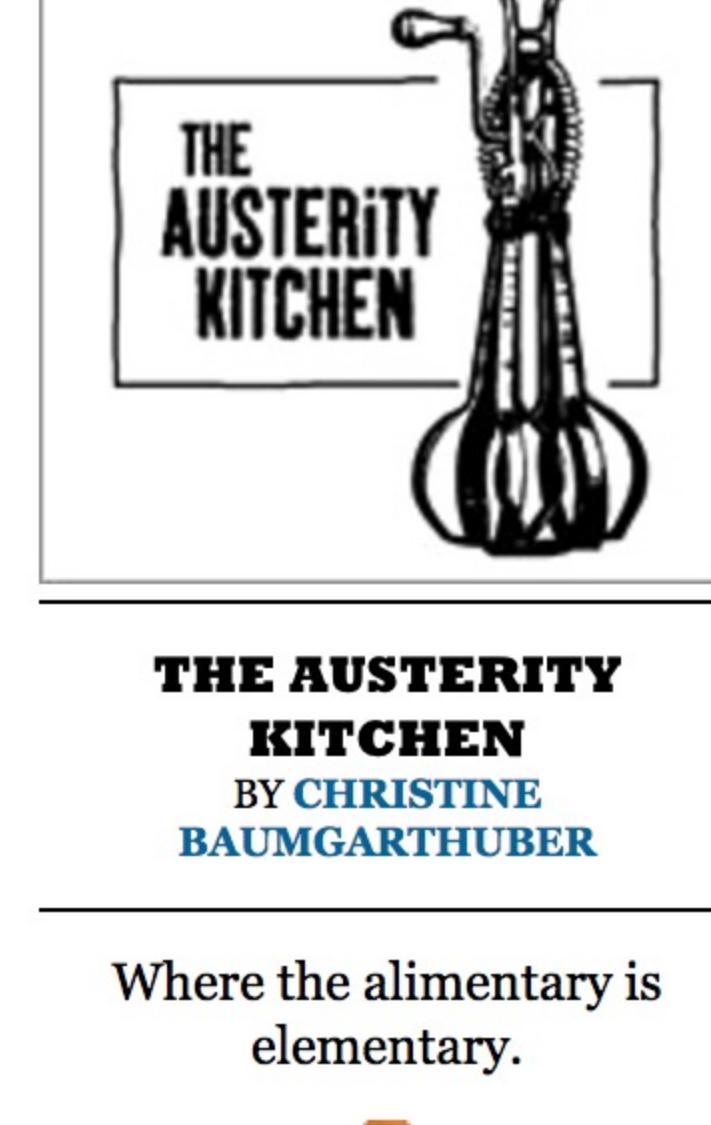
ARCHIVE

SHOP

ABOUT

Search ...

SEARCH



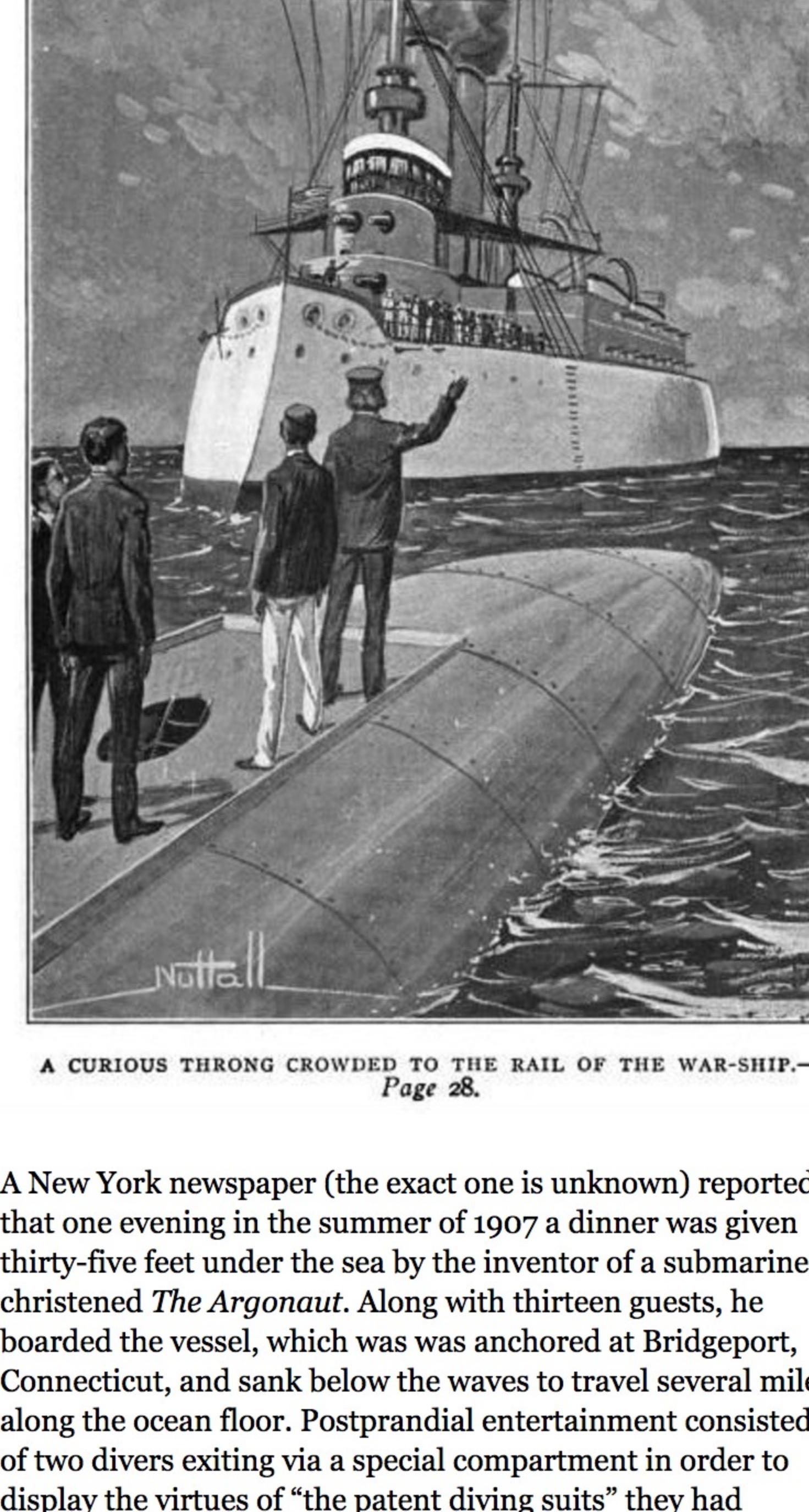
**THE AUSTERITY  
KITCHEN**  
BY CHRISTINE  
BAUMGARTNER

Where the alimentary is  
elementary.



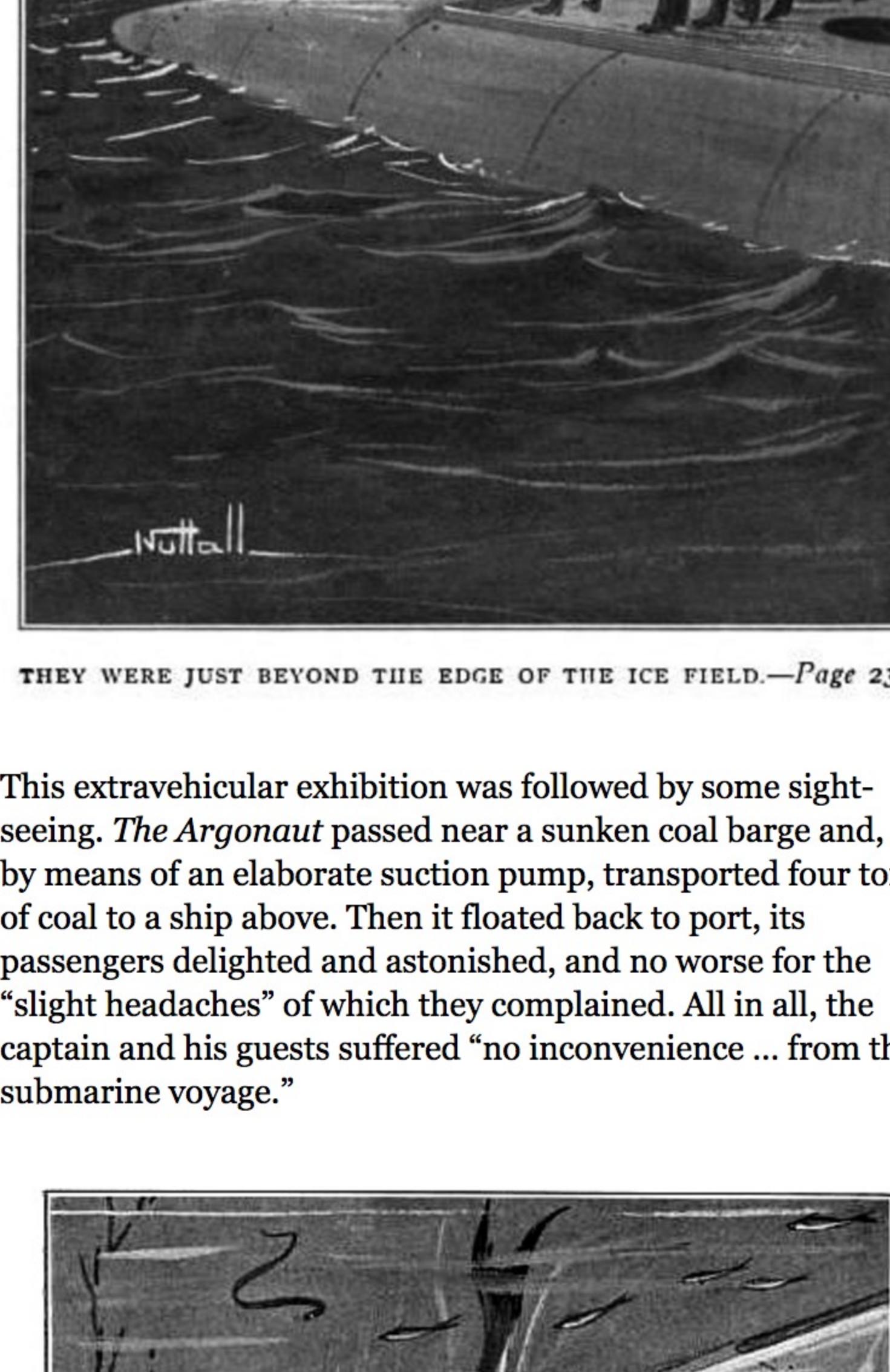
## Full Fathom Five Thy Father Dines

By CHRISTINE BAUMGARTNER



A CURIOUS THROB CROWDED TO THE RAIL OF THE WAR-SHIP.—  
Page 28.

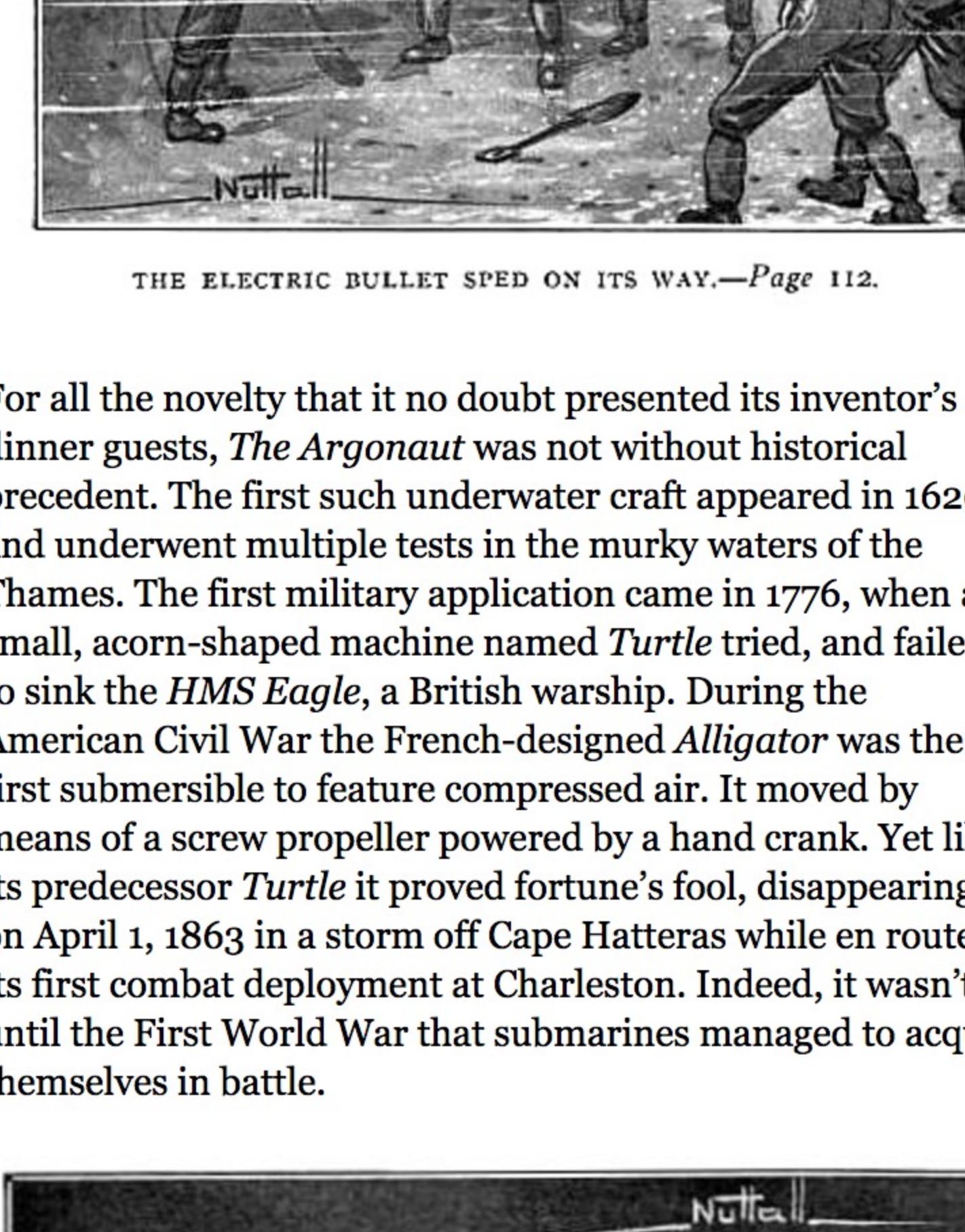
A New York newspaper (the exact one is unknown) reported that one evening in the summer of 1907 a dinner was given thirty-five feet under the sea by the inventor of a submarine christened *The Argonaut*. Along with thirteen guests, he boarded the vessel, which was anchored at Bridgeport, Connecticut, and sank below the waves to travel several miles along the ocean floor. Postprandial entertainment consisted of two divers exiting via a special compartment in order to display the virtues of "the patent diving suits" they had donned.



THEY WERE JUST BEYOND THE EDGE OF THE ICE FIELD.—Page 232.

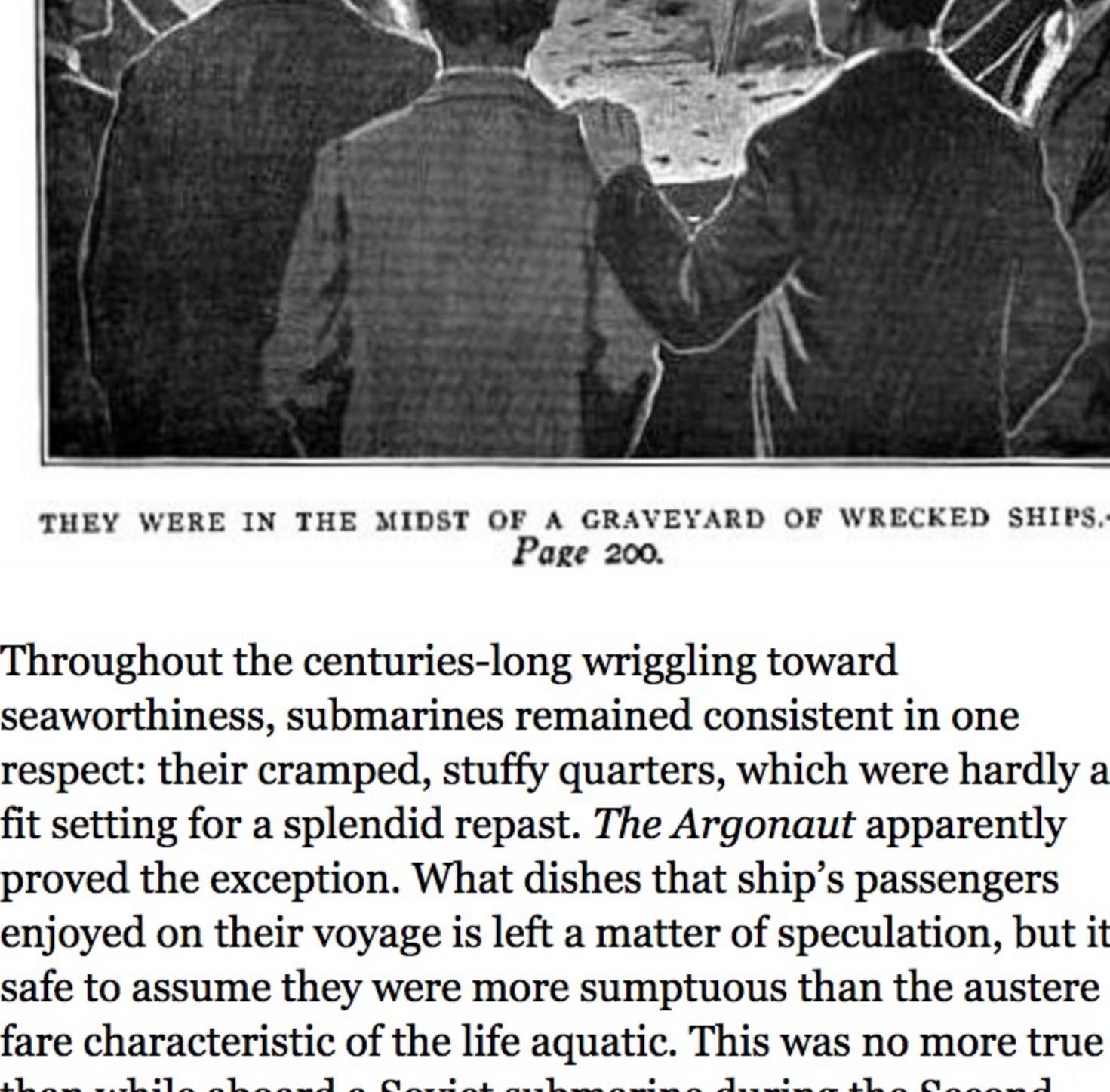
"This is the song of the submarine / Afloat on the waters wide. / Like a sleeping whale / In the starlight pale, / Just flush with the swirling tide. / The salt sea ripples against her plates / The salt wind is her breath, / Like the spear of fate / She lies in wait, / And her name is 'Sudden Death.' — William Booth, "The Song of the Submarine" (date unknown)

This extravehicular exhibition was followed by some sightseeing. *The Argonaut* passed near a sunken coal barge and, by means of an elaborate suction pump, transported four tons of coal to a ship above. Then it floated back to port, its passengers delighted and astonished, and no worse for the "slight headaches" of which they complained. All in all, the captain and his guests suffered "no inconvenience ... from the submarine voyage."



THE ELECTRIC BULLET SPED ON ITS WAY.—Page 112.

For all the novelty that it no doubt presented its inventor's dinner guests, *The Argonaut* was not without historical precedent. The first such underwater craft appeared in 1620 and underwent multiple tests in the murky waters of the Thames. The first military application came in 1776, when a small, acorn-shaped machine named *Turtle* tried, and failed, to sink the *HMS Eagle*, a British warship. During the American Civil War the French-designed *Alligator* was the first submersible to feature compressed air. It moved by means of a screw propeller powered by a hand crank. Yet like its predecessor *Turtle* it proved fortune's fool, disappearing on April 1, 1863 in a storm off Cape Hatteras while en route to its first combat deployment at Charleston. Indeed, it wasn't until the First World War that submarines managed to acquit themselves in battle.



THEY WERE IN THE MIDST OF A GRAVEYARD OF WRECKED SHIPS.—  
Page 200.

Throughout the centuries long-wriggling toward seaworthiness submarines remained consistent in one respect: their cramped, claustrophobic quarters, which were hardly fit setting for a splendid repast. *The Argonaut* apparently proved the exception. What dished the ship's passengers, however, was the lack of a place to go to the bathroom. It is safe to assume they were more sumptuous than the austere fare while aboard a Soviet submarine. This was the second true World War. Herring was a staple red wine a rare treat. And while the crewmen of a submarine had to stick to the same diet as the rest of the crew, they were not as restricted in their diet as the rest of the crew. They were able to eat whatever they wanted, as long as it was not too salty or too spicy. They were also able to drink whatever they wanted, as long as it was not too salty or too spicy.

August 3, 2012

Illustrations from *Under the Ocean to the South Pole: Or, The Strange Cruise of the Submarine Wonder* (1907)

A version of this post appeared at the original Austerity Kitchen.

Recipe for Buckwheat groats from *Scientific Feeding* (1914): Wash one cup of buckwheat groats several times with cold water, add about six cups of boiling water, add about two teaspoons of salt. Boil rapidly for ten minutes, then add dried prunes, then allow it to cook 50 or 60 minutes. Serve with hot cream. Cooked or stewed with dried prunes may be eaten with it, or added to the meal just before serving. Buckwheat from a winter food. People who eat buckwheat should let it alone.

Previously by  
CHRISTINE BAUMGARTNER

Cowboys and

Plastic Malls

Dinner with Caligula

Steaming Excrement



SUPPORT TNI

SUBMIT

TERMS OF USE

CONTACT US

DESIGNED BY IMP KERR BUILT BY KRATE