

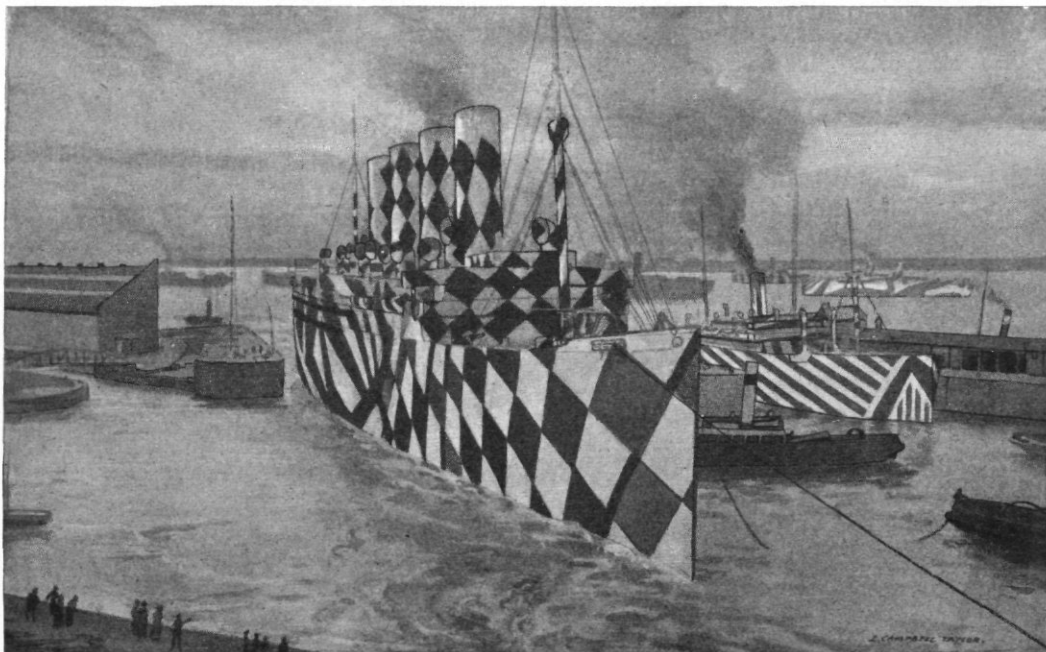
DAZZLE-PAINTING IN WAR-TIME.

TO the lover of the ship for the ship's sake the appearance of our docks in the great ports during the war may perhaps have come as somewhat of a shock, but to the artist the transformation from a monotonous uniformity to a scene presenting a pageant-like array of strong colour and strange designs this change can have been nothing but a joy. Certainly it has proved to many painters not merely a stimulus to record one outward aspect of the war, but a direct source of inspiration towards design and colour. It was the artist who in devising means for saving tonnage provided, by accident as it were, these splendid scenes of fleets clothed in their war-paint, such as were never before and, possibly, may never again be seen. ▯ ▯ ▯

Although the accompanying drawings naturally lose some of their effect by being reproduced in black and white, to the uninitiated they may perhaps appear sufficiently bizarre. Those who were not fortunate enough to see the docks at one of our great ports during the war may

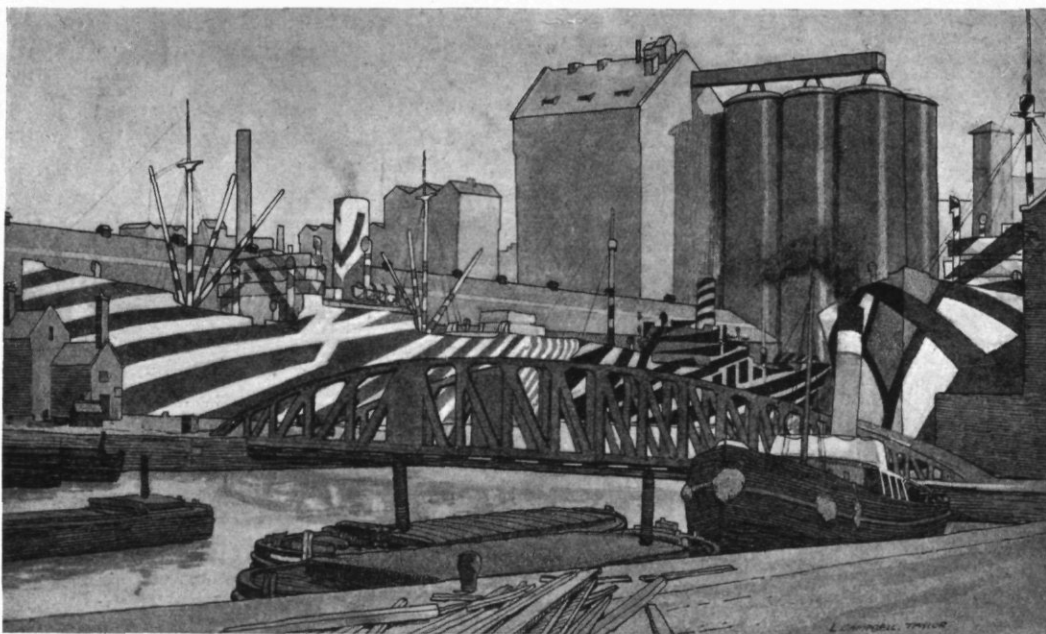
imagine the arrival of a convoy—or, as frequently occurred, two at a time—of these painted ships, and the many miles of docks crowded with vessels of all sorts, from the stately Atlantic liner to the humbler craft bearing its cargo of coal or palm oil, each resplendent with a variety of bright-hued patterns, up-to-date designs of stripes in black and white or pale blue and deep ultramarine, and earlier designs of curves, patches, and semicircles. Take all these, huddle them together in what appears to be hopeless confusion, but which in reality is perfect order, bow and stern pointing in all directions, mix a little sunshine, add the varied and sparkling reflections, stir the hotchpotch up with smoke, life, and incessant movement, and it can safely be said that the word "dazzle" is not far from the mark. ▯ ▯ ▯

On the many misty and grey days of winter perhaps even more strange effects were to be found, for then the pale colours would merge into nothingness, weird patterns of black and dark blue stand out



"H.M.T. 'MAURETANIA' ENTERING HALF-TIDE DOCK AT LIVERPOOL." WATER-COLOUR BY LIEUT. L. CAMPBELL TAYLOR, R.N.V.R.

DAZZLE-PAINTING IN WAR-TIME



"S.S. 'CLAN MCLEAN' IN DOCK,
BIRKENHEAD." WATER-COLOUR
BY L. CAMPBELL TAYLOR

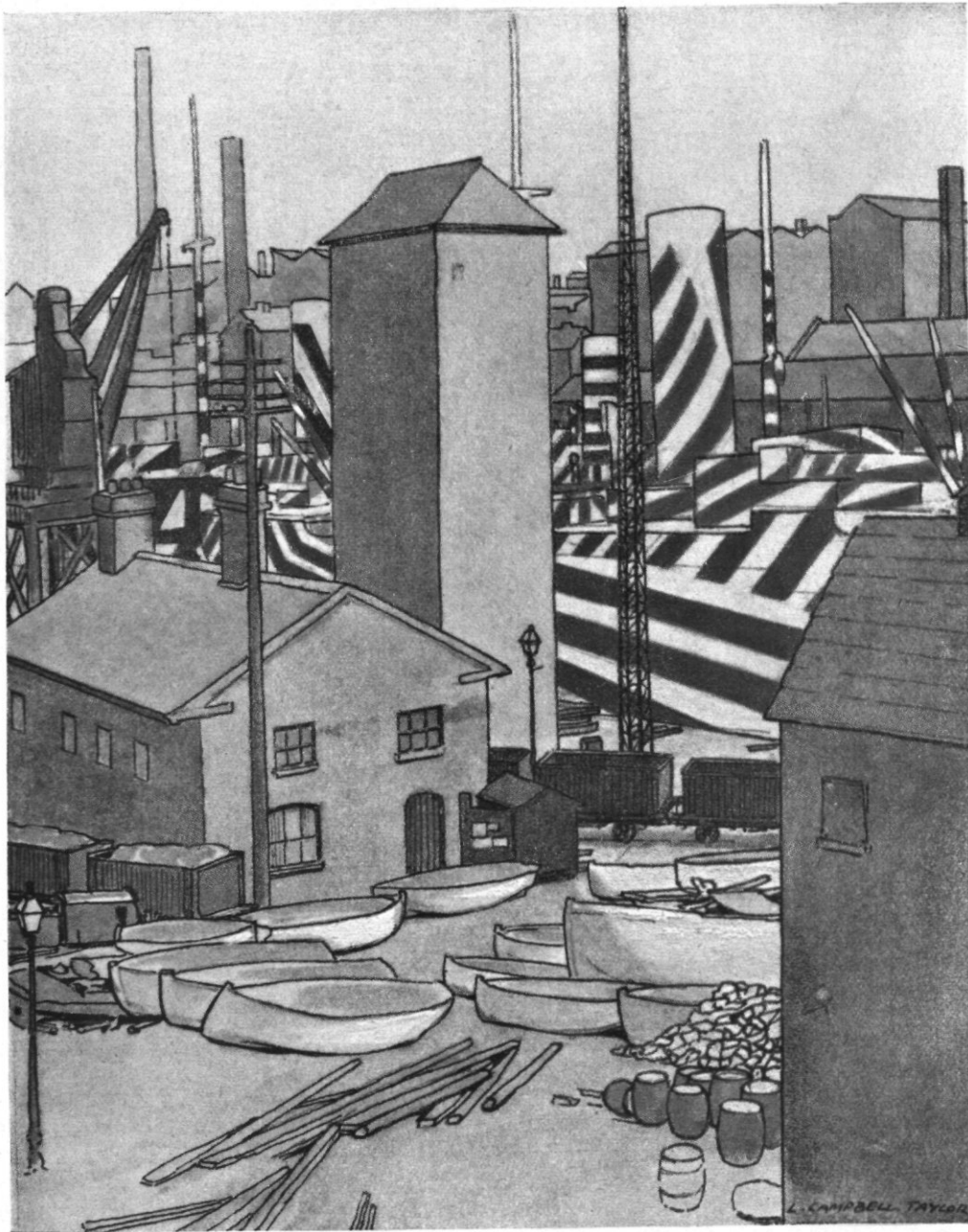
with startling sharpness from the surrounding gloom—part of a funnel, half a mast, a bow where no bow should be—and although the brilliance and clarity of summer was lacking, the almost uncanny strangeness was accentuated. ♦ ♦

The forming-up of a convoy in the river before a start on the perilous Atlantic run, owing to the contrast of dark and light colours, and the loss of certain portions of the accepted outlines of hulls and deck superstructures, was another medium for the exposition of dazzle-painting, and the cause of much bewilderment and speculative comment on the part of onlookers on landing-stage and ferry-boat. Here was a kaleidoscopic effect as each vessel passed slowly down the river to take up her appointed station outside the bar; stripes crossing stripes, blue, black, green, and grey appearing and disappearing. At times a large patch of some strong colour would detach itself from the side of a vessel, as if by a miracle, and eventually disclose the fact that it belonged to another vessel lying unsuspectingly alongside; and when, finally, all were in position and were

viewed from a distance, there appeared again nothing but an interesting confusion. ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

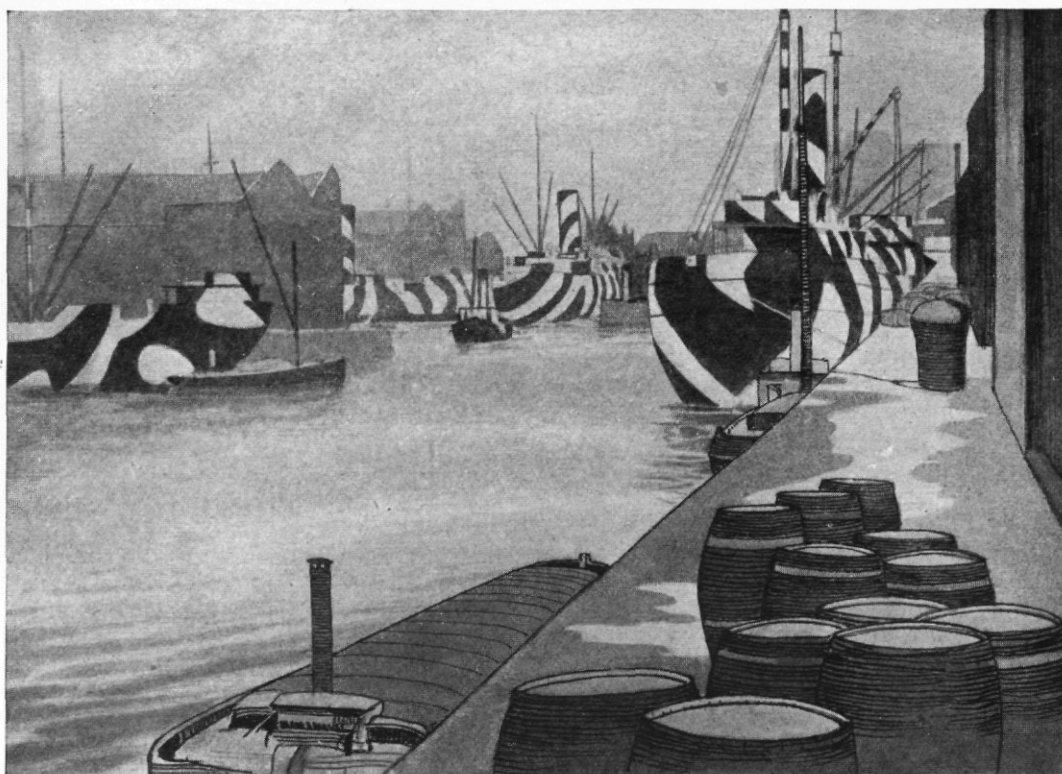
It was necessary frequently for vessels to have their dazzle design altered, some of the earlier plans showing room for improvement, and the later stripe and block designs were substituted. Ships so treated would creep back to port with a particularly odd-looking coat of many colours, the wear and tear of a winter journey across the Atlantic having played havoc with the fresh paint of her new design, causing the old one to appear in patches, whilst the deckwork and superstructure, not having suffered, would remain unworn and up to date, adding an unexpectedly gay spot in the docks. ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Subjects for the painter, many of them ready-made as regards arrangement of mass, line, and colour, literally bristled among the docks and would have proved the happy hunting-ground for the artist in search of material, but access in war-time was difficult, if not impossible, excepting to the very favoured few. ♦ ♦



"DAZZLED SHIPS IN
CANADA DOCK, LIVERPOOL."
WATER-COLOUR BY L.
CAMPBELL TAYLOR.

DAZZLE-PAINTING IN WAR-TIME



"DAZZLED SHIPS IN QUEEN'S DOCK,
LIVERPOOL." WATER-COLOUR BY
LIEUT. GUY KORTRIGHT, R.N.V.R.

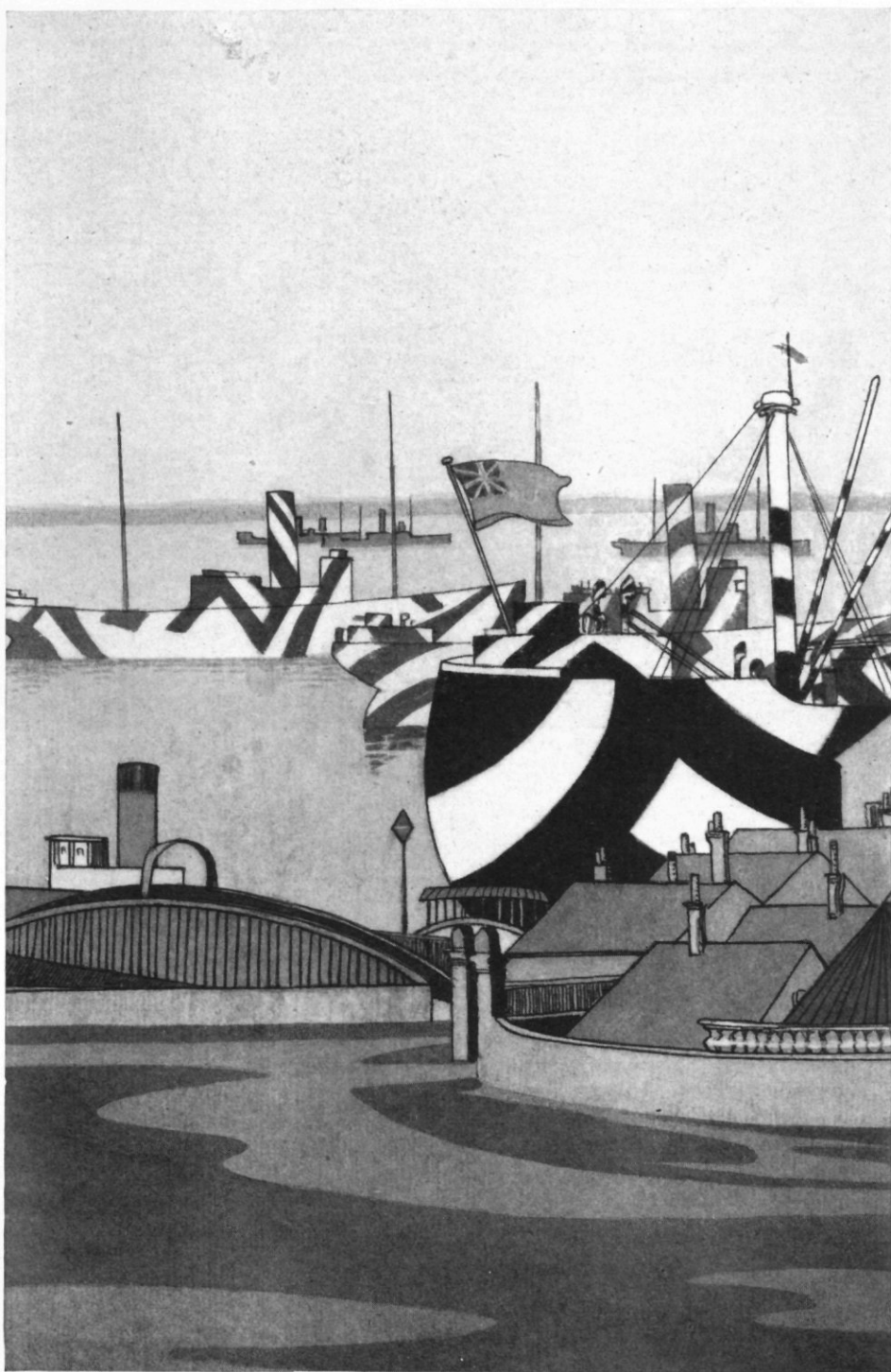
The suggestion has been thrown out, perhaps not a very practical one, that some scheme of dazzle-painting should be continued as a normal practice, but with the reverse of its war-time aim—namely, not to break up but to accentuate the lines and shape of a vessel and its various parts, and thus to help in the avoidance of collision. Whatever the owners and the general public might say, the artist, at any rate, would welcome the innovation as a peace-time measure. ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

There has been, and even to-day there still is, much misconception as to the why and the wherefore of dazzle-painting, and in its early stages opposition was encountered in consequence. It was thought that the object in view was to render a ship invisible, but experiment had proved the impossibility of this. The mission of "dazzle" was so to distort and break up the accepted constructional lines of a vessel

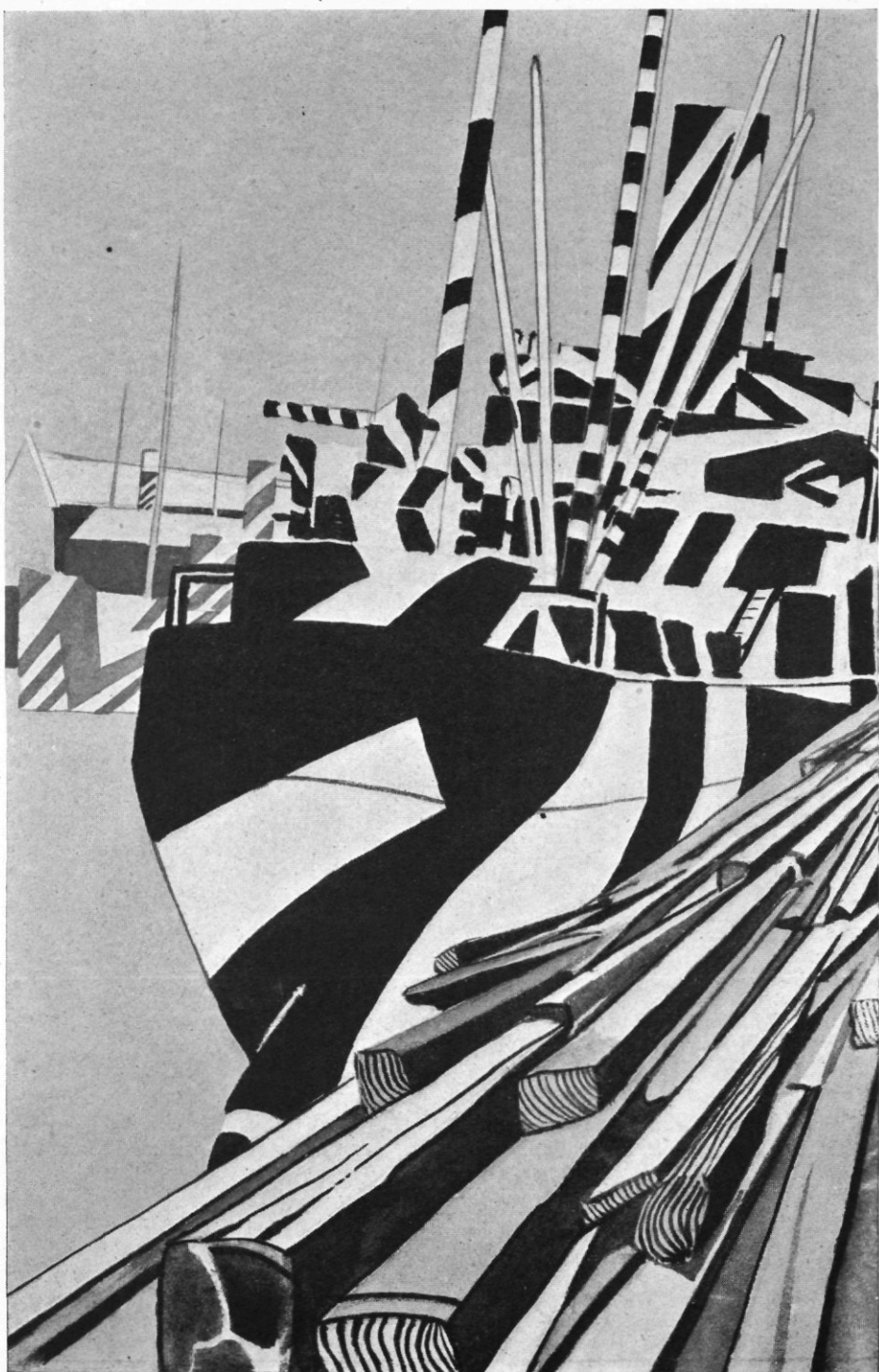
that an enemy submarine commander, viewing her through his periscope, should make a false estimate of the true course of his intended victim. If this could be accomplished the U-boat captain would rise, in all probability, in the wrong place and at a disadvantage from whence to discharge his torpedo, thus giving our vessels a better chance of escape. ♦

The problem on land was another matter, and there true camouflage was resorted to in the treatment of guns, gun-pits, huts, tanks, and shell-holes. Invisibility chiefly was the aim, for these camouflaged objects were seen against a solid background when viewed from the air, but the ship at sea seen through a periscope of a submarine has a background mostly sky, and this is not only ever-changing but is the source from which she receives her lighting. ♦ ♦ ♦

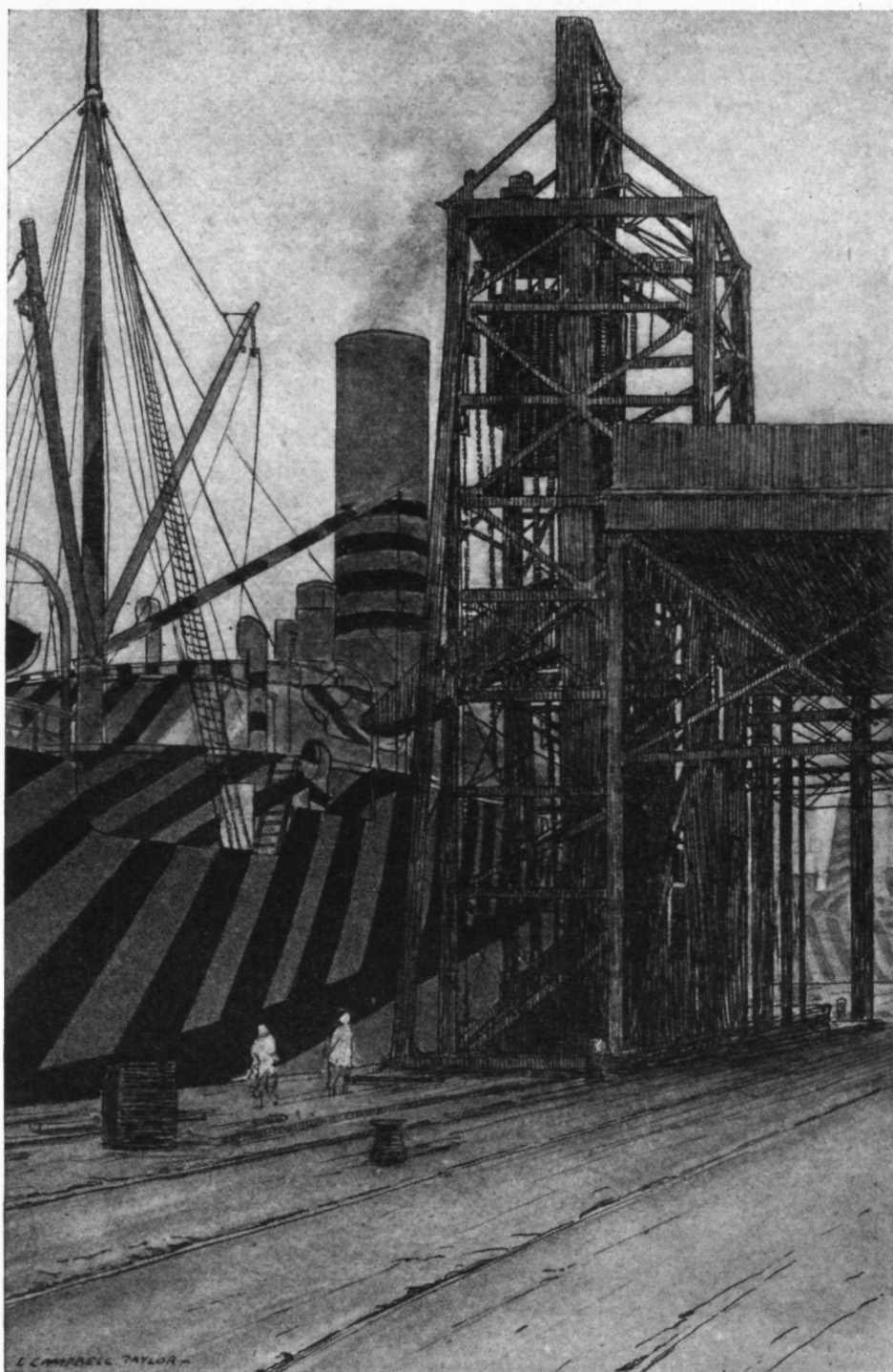
HUGH HURST



"S.S. 'MINNEDOSA' AT LIVERPOOL AFTER
DISEMBARKING AMERICAN TROOPS"
WATER-COLOUR BY GUY KORTRIGHT



"S.S. 'DICTATOR' IN HERCULANEUM
DOCK, LIVERPOOL." WATER-
COLOUR BY GUY KORTRIGHT



"DAZZLED SHIP TAKING IN COAL
AT LIVERPOOL." WATER-COLOUR
BY L. CAMPBELL TAYLOR