

***Naval Episodes***

***of the***

***Great War***

**John Buchan**

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*Title:* Naval Episodes of the Great War

*Date of first publication:* 1938

*Author:* John Buchan (1875-1940)

*Date first posted:* July 13, 2022

*Date last updated:* July 13, 2022

Faded Page eBook #20220727

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines, John Routh & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>



*J. Russell & Sons*

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JELlicOE

NAVAL EPISODES OF  
THE GREAT WAR

*by*  
JOHN BUCHAN

*Illustrated*

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WORKS, EDINBURGH; 25 RUE DENFERT-ROCHEREAU,  
PARIS; 312 FLINDERS STREET, MELBOURNE;  
91-93 WELLINGTON STREET WEST, TORONTO;  
381-385 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

*First published, March 1938*

## PREFACE

Like the earlier volume of *Episodes of the Great War*, this book consists of selections from Mr. Buchan's *History of the Great War* (Nelson, 4 vols., 1921-22), made without revision and without any alterations beyond a few necessary changes in phrasing. Unlike *Episodes*, it does not attempt to present a continuous narrative, but it covers the important naval operations of the War, and deals in some detail with the problems of commerce, contraband, and blockade.

The selection has been made by Mr. Stanley Williams.

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NAVAL EPISODES OF THE  
GREAT WAR

## CHAPTER I

### THE BRITISH AND GERMAN NAVIES

#### Their Character—Their Relative Strength—The Strategical Position.

At the outbreak of the Great War, the British navy had reached a point of efficiency both in quality and quantity which was unprecedented in its history. It is true that the growth of German sea-power had relatively reduced its pre-eminence, but the existence of a bold claimant for the empire of the ocean had stimulated the spirit of the fleet, and improved its organization for war. This is not the place to enter into the interminable discussions which since 1906 had raged around the subject. The attempts at reduction, happily frustrated, may well be relegated to oblivion. Ever since Lord Selborne's period of office at the Admiralty a steady advance may be noted in training and equipment. The establishment of the Royal Fleet Reserve and the Volunteer Naval Reserve, the provision of North Sea bases, the admirable work done by the Committee of Imperial Defence, the development of armament and of battleship designing, the improvement in gunnery practice, the system of manning older ships with nucleus crews, the revision of the rates of pay, the opening up of careers for the lower deck, and the provision of a naval air service, were landmarks in the advance.

Much was due to Lord Fisher, who for five and a half years held the post of First Sea Lord; something was due, also, to the civilian First Lords, Mr. McKenna and Mr. Winston Churchill. The former saved the situation in the crisis of 1909; the latter flung himself into the work of his department with a zeal and intelligence which were of incalculable value to the country in the hour of need. In the Navy Estimates of March 1914, Parliament sanctioned over fifty-one millions for naval defence—the largest sum ever granted for the purpose. There was always a certain criticism of our naval policy on technical grounds, for the advent of the big gun, the submarine, and the airship had dissolved much of the old orthodox theory, and the air was thick with new doctrine. In particular, the organization of the Admiralty was attacked with some justice, and the first months of war revealed various errors of prevision. The capital ship had tended to monopolize our mind to the exclusion of other weapons. But it is unquestionable that Britain had never been stronger afloat than she was in 1914.

The German navy, the second in the world, was a creation of the past fifteen years, deliberately undertaken for the purpose of challenging British supremacy. The chief begetter had been an obscure naval officer called Tirpitz, who in 1897 succeeded Admiral von Hollmann as Minister of Marine. With the support of the Emperor he began to wring money for the navy out of a reluctant Treasury and in the face of a jealous army, and by dint of a skilful press campaign succeeded in arousing in the German people a new enthusiasm for maritime power. At the outbreak of war he had held office for fifteen years, and had built up a navy which in ships and men was second only to one—a marvellous performance for so short a period.

In the old days the German navy had been regarded as a branch of the army: naval strategy was conceived of as only an auxiliary to land strategy, and ships as units for coast defence. It had been the task of the new German sea-lords to emancipate the fleet from this military tradition. The result was that the navy had become a far more democratic profession than the sister service, and had drawn to it many able men of middle-class birth who were repelled by the junkerdom of the army. It was manned chiefly by conscripts, but about a quarter consisted of volunteers, mainly dwellers on the coast and on the Frisian and Baltic islands, and men who had deliberately made it their career. The officers were almost to a man professional enthusiasts, and British sailors, who fraternized with them in foreign ports, had borne witness to their efficiency and seamanlike spirit.

In August 1914 Britain possessed 73 battleships and battle-cruisers, 34 armoured cruisers, 87 cruisers, 227 destroyers, and 75 submarines—many of each class being of an antiquated type. Germany had 46 battleships and battle-cruisers, 40 armoured cruisers, 12 cruisers, 152 destroyers, and 40 submarines. But as she had practically all her fleet in northern waters, the true comparison was between her High Seas Fleet and its actual antagonist, the British Grand Fleet. On this basis Britain had 20 Dreadnoughts, 8 pre-Dreadnoughts, 4 battle-cruisers, 9 cruisers, 12 light cruisers, and 42 destroyers; Germany, 13 Dreadnoughts, 16 pre-Dreadnoughts, 3 battle-cruisers, 2 cruisers, 15 light cruisers, and 88 destroyers. Germany had 28 submarines, and was building 24; Britain had 54 and was building 19; but of the 54, 37 were old types useful only for coast defence, and only 9 of the total were comparable to the German craft. Germany's strength in destroyers and submarines is to be noted, for it gave a hint of her naval policy. She could not hope to meet the British Grand Fleet in an open battle—at any rate not at the beginning. It was her aim to avoid such a trial of strength until the British lead had been reduced by the slow attrition of submarines, mines, and the casualties of the sea. The policy of a sudden raid—that “day” which

German naval officers had long toasted—was made almost impossible by the manner in which war broke out and by the preparedness of Britain at sea.

The Fabian line of strategy had many advantages from Germany's standpoint. It gave ample scope for the ingenuity and boldness of those branches of her sea service, like mine-layers and submarines, to which she had paid special attention. It kept her fleet intact against the time when, her arms victorious on land, she could sally forth to fight a dispirited enemy. Further, a period of forced inaction must have a wearing effect upon the nerves of the British navy. For a fleet which believes itself invincible and longs for combat it is a hard trial to wait day after day without desecrating an enemy's pennon on the horizon. The modern battleship had not the constant small duties which existed in the ships of Nelson's time, and it was hoped that the men and officers might grow stale and apathetic; or, in the alternative, they might risk an attack upon the German fleet in its home waters—an attack which, in the German view, would result in the crushing defeat of the invader.



*Stanford, London.*

### The North Sea and Straits of Dover

This plan, perfectly sound strategy in the circumstances, was made possible by the peculiar configuration of the German coast, and the

magnificent shelter it provided. The few hundred miles between Emden and the Danish frontier are deeply cut by bays and river mouths, and the western part is screened by the chain of Frisian islands from Borkum to Wangeroog. In the centre of the bight lies Heligoland, a strong fortress with a wireless station. Close to the Dutch frontier is the estuary of the Ems, with the town of Emden. Then follows a low, sandy stretch of coast, indented with tidal creeks, till the estuary of the Jade is reached at Wilhelmshaven, which was the fortified base of the North Sea Fleet. Next is the estuary of the Weser, with the important dockyard of Bremerhaven. Last comes the estuary of the Elbe, with Cuxhaven at its mouth, opposite the debouchment of the Kiel Canal, and at its head the great city and dockyard of Hamburg. Each estuary was a network of many channels among the sands, requiring skilful piloting, and in themselves a strong defence against a raid. There was, further, the screen of the islands, behind which operations could take place unnoticed, and there was the Kiel Canal to furnish a back door to the Baltic. The coast was followed by a double line of railway from Hamburg to Emden, which tapped no populous district and carried no traffic, but was meant solely for strategic purposes. This Frisian corner was the key to German naval defence. Her front there was protected from British assault, and from that base her submarines and destroyers could make raids on the British navy and return swiftly to sanctuary. Britain was handicapped in this kind of contest by her weight. It was like the fight of an elephant against a leopard. The heavier antagonist, once he can use his strength, makes short work of the enemy; but he may be given no chance to exert that strength, and may weaken and sink from a multitude of trivial wounds. Britain had the further drawback that at the outset she possessed no naval bases on the North Sea fortified against submarine attack.

The German plan involved the immediate sacrifice of Germany's foreign trade, which would be speedily put an end to by that considerable part of the British navy which was not on duty with the Grand Fleet. On the other hand it maintained her main naval strength intact; it immobilized in the difficult duty of siege and blockade the bulk of the sea-power of Britain, and kept that sea-power in a state of exasperated inaction and perpetual risk. These, however, were advantages and disadvantages which could only materialize in the event of the prolongation of the war. In the early stage, Germany's effort after immediate victory, the two navies had no bearing upon the struggle save in one point—the ferrying over the Channel of the British Expeditionary Force. If Germany could prevent or delay that operation her fleet would have secured a brilliant and most vital success in the first round.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WAR AT SEA BEGINS

Germany's Naval Policy—Sir John Jellicoe's Problem—The Transport of the Armies—Escape of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*—Protection of the Trade Routes—Security of the British Coasts.

Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914, and at 8.30 that morning the British Grand Fleet put out to sea. From that moment it disappeared from English sight. Dwellers on the southern and eastern coasts in the bright weather of early August could see an occasional cruiser or destroyer speeding on some errand, or an escorted minesweeper busy at its perilous task. But the great battleships had gone. Somewhere out on the blue waters or hidden in a creek of our northern and western shores lay the vigilant admirals of Britain. But presently came news. On the night of the 4th the German mine-layer *Königin Luise* left Borkum, and about 11 a.m. on the 5th she was sighted, chased, and sunk by two British destroyers. Early on the 6th the British light cruiser *Amphion* struck one of the mines she had laid, and foundered with some loss of life. Battle had been joined at sea.

To the command of the Grand Fleet there had been appointed Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, with Rear-Admiral Charles Madden as Chief of Staff. It consisted at the moment of twenty Dreadnoughts, eight "King Edwards," four battle-cruisers, two squadrons of cruisers and one of light cruisers. Those who shared Stevenson's view as to the racy nomenclature of British seamen found something reassuring in the name of the new Commander-in-Chief. Admiral Jellicoe had served as a lieutenant in the Egyptian war in 1882. Specializing in gunnery, he had become a commander in 1891 and a captain in 1897; had served on the China station, commanding the Naval Brigade and acting as chief staff officer in the Peking expedition of 1900, where he was severely wounded. Thereafter he became successively Naval Assistant to the Controller of the Navy, Director of Naval Ordnance and Torpedoes, Rear-Admiral in the Atlantic Fleet, a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty and Controller of the Navy, Vice-Admiral commanding the Atlantic Fleet, Vice-Admiral commanding the Second Division of the Home Fleet, and second Sea Lord of the Admiralty. He brilliantly distinguished himself in the command of the "Red" Fleet at the naval manœuvres of 1913. Rear-Admiral Madden, his Chief of Staff, who was also his brother-in-law,

had already served with him at the Admiralty. Sir John Jellicoe was one of the officers chiefly responsible for the modern navy of Britain, and enjoyed not only the admiration and complete confidence of his colleagues, but a peculiar popularity among all grades of British seamen. His nerve and self-possession were not less conspicuous than his professional skill, and in the wearing months ahead of him he had need of all resources of mind and character.

The British fleet had not fought a great battle at sea since Trafalgar. Since those days, only a century removed in time, the conditions of naval warfare had seen greater changes than in the span between Themistocles and Nelson. The old wooden walls, the unrifled guns, the boarders with their cutlasses, belonged to an earlier world. The fleet had no longer to scour the ocean for the enemy's fleet. Wireless telegraphy, aerial reconnaissance, and swift destroyers brought it early news of a foe. The gun power of a modern battleship would have wrecked the Spanish Armada with one broadside, and the enemy could now be engaged at a distance of many miles. Sea fighting was no more the clean and straightforward business of the old days. Destruction dwelt in every element when there was no sign of a hostile pennant. Aircraft dropped bombs from the clouds; unseen submarines, like swordfish, pierced the hull from the depths; and anywhere might lurk those mines which destroyed, like some convulsion of nature, with no human enemy near. Britain had to fight under new conditions, with new strategy and new weapons, with far greater demands on the intellect and a far more deadly strain on the nerves. Most things had changed, but two things remained unaltered—the cool daring of her sailors, and their conviction that the seas were the unquestionable heritage of their race.

Germany's naval policy in the first instance was, as we have seen, to refuse battle and withdraw her fleet behind prepared defences. To this decision various purposes contributed. She needed every soldier she possessed in the battle-line, and wished to avoid the necessity of guarding her Pomeranian coast with an army. Again, she hoped that public opinion in Britain, alarmed at the inactivity of its navy, would compel an attack on the Elbe position—an attack which, she believed, would end in a British disaster. But her defence was not to be passive. By a mine and submarine offensive, pushed right up to the British coasts, she hoped to wear down Britain's superiority in capital ships and bring it in the end to an equality with her own. Then, and not till then, her High Seas Fleet was willing to sally forth and give battle.



*Exclusive News Agency*

### ADMIRAL VON INGENOHL

To meet such Fabian tactics was no easy problem for Britain. The ordinary citizen hoped for a theatrical *coup*, a full dress battle, or at the least a swift series of engagements with enemy warships. When nothing happened he began to think that something was amiss; he could not believe that it was a proof of success that nothing happened—nothing startling, that is to say, for every day had its full record of quiet achievement. As a consequence of this inactivity, false doctrines began to be current, in which, let it be said, the British naval leaders did not share. It was Britain's business to command the sea, and so long as an enemy fleet remained intact, that command was not

absolute but qualified. The British fleet might be invincible, but it was not yet victorious. Its numerous minor activities were not undertaken for their own sake, as if in themselves they could give the final victory; they were forms of compulsion conceived in order to force the High Seas Fleet to come out and fight.



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ADMIRAL SIR BERKELEY MILNE

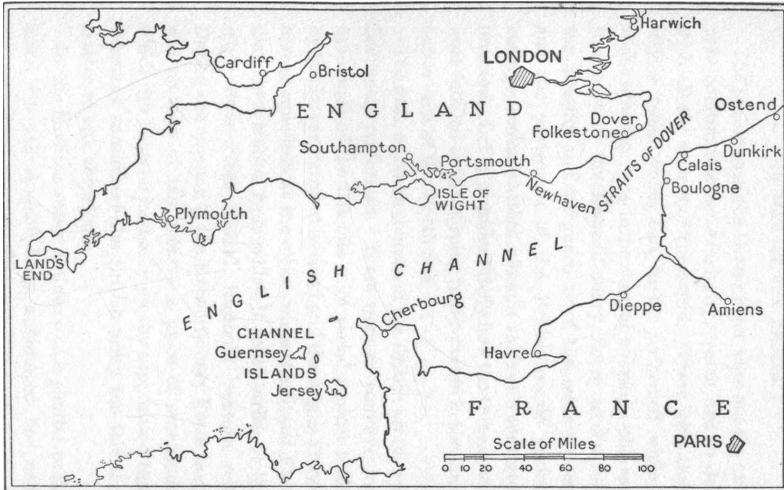
But that ultimate battle was not to be induced by measures which spelt suicide for the attacker. There were urgent tasks to be performed on the ocean—in protecting British trade, in cutting off enemy imports, in moving the troops of a world-wide Empire. So long as these were duly performed

the practical mastery of the seas was in British hands, and it would have been criminal folly to throw away capital ships in an immediate attack on the fortified retreat of so accommodating an enemy. It was Britain's duty to perform this work of day-to-day sea control, and to be ready at any moment for the grand battle. On land an army fights its way yard by yard to a position from which it can deal a crushing blow. But a fleet needs none of these preliminaries. As soon as the enemy chooses to appear the battle can be joined. Hence Admiral von Ingenohl was right in saving his fleet for what he considered a better chance, and Britain was right in not forcing him unduly. Naval power should be used, not squandered, and the mightiest fleet on earth may be flung away on a fool's errand. It should not be forgotten that the strength of a fleet is a more brittle and less replaceable thing than the strength of an army. New levies can be called for on land, and tolerable infantry trained in a few months. But in the navy it takes six years to make a junior officer, two years in normal times to build a cruiser, and three years to replace a battleship. A serious loss in fighting units is, for any ordinary naval war, an absolute, not a temporary calamity.

Sir John Jellicoe had to face a problem far more intricate than at the time was commonly believed. Not since the seventeenth century had Britain confronted a great naval Power whose base lay northward of the Straits of Dover. The older British sea strategy had assumed an enemy to southward of the English Channel, and on the southern coasts lay the best and securest of our naval ports. But now the foe lay across the stormy North Sea, 120,000 square miles in extent, into which he possessed two separate entries linked by the Kiel Canal. The east coast of Britain was now the fighting front, and on it lay a dozen vulnerable ports and no first-class fleet base. Before 1914 this situation had been foreseen, but it had not been adequately met. A first-class base was in preparation at Rosyth, but it was not yet ready, and in any case its outer anchorage was exposed to torpedo attack. In 1910 Cromarty had been selected as a fleet base, and Scapa in the Orkneys as a base for minor forces, and by July 1914 the fixed defences of the former were ready. But nothing had been done at Scapa, which from its position and size was selected as the Grand Fleet base on the outbreak of hostilities.

Jellicoe was aware of the German purpose of attrition, and realized that till his base was better secured his fleet was at the mercy of an enemy attack both in harbour and in its North Sea cruises, for he was still very short of mine-sweepers and destroyers to form a protective screen. He saw that Germany's chance lay in the uncertainty of the first month, when Britain had to perform many urgent naval tasks before her sea organization was complete. He therefore decided to confine his Battle Fleet in ordinary

conditions to operations in the more northern waters of the North Sea, and to establish in the southern waters a regular system of cruiser patrols, supported by periodic sweeps of the Battle Fleet. It was his business to avoid losses so far as possible from the casual mine and submarine, and at the same time to protect the British coasts from raids and be ready at any moment to fall upon the High Seas Fleet if it ventured out—a combination of calculated duties and incalculable hazards trying under any circumstances, and doubly trying when the Grand Fleet had not yet found a certain home.



*Stanford, London.*

### Straits of Dover and the English Channel.

The problems of the Grand Fleet were not the only ones confronting the Admiralty, which had to deal with all the waters of the world. There were three urgent tasks which had to be performed while a wider strategy was in process of shaping—the safe transport of the Expeditionary Force to France; the clearing and safeguarding of the trade routes; and the protection of the British coasts against enemy attacks, whether sporadic raids or a concerted invasion. Let us consider briefly how the three duties were fulfilled before turning to the events in the main battle area of the North Sea.

The first, so far as concerned the British army, was brilliantly performed. There were no convoys, but both ends of the Channel were closed against raids, by the Dover Patrol at one end and the Anglo-French cruiser squadron at the other, while the Grand Fleet took up a station from which it could strike at the High Seas Fleet should Ingenohl venture out. During the crossing of the Expeditionary Force there was no sign of the enemy—a

piece of supineness which can be explained only on the supposition that Germany considered the British army too trivial a matter to risk ships over.

In the Mediterranean France had a similar problem. On 4th August Italy announced her neutrality, and Austria had not yet declared war on Britain or France, though it was clear that the declaration was imminent. The Austrian fleet was in the Northern Adriatic and had to be watched. Germany had in the Mediterranean the fastest armoured ships in her navy: the battle-cruiser *Goeben* and the fast light cruiser *Breslau*—two vessels admirably fitted to act as commerce destroyers. The British squadron consisted of three battle-cruisers, four heavy cruisers, and four light cruisers—a greatly superior force in gun power, but containing no vessel which was the *Goeben's* equal in speed. It was their business to prevent the German ships making for the Atlantic, and to hunt them down at the earliest possible moment. But the situation was complicated by two factors—one, the necessary co-operation with the French; the other, the difficulty of receiving in time the orders of the British Admiralty, which had the strategic direction of the operations. In such a chase unless the man on the spot can act on his own responsibility the quarry may escape, for from hour to hour the situation changes.



The Mediterranean Area.

The first orders of Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, who commanded the British squadron, were to protect the movements of the French transports

from Algiers to Toulon. At daybreak on the 4th the *Goeben* and *Breslau* appeared off the Algerian coast and fired a few shots at the coast towns of Bona and Philippeville. Meantime Admiral Souchon, in command of the *Goeben*, had received wireless instructions from Berlin to proceed to Constantinople. Admiral de Lapeyrère, commanding the Toulon fleet, decided on his own initiative to depart from his original instructions (which were to operate to the eastward of the transports) and to form convoys. The decision was sound, for his ships were too slow to hunt down the enemy, and by putting them alongside the transports he was in a better position for both defence and a blow at the Germans if they were shepherded westward.

This decision should have left Admiral Milne's force to pursue the *Goeben*, but unfortunately his first instructions from the Admiralty were not cancelled, and this was the main cause of the fiasco which followed. Souchon, after feinting to the west, turned eastward and reached Messina on the 5th. Milne took up a position which he believed to be in accordance with his orders, and which would have cut off Souchon had he come westward again. But Souchon passed out of the southern end of the Straits in the evening, and if he could get clear of Admiral Troubridge in the mouth of the Adriatic, the way was open for him to the Dardanelles. Now Troubridge had with him no battle-cruiser, he had instructions from the Admiralty not to risk an action against a superior force, and he considered therefore that he was not entitled to fight unless he could manœuvre the enemy into a favourable position. Souchon feinted towards the Adriatic, and then turned south-east for Cape Matapan. Troubridge gave up the chase when day broke on the 7th and slowed down, waiting on the British battle-cruisers which did not come. The *Gloucester* (Captain Howard Kelly), a ship scarcely larger than the *Breslau*, clung, however, to the enemy skirts, and fought a running fight till 1.50 p.m. on the 7th. Souchon was not yet out of danger, for when he reached the Ægean he heard that he would not be permitted to enter the Dardanelles, and was compelled for several days to cruise among the islands. Milne, who followed slowly, was soon within a hundred miles of the Germans, but believed that they were making for Alexandria, or about to break to join the Austrians. On the 9th Souchon heard the wireless of the British, and decided at all costs to run for Constantinople. At 8.30 p.m. on the 10th he was allowed to enter the Dardanelles.

The British failure was to have the most malign and far-reaching consequences. Souchon, perplexed by conflicting orders from Berlin, played, largely on his own responsibility, a bold game which succeeded. The British admirals, dutifully following their Admiralty's formal instructions, missed their chance. They were very properly exonerated from blame, for

the mistake was the result of the new conditions of war. They received by wireless all the news that reached the Admiralty, and consequently had to keep their eyes turning every way instead of concentrating on the one vital object. In the old days an admiral would have been left to his general instructions, and, had he been a bold man, would have destroyed the enemy.

The second task was the clearing and safeguarding of the world's trade routes. The first step lay with the Grand Fleet, for, as Sir Julian Corbett has well put it, "since all the new enemy's home terminals lay within our own home waters, we could close them by the same disposition with which we ensured free access to our own." But, the earths having been stopped, it was necessary to run down the quarries. All German cables were cut, and, except for wireless, her outlying ships were left without guidance from home. In every quarter of the globe British cruisers spread their net. German merchantmen in the ports of the Empire were detained, and hundreds of ships were made prize of in the high and the narrow seas. Some escaped to the shelter of neutral ports, especially to those of the United States, but none got back to Germany. In a week German seaborne commerce had ceased to exist, and on 14th August the Admiralty could announce that the passage of the Atlantic was safe. It was true that a few German cruisers and armed merchantmen were still at large. Admiral von Spee had in the Pacific the armoured cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and the light cruisers *Nürnberg*, *Leipzig*, and *Emden*; the light cruisers *Karlsruhe* and *Dresden* were in the Atlantic. But the number seemed too few and their life too precarious seriously to affect our commerce. The British Government very properly began by guaranteeing part of the risk of maritime insurance; but soon the rates fell of their own accord to a natural level, as it became clear how complete was our security. It was calculated at the outbreak of war that British losses in the first six months would rise to 10 per cent. of vessels engaged in foreign trade. A return issued early in October showed that of her mercantile marine Britain had lost up to that date only 1.25 per cent., while Germany and Austria had each lost 10 per cent. of their total shipping.

The third problem, the security of the British coast from invasion, loomed large in those early days. The curious inactivity of the enemy during the crossing of the Expeditionary Force seemed to presage a great surprise attack in the near future. The danger was much in Lord Kitchener's mind, and, considering that it was unsafe to leave the country without at least two regular divisions, he postponed the crossing of the 6th Division and brought it to East Anglia. The heavy ships of the Grand Fleet, owing to the risk of submarines, were ordered on 9th August to go north-west of the Orkneys, and since the enemy had located Scapa, a second war anchorage was

established on the north-west coast of Scotland at Loch Ewe. They were brought east again on the 15th when the risk of invasion seemed greatest, and took up a midsea position in the latitude of Aberdeen, while Rear-Admiral Christian's Southern Force, which included the Harwich flotilla, and was now an independent command directly under the Admiralty, watched the southern waters. On the 17th, the immediate danger being over, the Grand Fleet returned to Loch Ewe. Against minor raids the protection of the coasts lay with the destroyer flotillas, which were organized in two classes, "Patrol" and "Local Defence." Presently a vast auxiliary service was created from the mercantile marine, from the fishing fleets, from private yachts and motor boats. Britain became a nation in arms on the water as well as on the land, and her merchantmen became part of the navy as in her ancient wars.

Meantime she did not forget the major duty of watching and enticing to battle the German High Seas Fleet. Apart from the regular cruisers of the British fleet and the cruiser squadrons in the North Sea, the Harwich flotilla kept watch to the very edge of the German sanctuary. The German admiral's aim was to send out patrols which would entice the British destroyers inside the Bight of Heligoland and then to cut in behind them with his light cruisers. There was an attempt of this sort on 18th August; another on 21st August, when the German light cruiser *Rostock* had a narrow escape; but both were fruitless thrusts into the void. A third operation on the night of 25th August laid mines off the Tyne and the Humber. At this time both sides overestimated the danger from submarines and were over-careful with their heavier ships; consequently any action was likely to be fought by only a fraction of the strength of the combatants. But the strategy of two opponents, however cautious, operated on converging lines which were certain sooner or later to meet, and the result was that 28th August, the day when Sir John French's army reached the Oise, saw the first important naval engagement of the war.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BATTLE OF THE BIGHT

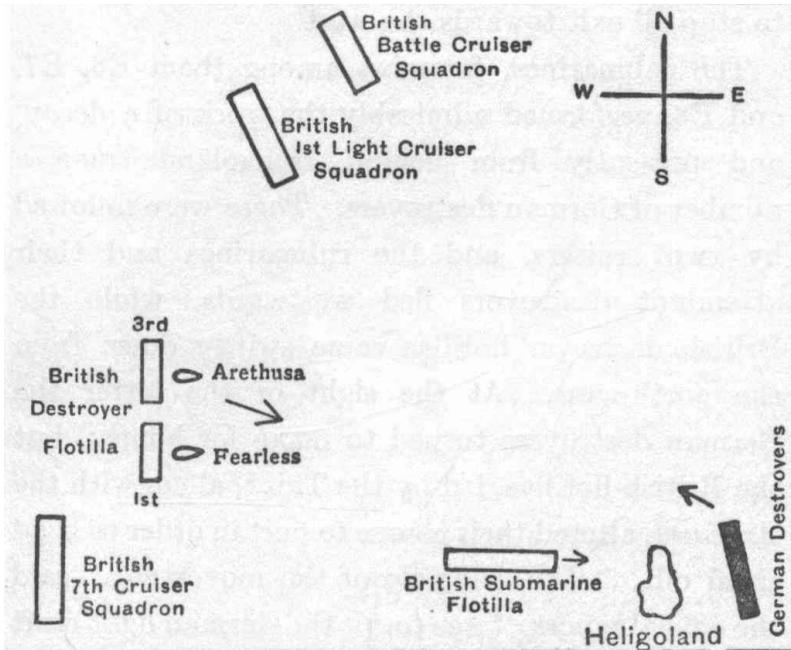
#### Commodore Keyes's Plan—Admiral Beatty's Decision—The Moral Effect of the Battle—The Blockade.

The plan, which led to the battle, and which originated with Commodore Roger Keyes, was to lure out to sea the enemy day patrols and intercept them by our destroyer flotillas while British cruisers and battle-cruisers waited in readiness to deal with any heavier German ships that came out in support.<sup>[1]</sup>

The battle-cruisers were the largest and newest of their class, displacing some 27,000 tons, with a speed of 29 knots, and an armament each of eight 13.5 and sixteen 4-inch guns. The First Light Cruiser Squadron contained ships of the "town" class—5,500 tons, 25 to 26 knots, and eight or nine 6-inch guns. The Seventh Cruiser Squadron were older ships from the Third Fleet—12,000 tons and 21 knots. The First Destroyer Flotilla contained destroyers each of about 800 tons, 30 knots, and two 4-inch and two 12-pounder guns. The Third Flotilla was composed only of the largest and latest type—965 tons, 32 knots, and three 4-inch guns. Of the accompanying cruisers the *Arethusa* was the latest of an apostolic succession of vessels of that name—was the first ship of a new class; her tonnage was 3,750, her speed 30 knots, and her armament two 6-inch and six 4-inch guns. Her companion, the *Fearless*, had 3,440 tons, 26 knots, and ten 4-inch guns. The two small destroyers which accompanied the submarines, the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake*, had 767 tons, 35 knots, and two 4-inch and two 12-pounder guns.

At midnight on August 26th the submarine flotilla, under Commodore Keyes, sailed from Harwich for the Bight of Heligoland. At five o'clock on the evening of the 27th the First and the Third Destroyer Flotillas, under Commodore Tyrwhitt, left Harwich, and during that day the Battle-Cruiser Squadron, the First Light Cruiser Squadron, and the Seventh Cruiser Squadron also put to sea. The rendezvous appointed was reached early on the morning of the 28th, the waters having been searched for hostile submarines before dawn by the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake*. The enemy had word of their coming, and was preparing a counterplot. His usual patrols were not sent out, but a few torpedo boats were dispatched to the entrance of

the Bight as a bait to entice the attackers into a net which would be drawn tight by his light cruisers.



Position at 7 a.m.  
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

The chronicle must now concern itself with hours and minutes. The first phase of the action began just before 7 a.m. on the 28th. The morning had broken windless and calm, with a haze which limited the range of vision to under three miles. The water was like a mill-pond, and out of the morning mist rose the gaunt rock of Heligoland, with its forts and painted lodging-houses and crumbling sea-cliffs. It was the worst conceivable weather for the submarines, since in a calm sea their periscopes were easily visible. The position at seven o'clock was as follows. Close to Heligoland, and well within German territorial waters, were Commodore Keyes's eight submarines, with his two small destroyers in attendance. Approaching rapidly from the north-west were Commodore Tyrwhitt's two destroyer flotillas, while behind them, at some distance and a little to the east, was Commodore Goodenough's First Light Cruiser Squadron. Behind it lay Sir David Beatty's battle-cruisers, with four destroyers in attendance. A good deal to the south, and about due west of Heligoland, lay Admiral Christian's Seventh Cruiser Squadron, to stop all exit towards the west.

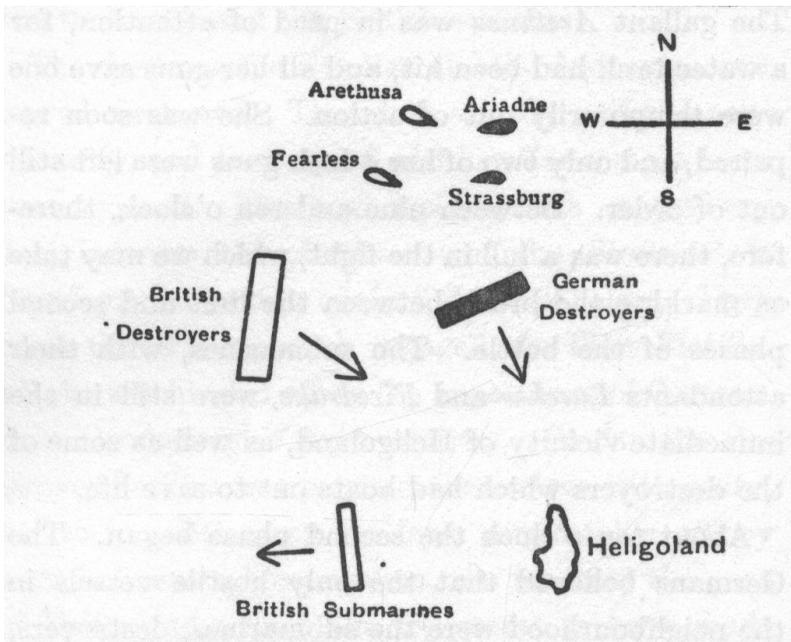


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ADMIRAL SIR DAVID BEATTY

The submarines, foremost among them E6, E7, and E8, performed admirably the work of a decoy, and presently from behind Heligoland came a number of German destroyers. These were followed by two cruisers, and the submarines and their attendant destroyers fled westwards, while the British destroyer flotillas came swiftly down from the north-west. At the sight of the latter the German destroyers turned to make for home; but the British flotillas, led by the Third, along with the *Arethusa*, altered their

course to port in order to head them off. "The principle of the movement," said the official report, "was to cut the German light craft from home and engage them at leisure in the open sea." The destroyers gave little trouble, and our own ships of that class were quite competent to deal with them. But between our two attendant cruisers and the two German cruisers a fierce battle was waged. About eight o'clock the *Arethusa*—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—was engaged with the German *Stettin* and the *Frauenlob*, and till the *Fearless* drew the *Stettin's* fire, was exposed to the broadsides of the two vessels, and was considerably damaged. About 8.25, however, one of her shots shattered the forebridge of the *Frauenlob*, and the crippled vessel drew off towards Heligoland, whither the *Stettin* soon followed. Meantime the destroyers had not been idle. They had sunk the leading boat of the German flotilla, V187, and had damaged a dozen more. With great heroism they attempted to save the German sailors now struggling in the water, and lowered boats for the purpose. These boats, as we shall see, came into deadly peril during the next phase of the action.

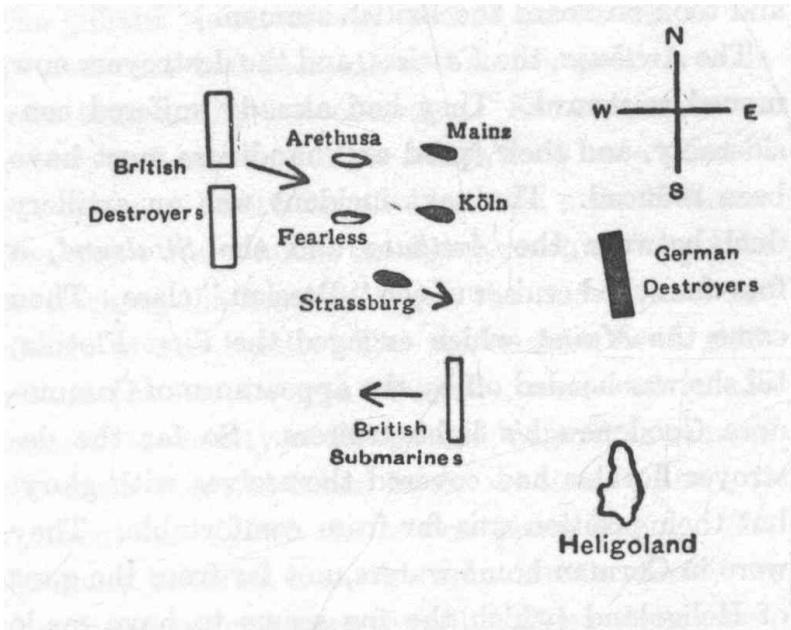


Position about 8.25 a.m.  
 Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

On the retreat of the *Stettin* and the *Frauenlob* the destroyer flotillas were ordered to turn westward. The gallant *Arethusa* was in need of attention, for a water-tank had been hit, and all her guns save one were

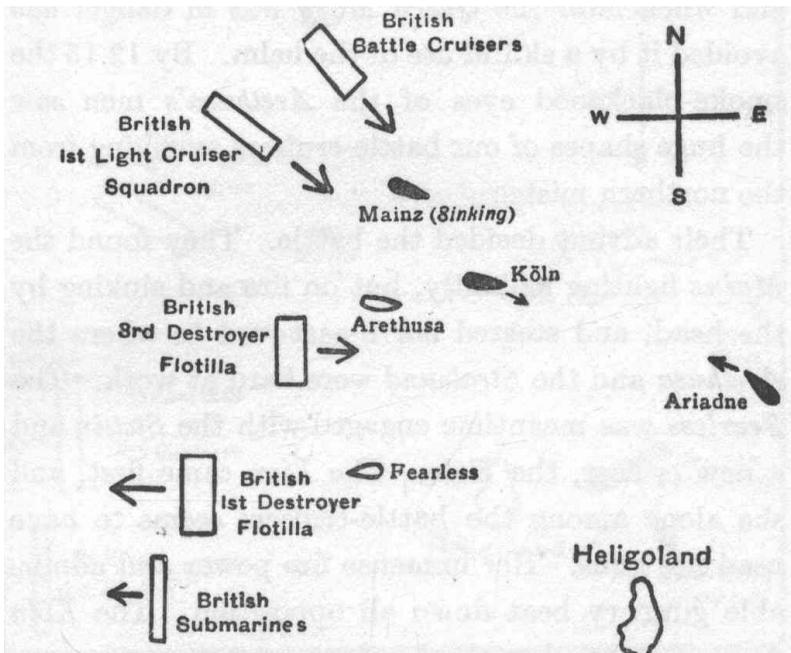
temporarily out of action. She was soon repaired, and only two of her 4-inch guns were left still out of order. Between nine and ten o'clock, therefore, there was a lull in the fight, which we may take as marking the break between the first and second phases of the battle. The submarines, with their attendants *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*, were still in the immediate vicinity of Heligoland, as well as some of the destroyers which had boats out to save life.

About ten o'clock the second phase began. The Germans believed that the only hostile vessels in the neighbourhood were the submarines, destroyers, the *Arethusa* and the *Fearless*, and they resolved to take this excellent chance of annihilating them. First the *Stettin* returned, and came on the boats of the First Flotilla busy saving life, and, thinking apparently that the British had adopted the insane notion of boarding, opened a heavy fire on them. The small destroyers were driven away, and two boats, belonging to the *Goshawk* and the *Defender*, were cut off under the guns of Heligoland. At this moment submarine E4 (Lieutenant-Commander E. W. Leir) appeared alongside. By the threat of a torpedo attack he drove off the German cruiser for a moment, and took on board the British seamen.



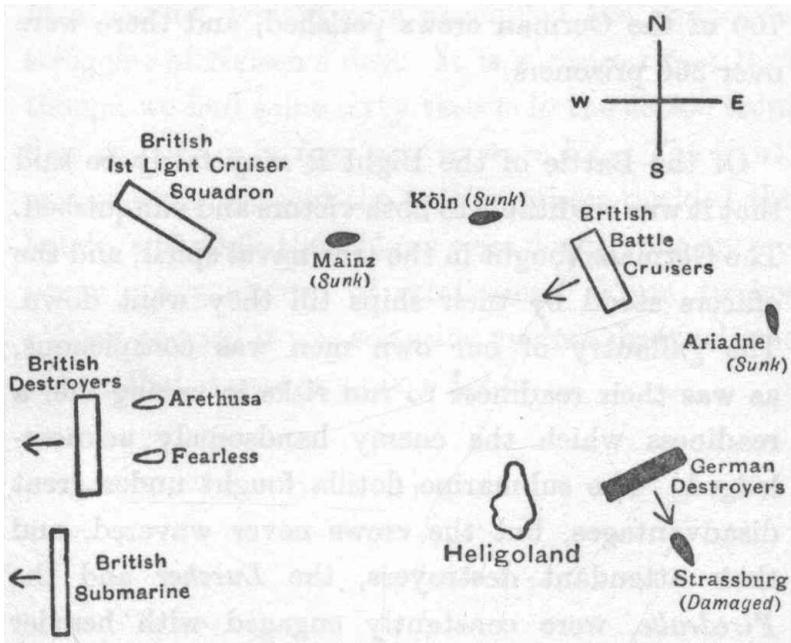
Position about 11 a.m.  
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

The *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and the destroyers now moved westward. They had already suffered considerably, and their speed and handiness must have been reduced. The next incident was an artillery duel between the *Arethusa* and the *Stralsund*, a four-funnelled cruiser of the "Breslau" class. Then came the *Mainz*, which engaged the First Flotilla, till she was headed off by the appearance of Commodore Goodenough's light cruisers. So far the destroyer flotillas had covered themselves with glory, but their position was far from comfortable. They were in German home waters, not far from the guns of Heligoland (which the fog seems to have made useless at that range); they were a good deal crippled, though still able to fight; and they did not know but that at any moment the blunt noses of Ingenohl's great battleships might come out of the mist. The battle had now lasted for five hours—ample time for the ships in the Elbe to come up. Commodore Tyrwhitt about eleven had sent a wireless signal to Sir David Beatty asking for help, and by twelve o'clock that help was sorely needed. It was on its way. Admiral Beatty, on receipt of the signal, at once sent the First Light Cruiser Squadron south-eastwards. The first vessels, the *Falmouth* and the *Nottingham*, arrived on the scene of action about twelve o'clock, and proceeded to deal with the damaged *Mainz*. By this time the First Destroyer Flotilla had retired westward, but the Third Flotilla and the *Arethusa* were still busy with the *Stralsund*. Admiral Beatty had to take a momentous decision. There was every likelihood that some of the enemy's great armoured and battle-cruisers were close at hand, and he wisely judged that "to be of any value the support must be overwhelming." It was a risky business to take his vessels through a mine-strewn and submarine-haunted sea; but in naval warfare the highest risks must be run. Hawke pursued Conflans in a stormy dusk into Quiberon Bay, and Nelson before Aboukir risked in the darkness the shoals and reefs of an uncharted sea. So Admiral Beatty gave orders at 11.30 for the battle-cruisers to steam E.S.E. at full speed. They were several times attacked by submarines, but their pace saved them, and when later the *Queen Mary* was in danger she avoided it by a skilful use of the helm. By 12.15 the smoke-blackened eyes of the *Arethusa's* men saw the huge shapes of our battle-cruisers emerging from the northern mists.



Position at noon  
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

Their advent decided the battle. They found the *Mainz* fighting gallantly, but on fire and sinking by the head, and steered north-eastward to where the *Arethusa* and the *Stralsund* were hard at work. The *Fearless* was meantime engaged with the *Stettin* and a new cruiser, the *Köln*. The *Lion* came first, and she alone among the battle-cruisers seems to have used her guns. Her immense fire power and admirable gunnery beat down all opposition. The *Köln* fled before her, but the *Lion's* guns at extreme range hit her and set her on fire. Presently the *Ariadne* hove in sight from the south—the forerunner, perhaps, of a new squadron. Two salvos from the terrible 13.5 inch guns sufficed for her, and, burning furiously, she disappeared into the haze. Then the battle-cruisers circled north again, and in ten minutes finished off the *Köln*. She sank like a plummet with every soul on board. At twenty minutes to two Admiral Beatty turned homeward. The submarines and the destroyer flotillas had already gone westward, and the Light Cruiser Squadron, in a fan-shaped formation, preceded the battle-cruisers. Admiral Christian's squadron was left to escort the damaged ships and defend the rear.



Position at 1.40 p.m.  
 Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

By that evening the whole British force was in its own waters without the loss of a single unit. The *Arethusa* had been badly damaged, but in a week was ready for sea again. The British casualties were thirty-five killed and about forty wounded. The Germans lost three light cruisers, the *Mainz*, *Köln*, and *Ariadne*, and one destroyer, the V187. At least 700 of the German crews perished, and there were over 300 prisoners.

Of the Battle of the Bight it may fairly be said that it was creditable to both victors and vanquished. The Germans fought in the true naval spirit, and the officers stood by their ships till they went down. The gallantry of our own men was conspicuous, as was their readiness to run risks in saving life, a readiness which the enemy handsomely acknowledged. The submarine flotilla fought under great disadvantages, but the crews never wavered, and their attendant destroyers, the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake*, were constantly engaged with heavier vessels. The two destroyer flotillas were not less prominent, and, having taken the measure of the German destroyers, did not hesitate to engage the enemy's cruisers. But the chief glory belonged to the *Arethusa* and the *Fearless*, who for a critical hour bore the brunt of the battle. For a time they were matched against three German cruisers, which

between them had a considerably greater force of fire. Nowadays much of naval fighting is so nearly a mathematical certainty that, given the guns and the speed, you can calculate the result. But it was the good fortune of the *Arethusa* to show her mettle in a conflict which more resembled the audacious struggles of Nelson's day. It is a curious fact that though we had some sixty vessels in the action from first to last, only four or five were hit. The light cruiser squadron and the battle-cruisers decided the battle, and while their blows were deadly, the enemy never got a chance of retaliation. From twelve o'clock onward it was scientific modern destruction; before that it was any one's fight.

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The various forces engaged may be set down in the order of their appearance in the action.

1. *Eighth Submarine Flotilla* (Commodore Roger Keyes).—Parent ships: Destroyers *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*. Submarines: D2, D8, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9.
2. *Destroyer Flotillas* (Commodore R. Y. Tyrwhitt).—Flagship: Light cruiser *Arethusa*.
- 2a. First Destroyer Flotilla: Light cruiser *Fearless* (Captain Blunt).—Destroyers: *Acheron*, *Archer*, *Ariel*, *Attack*, *Badger*, *Beaver*, *Defender*, *Ferret*, *Forester*, *Goshawk*, *Hind*, *Jackal*, *Lapwing*, *Lizard*, *Phoenix*, *Sandfly*.
- 2b. Third Destroyer Flotilla: *Laertes*, *Laforey*, *Lance*, *Landrail*, *Lark*, *Laurel*, *Lawford*, *Legion*, *Leonidas*, *Lennox*, *Liberty*, *Linnet*, *Llewelyn*, *Lookout*, *Louis*, *Lucifer*, *Lydiard*, *Lysander*.
3. *First Light Cruiser Squadron* (Commodore W. B. Goodenough).—*Southampton*, *Falmouth*, *Birmingham*, *Lowestoft*, *Nottingham*.
4. *First Battle-Cruiser Squadron* (Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty).—*Lion*, *Princess Royal*, *Queen Mary*, *New Zealand*. Joined at sea by *Invincible* (Rear-Admiral Moore) and by destroyers: *Hornet*, *Hydra*, *Tigress*, and *Loyal*.
5. *Seventh Cruiser Squadron* (Rear-Admiral A. H. Christian).—Armoured cruisers: *Euryalus*, *Cressy*, *Hogue*, *Aboukir*, *Sutlej*, *Bacchante*, and light cruiser *Amethyst*.

## CHAPTER IV

### MINES AND SUBMARINES

What Control of the Sea Implies—The Submarine Menace.

The chief consequence of the Battle of the Bight was its moral effect upon Germany. Ingenohl was confirmed in his resolution to keep his battleships in harbour, and not even a daring sweeping movement of the British early in September, when our vessels came within hearing of the church bells on the German coast, could goad him into action. But he retaliated by an increased activity in mine-laying and the use of submarines. In the land warfare of the Middle Ages there came a time when knights and horses were so heavily armoured that they lost mobility, and what had been regarded as the main type of action ended in stalemate. Wherefore, since men must find some way of conquering each other, came the chance for the hitherto despised lighter troops, and the archers and spearmen began to win battles like Courtrai and Bannockburn. A similar stalemate was now reached as between the capital ships of the rival navies. The British battleships were vast and numerous; the German fleet, less powerful at sea, was strong in its fenced harbour. No decision could be arrived at by the heavily armed units, so the war passed for the moment into the hands of the lesser craft. For a space of several months the Germans fought almost wholly with mines and submarines. One truth at this period was somewhat forgotten by the British people. Command of the sea, unless the enemy's navy is totally destroyed, does not mean complete protection. This had been well stated in a famous passage by Admiral Mahan<sup>[1]</sup>.—

“The control of the sea, however real, does not imply that an enemy's single ships or small squadrons cannot steal out of ports, and cross more or less frequented tracts of ocean, make harassing descents upon unprotected points of a long coast-line, enter blockaded harbours. On the contrary, history has shown that such evasions are always possible, to some extent, to the weaker party, however great the inequality of naval strength.”

It has been true in all ages, and was especially true now that the mine and submarine had come to the assistance of the weaker combatant. Our policy was to blockade Germany, so that she should suffer and our own life

go on unhindered. But the blockade could only be a watching blockade; it could not seal up every unit of the enemy's naval strength. To achieve the latter we should have had to run the risk of missing the very goal at which we aimed. It was our business to see that Germany did nothing without our knowledge, and to encourage her ships to come out that we might fall upon them. Her business was to make our patrolling as difficult as possible. To complain of British losses in such a task was to do precisely what Germany wished us to do, in order that caution might take the place of a bold and aggressive vigilance.

Germany had laid in the first days of the war a large mine-field off our eastern coasts, and early in September, by means of trawlers disguised as neutrals, she succeeded in dropping mines off the north coast of Ireland, which endangered our Atlantic commerce and the operations of our Grand Fleet. The right precaution—the closing of the North Sea to neutral shipping, unless specially convoyed—was not taken till later in the day, and even then was too perfunctorily organized. But the mine-field, for all its terrors, was not productive of much actual loss to our fighting strength. During the first two months of war, apart from the *Amphion*, the only casualty was the old gunboat *Speedy*, which struck a mine and foundered in the North Sea on 3rd September. Indeed the new German mine-field had its advantages; since it barred certain approaches to our coast, it released our flotillas for a more extensive coastwise patrol.

The submarine was a graver menace. On 5th September the *Pathfinder*, a light cruiser of 2,940 tons, with a crew of 268, was torpedoed off the Lothian coast and sunk with great loss of life. Eight days later the German light cruiser *Hela*, a vessel slightly smaller than the *Pathfinder*, was sunk by the British submarine E9 (Lieutenant Max Horton) in wild weather between Heligoland and the Frisian coast—an exploit of exceptional boldness and difficulty. During that fortnight a storm raged, and our patrols found it hard to keep the seas, many of the smaller destroyers being driven to port. This storm led indirectly to the first serious British loss of the war. Three cruisers of an old pattern, the *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir*, which were part of Admiral Christian's Southern Force, had for three weeks been engaged in patrolling off the Dutch coast. It is obvious that three large ships carrying heavy crews should not have been employed on a duty which could have been performed better and more safely by lighter vessels, but the Admiralty had not yet got the new light cruisers of the *Arethusa* class which were to relieve them. No screen of destroyers was with them at the moment owing to

the storm. On 22nd September the sky had cleared and the seas fallen, and about half-past six in the morning, as the cruisers proceeded to their posts, the *Aboukir* was torpedoed, and began to settle down. Her sister ships believed she had struck a mine, and closed in on her to save life. Suddenly the *Hogue* was struck by two torpedoes, and began to sink. Two of her boats had already been got away to the rescue of the *Aboukir's* men, and as she went down she righted herself for a moment, with the result that her steam pinnace and steam picket-boat floated off. The *Cressy* now came up to the rescue, but she also was struck by two torpedoes, and sank rapidly. Three trawlers in the neighbourhood at the time picked up the survivors in the water and in the boats, but of the total crews of 1,459 officers and men only 779 were saved. In that bright, chilly morning, when all was over within a quarter of an hour, the British sailor showed admirable discipline and courage. Men swimming in the frosty sea or clinging naked to boats or wreckage cheered each other with songs and jokes. The destruction was caused by a single German submarine, the U29, a comparatively old type, commanded by Captain Otto Weddigen, of whom the world was to hear more. The loss of the three cruisers was a result of the kind of mistake which is inevitably made at the beginning of a naval war before novel conditions are adequately realized. The senior officer in charge took an undue risk in steering towards the enemy's base in full daylight, unscreened by destroyers, and in proceeding slowly without zigzagging, and with the ships abreast two miles apart. At the same time the Admiralty's general instructions were far from clear, and the three vessels were performing a duty on which it was folly to employ them.

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[1] *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 14.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WAR ON COMMERCE

#### The Commerce Raiders—The Declaration of London.

The third method of weakening British sea-power was by the attack upon merchantmen by light cruisers. Germany could send forth no new vessels of this type after the outbreak of war, and her activities were confined to those which were already outside the Narrow Seas, especially those under Admiral von Spee's command at Kiao-chau. So far as the present stage is concerned, we need mention only the *Emden* and the *Königsberg*. The former was to provide the world with a genuine tale of romantic adventure, always welcome among the grave realities of war, and in her short life to emulate the achievements and the fame of the *Alabama*. She appeared in the Bay of Bengal on 10th September, and within a week had captured seven large merchantmen, six of which she sank. Next week she arrived at Rangoon, where her presence cut off all sea communication between India and Burma. On 22nd September she was at Madras, and fired a shell or two into the environs of the city, setting an oil tank on fire. On the 29th she was off Pondicherry, and the last day of the month found her running up the Malabar coast. There for the present we leave her, for the tale of her subsequent adventures belongs to another chapter. The *Königsberg* had her beat off the east coast of Africa. Her chief exploit was a dash into Zanzibar harbour, where, on 20th September, she caught the British cruiser *Pegasus* while in the act of repairing her boilers. The *Pegasus* was a seventeen-year-old ship of 2,135 tons, and had no chance against her assailant. She was destroyed by the *Königsberg's* long-range fire.

The exploits of the two German commerce raiders were magnified because they were the exception, while the British capture of German merchantmen was the rule. We did not destroy our captures, because we had many ports to take them to, and they were duly brought before our prize courts. In addition, we had made havoc of Germany's converted liners. The *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, which had escaped from Bremerhaven at the beginning of the war, and which had preyed for a fortnight on our South Atlantic commerce, was caught and sunk by the *Highflyer* near the Cape Verde Islands. On 12th September the *Berwick* captured in the North

Atlantic the *Spreewald*, of the Hamburg-Amerika line. On 14th September the *Carmania*, Captain Noel Grant, a British converted liner, fell in with a similar German vessel, the *Cap Trafalgar*, off the coast of Brazil. The action began at 9,000 yards, and lasted for an hour and three-quarters. The *Carmania* was skilfully handled, and her excellent gunnery decided the issue. Though the British vessel had to depart prematurely owing to the approach of a German cruiser, she left her antagonist sinking in flames.

These instances will suffice to show how active British vessels were in all the seas. The loss of a few light cruisers and a baker's dozen of merchantmen was a small price to pay for an unimpaired foreign trade and the practical impotence of the enemy. Modern inventions give the weaker Power a better chance for raiding than in the old days; but in spite of that our sufferings at this stage were small compared with those in any other of our great wars. It is instructive to contrast our fortunes during the struggle with Napoleon. Then, even after Trafalgar had been fought, French privateers made almost daily captures of English ships in our home waters. Our coasts were frequently attacked, and the inhabitants of the seaboard went for years in constant expectation of invasion. In the twenty-one years of war we lost 10,248 British ships. Further back in our history our inviolability was even more precarious. In the year after Agincourt the French landed in Portland. Seven years after the defeat of the Armada the Spanish burned Penzance and ravaged the Cornish coasts. In 1667 the Dutch were in the Medway and the Thames. In 1690 the French burned Teignmouth, and landed in Sussex; in 1760 they seized Carrickfergus; in 1797 they landed at Fishguard. In 1775 Paul Jones captured Whitehaven, and was the terror of our home waters. The most prosperous war has its casualties in unexpected places.

The opening stages of the war at sea, though they brought no dramatic *coup*, were of supreme importance in the history of the campaign. A very real crisis had been successfully tided over. Germany had missed a chance which she was never to recover, and her growing difficulties on the Eastern front compelled her for a time to devote as much attention to the Baltic as to the North Sea. The British army had safely crossed the Channel, and the French Algerian forces the Mediterranean. The seas of the world had been cleared of German commerce, and, except for a few stragglers, of German warships. The High Seas Fleet was under close observation, and flanking forces at Harwich, in the Humber, and at Rosyth waited on its appearance, while the Grand Fleet closed the northern exits of the North Sea. The Grand Fleet was as yet without a proper base, and the situation was still full of anxiety for its commander. Jellicoe's steadfastness in those difficult days, his caution which never sank into inaction, his boldness which never

degenerated into folly, convinced his countrymen that in him they had the naval leader that the times required. The ill-informed might clamour, but the student of history remembered that it had never been an easy task to bring an enemy fleet to book. In the Revolution Wars, Britain had to wait a year for the first naval battle, Howe's victory of the 1st June; while Nelson lay for two years before Toulon, and Cornwallis for longer before Brest. "They were dull, weary, eventless months"—to quote Admiral Mahan—"those months of waiting and watching of the big ships before the French arsenals. Purposeless they surely seemed to many, but they saved England. The world has never seen a more impressive demonstration of the influence of sea-power upon its history. Those far-distant, storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the dominion of the world."

In Nelson's day Britain had one advantage of which she was now deprived. She was not hampered by a code of maritime law framed in the interests of unmaritime nations. The Declaration of Paris of 1856, among other provisions, enacted that a neutral flag covered enemy's merchandise except contraband of war, and that neutral merchandise was not capturable even under the enemy's flag. This Declaration, which was not accepted by the United States, had never received legislative ratification from the British Parliament; but Britain regarded herself as bound by it, though various efforts had been made to get it rescinded in time of peace by those who realized how greatly it weakened the belligerent force of a sea Power. The Declaration of London of 1909 made a further effort to codify maritime law. <sup>[1]</sup> It was signed by the British plenipotentiaries, though Parliament refused to pass the statutes necessary to give effect to certain of its provisions. In some respects it was more favourable to Britain than the Declaration of Paris, but in others it was less favourable, and it was consistently opposed by most good authorities on the subject. Generally speaking, it was more acceptable to a nation like Germany than to one in Britain's case. <sup>[2]</sup> When war broke out the British Government announced that it accepted the Declaration of London as the basis of its maritime practice. The result was a state of dire confusion, for the consequences of the new law had never been fully realized. Under it, for example, the captain of the *Emden* could justify his sinking of British ships instead of taking them to a port for adjudication. One provision, which seems to have been deduced from it, was so patently ridiculous that it was soon dropped—that belligerents (that is, enemy reservists) in neutral ships were not liable to arrest. Presently successive Orders in Council, instigated by sheer necessity, altered the Declaration of

London beyond recognition. The truth is, that Britain was engaged in so novel a war that many of the older rules could not be applied. Germany had become a law unto herself, and the Allies were compelled in self-defence to frame a new code, which should comply not only with the half-dozen great principles of international equity, but with the mandates of common sense.

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[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 4554 of 1909.

[2] The following are a few examples of the way in which it impaired our naval power: It was made easy to break a blockade, for the right of a blockading Power to capture a blockade-runner did not cover the whole period of her voyage and was confined to ships of the blockading force (Articles 14, 16, 17, 19, 20); stereotyped lists of contraband and non-contraband were drawn up, instead of the old custom of leaving the question to the discretion of the Prize Court (Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 28); a ship carrying contraband could only be condemned if the contraband formed more than half its cargo; a belligerent warship could destroy a neutral vessel without taking it to a port for judgment; the transfer of an enemy vessel to a neutral flag was presumed to be valid if effected more than thirty days before the outbreak of war (Article 55); the question of the test of enemy property was left in confusion (Article 58); a neutral vessel, if accompanied by any sort of warship of her own flag, was exempt from search; belligerents in neutral vessels on the high seas were exempt from capture (based on Article 45). With the Declaration of London would go most of the naval findings of the Hague Conference of 1907. The British delegates who assented to the Declaration of London proceeded on the assumption that in any war of the future Britain would be neutral, and so endeavoured to reduce the privileges of maritime belligerents.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BATTLE OF CORONEL

The Position in Home Waters—Cradock and von Spee—Battle of Coronel.

On 29th October, Prince Louis of Battenberg, who as First Sea Lord had done good service to his adopted country, retired from office, and Lord Fisher returned to the post which he had held four years before. Lord Fisher was beyond doubt the greatest living sailor, and the modern British navy was largely his creation. Explosive, erratic, a dangerous enemy, a difficult friend, this “proud and rebellious creature of God” had the width of imagination and the sudden lightning flashes of insight which entitle him to rank as a man of genius. Behind a smoke screen of vulgar rhodomontade, his powerful mind worked on the data of a vast experience. Moreover, he had that rarest of gifts—courage, as the French say, of the head as well as of the heart. His policy in war might be too bold or too whimsical, but it would never be timorous or supine.



*Central News*

### ADMIRAL VON SPEE

The situation which he had to face in October did not differ greatly from that of the preceding months. Jellicoe, without adequate bases, was engaged in the difficult task of performing a multitude of duties while keeping intact his capital ships. He had to arrange for the convoying of the first contingent of Canadian troops, and to meet and defeat the German campaign of submarines and mines around the British coasts. On 16th October an alarm of enemy submarines at Scapa compelled him to leave that anchorage till its defences were complete, and, after moving his whole cruiser system farther north, he chose as his battleship bases the natural harbours of Skye and Mull, and Lough Swilly in Ireland. The German liner *Berlin*, which had

managed to slip through our North Sea patrols at the end of September, had sown mines in the north Irish waters, and one of them was struck on 27th October by the *Audacious* of the Second Battle Squadron, which sank after a twelve hours' struggle to get to port. As a protest and a protection against indiscriminate mine-laying in the great highways of ocean trade the British Admiralty on 2nd November notified to the world that the whole of the North Sea would thenceforth be regarded as a military area, and that neutral ships could only pass through it by conforming to Admiralty instructions and keeping to certain predetermined routes. Presently the situation improved, the defences of Scapa were completed, and the German submarine attack languished, as if its promoters were disappointed with its results and were casting about for a new policy.



*Topical Press*

ADMIRAL C. G. F. M. CRADOCK

It was well that the Admiralty had an easier mind in home waters, for they were faced with an urgent and intricate problem in more distant seas. The existence of Admiral von Spee's squadron left our overseas possessions and our great trade routes at the mercy of enemy raids. Till it was hunted down no overseas port could feel security, and the Australian and New Zealand Governments, busy with sending contingents to the fighting fronts, demanded not unnaturally that this should be made the first duty of the British navy. Whether the squadron kept together or split into raiding units it was no light task to bring it to book when it had the oceans of the world for its hunting ground. Sooner or later it was doomed, and von Spee, hampered

with difficulties of coaling and supplies, could only hope for a brief career. But during that career a bold man might do incalculable damage to the Allies and deflect and cripple all their strategic plans, and the German admiral was a most bold and gallant commander.

About the middle of August two of his light cruisers, the *Dresden* and the *Karlsruhe*, appeared in the mid-Atlantic, while the *Emden*, as we have seen, harried the Indian Ocean. Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, in command of the North American station, took up the chase of the first two throughout the West Indian islands and down the east coast of South America. Meantime von Spee was somewhere in the Central Pacific, where at the end of September he bombarded Tahiti, and presently it became clear that the *Dresden* had joined him. His squadron now comprised two armoured cruisers—the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst*; and three light cruisers—the *Dresden*, *Leipzig*, and *Nürnberg*. The first two were sister ships, both launched in 1906, with a tonnage of 11,400 and a speed of at least 23 knots. They carried 6-inch armour, and mounted eight 8.2-inch, six 5.9-inch, and eighteen 21-pounder guns. The *Dresden* was a sister ship of the *Emden*—3,592 tons, 24½ knots, and ten 4.1-inch guns. The *Nürnberg* was slightly smaller—3,400 tons—her armament was the same, and her speed was about half a knot quicker. Smaller still was the *Leipzig*—3,200 tons—with the same armament as the other two, and a speed of over 22 knots. This squadron set itself to prey upon our commerce routes, remembering that the British navy was short in cruisers of the class best fitted to patrol and guard the great trade highways. Von Spee moved nearer the western coast of South America, and found coaling and provisioning bases on the coast of Ecuador and Colombia, and in the Galapagos Islands. The duties of neutrals were either imperfectly understood or slackly observed by some of the South American states at this stage, and the German admiral seems to have been permitted the use of wireless stations, which gave him valuable information as to his enemy's movements.

So soon as definite news came of von Spee's whereabouts, Cradock sailed south to the Horn. He had in his squadron, when formed, the twelve-year-old battleship, the *Canopus*, two armoured cruisers, the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, the light cruiser *Glasgow*, and an armed liner, the *Otranto*, belonging to the Orient Steam Navigation Company. None of his vessels was strong either in speed or armament. The *Canopus* belonged to a class which had been long obsolete; her tonnage was 12,950, her speed under 19 knots, and her armament four 12-inch, twelve 6-inch, and ten 12-pounder

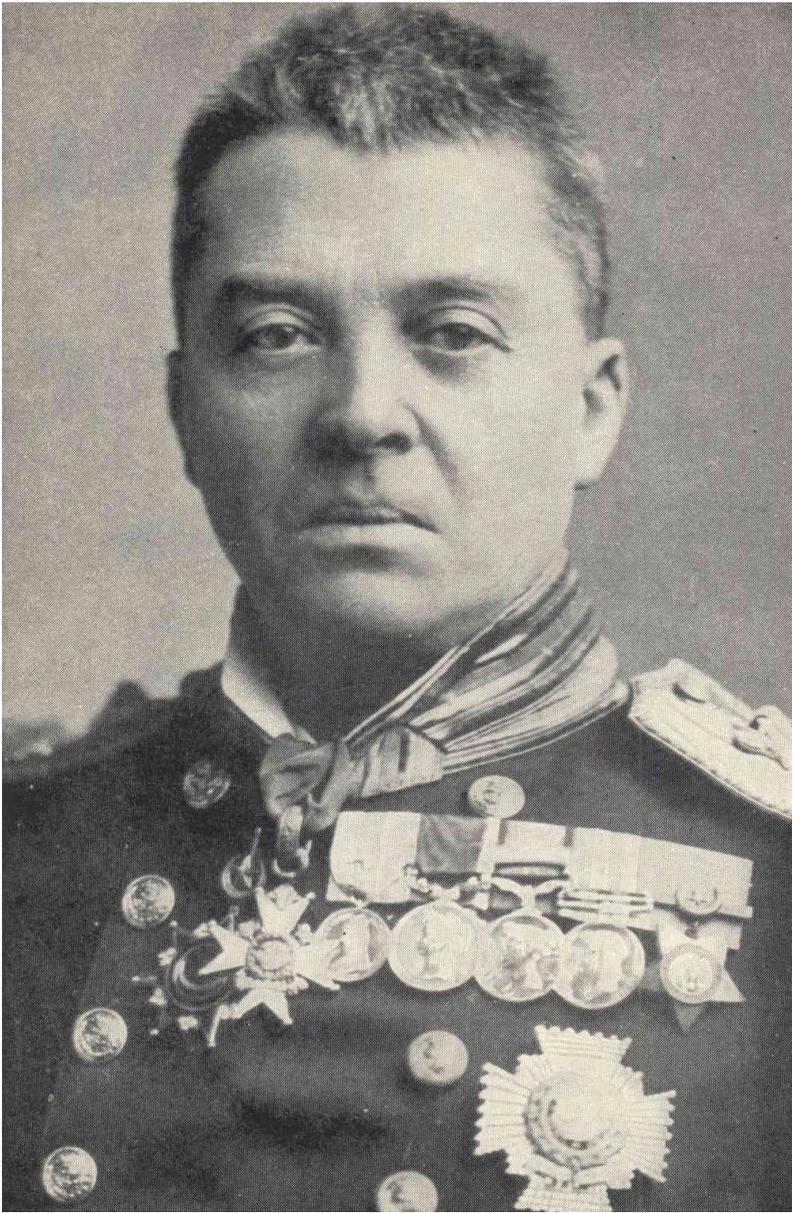
guns, all of an old-fashioned pattern. Her armour belt was only six inches thick. The *Good Hope* was also twelve years old; her tonnage was 14,100, her speed 23 knots, and her armament two 9.2-inch, sixteen 6-inch, and twelve 12-pounder guns. The *Monmouth* was a smaller vessel of 9,800 tons, with the same speed, and mounting fourteen 6-inch and eight 12-pounder guns. The *Glasgow* was a much newer vessel, and had a speed of 25 knots. Her tonnage was 4,800, and her armament two 6-inch and ten 4-inch guns.

Cradock's instructions, received on 14th September, were to make the Falkland Islands his base and to concentrate there a squadron strong enough to meet von Spee. A week later it appeared as if von Spee had gone off north-west from Samoa to his original station in the North Pacific, where the Japanese could deal with him. It looked therefore as if Cradock were safe; so he was ordered not to concentrate all his cruisers, but to attack German trade west of the Magellan Straits, for which task two cruisers and an armed liner would be sufficient. The news of the arrival of the *Dresden* did not seem to alter the situation. But on 5th October the Admiralty had information which suggested that von Spee was making for Easter Island, and Cradock was warned that he might have to meet the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, and consequently was ordered to take the *Canopus* with him. Cradock asked for reinforcements, and protested that his instructions were impossible, for with his small squadron he could not watch both coasts of South America. For some days, owing to bad weather and the pressure of other duties, there came no reply from the Admiralty. If von Spee escaped he might cripple our operations in the Cameroons, and might work untold harm in the troubled waters of South Africa. On 14th October Cradock was told to concentrate the *Good Hope*, *Canopus*, *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, and *Otranto* for a combined operation on the west coast of South America, and informed that a second squadron was being formed for the Plate area. Cradock assumed that his former orders also held good, and that he was expected to bring the enemy to action. His difficulty was with the *Canopus*, which was hopelessly slow. On 22nd October he left the Falklands to make a sweep round the Horn, leaving the *Canopus* to join him by way of the Magellan Straits.

He had no illusions about the dangers of his task for he knew that if he met von Spee he would meet an enemy more than his match. During these weeks weather conditions made communication with the Admiralty exceptionally difficult; he was not aware that an Anglo-Japanese squadron was operating in the North Pacific; and he seems to have regarded the charge of all the western coasts as resting on himself alone. In this spirit of devotion to a desperate duty he left the slow *Canopus* behind him, and with his two chief ships but newly commissioned and poor in gunnery, set out on

a task which might engage him with two of the best cruisers in the German fleet. He may have argued further—for no height of gallantry was impossible to such a man—that even if he perished the special circumstances of the conqueror might turn his victory into defeat. For, in Mr. Balfour’s words, “the German admiral in the Pacific was far from any front where he could have refitted. No friendly bases were open to him. If, therefore, he suffered damage, even though in suffering damage he inflicted apparently greater damage than he received, yet his power, great for evil while he remained untouched, might suddenly, as by a stroke of an enchanter’s wand, be utterly destroyed.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The opponents, Cradock from the south and von Spee from the north, were moving towards a conflict like one of the historic naval battles, a fight without mines, submarines, or destroyers, where the two squadrons were to draw into line ahead and each ship select its antagonist as in the ancient days. The *Glasgow*, which had been sent forward to scout, a little after 4 o’clock in the afternoon of 1st November sighted the enemy. She made out the two big armoured cruisers leading, and the light cruisers following in open order, and at once sent a wireless signal to the flagship. By 5 o’clock the *Good Hope* came up, and the *Monmouth* had already joined the *Glasgow* and the *Otranto*. Both squadrons were now moving southwards, the Germans having the inshore course. The British were led by the *Good Hope*, with the *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, and *Otranto* following in order; the Germans by the *Scharnhorst*, with the *Gneisenau*, *Dresden*, and *Nürnberg* behind.

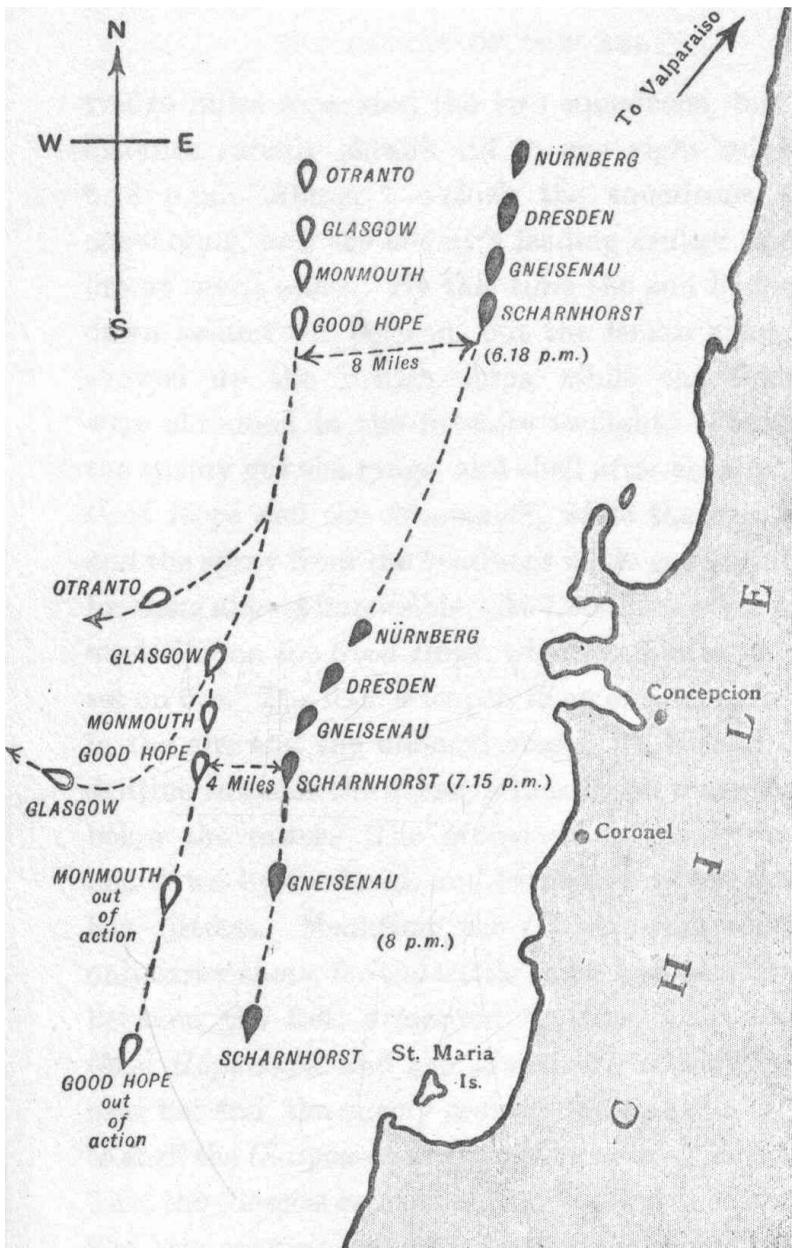


*J. Russell & Sons*

## LORD FISHER

We can reconstruct something of the picture. To the east was the land, with the snowy heights of the southern Andes fired by the evening glow. To the west burned one of those flaming sunsets which the Pacific knows, and silhouetted against its crimson and orange were the British ships, like

woodcuts in a naval handbook. A high sea was running from the south, and half a gale was blowing. At first some twelve miles separated the two squadrons, but the distance rapidly shrank till it was eight miles at 6.18 p.m. About 7 o'clock the squadrons were converging, and the enemy's leading cruiser opened fire at seven miles. By this time the sun had gone down behind the horizon, but the lemon afterglow showed up the British ships, while the German were shrouded in the inshore twilight. Presently the enemy got the range, and shell after shell hit the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, while the bad light and the spray from the head seas made good gunnery for them almost impossible. At 7.50 there was a great explosion on the *Good Hope*, which had already been set on fire. The flames leaped to an enormous height in the air, and the doomed vessel, which had been drifting towards the enemy's lines, soon disappeared below the water. The *Monmouth* was also on fire and down by the head, and turned away seaward in her distress. Meantime the *Glasgow* had received only stray shots, for the battle so far had been waged between the four armoured cruisers. But as the *Good Hope* sank and the *Monmouth* was obviously near her end, the enemy cruisers fell back and began to shell the *Glasgow* at a range of two and a half miles. That the *Glasgow* escaped was something of a miracle. She was scarcely armoured at all, and was struck by five shells at the water line, but her coal seems to have saved her.



Battle of Coronel.

The moon was now rising, and the *Glasgow*, which had been trying to stand by the *Monmouth*, saw the whole German squadron bearing down upon her. The *Monmouth*, refusing to surrender, was past hope, so she did the proper thing and fled. By ten minutes to nine she was out of sight of the

enemy, though she occasionally saw flashes of gun-fire and the play of searchlights, for fortunately a flurry of rain had hidden the unwelcome moon. She steered at first W.N.W., but gradually worked round to south, for she desired to warn the *Canopus*, which was coming up from the direction of Cape Horn. Next day she found that battleship two hundred miles off, and the two proceeded towards the Straits of Magellan.

Cradock, out of touch with the Admiralty and perplexed by contradictory telegrams, could only “take counsel from the valour of his heart.” He chose the heroic course, and he and his 1,650 officers and men went to their death in the spirit of Drake and Grenville. The Germans had two light cruisers to his one, for the *Otranto* was negligible; but these vessels were never seriously in action, and the battle was decided in the duel between the armoured cruisers. The *Good Hope* mounted two 9.2-inch guns but these were old-fashioned, and were put out of action at the start. The 6-inch guns which she and the *Monmouth* possessed were no match for the broadsides of twelve 8.2-inch guns fired by the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. The German vessels were also far more heavily armoured, and they had the inestimable advantage of speed. They were able to get the requisite range first and to cripple Cradock before he could reply, and they had a superb target in his hulls silhouetted against the afterglow of sunset. The Battle of Coronel was fought with all conceivable odds against us.

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[1] Speech at the unveiling of Cradock’s memorial in York Minster.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BATTLE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Sturdee leaves England with the Battle-Cruisers—Battle of the Falkland Islands—Its Results.

The defeat of Coronel played havoc with the British Admiralty's plans and dispositions, and left a hundred vulnerable spots throughout the Empire open to von Spee. Mr. Churchill and Lord Fisher did not hesitate; a blow must be struck and at once, and that blow must be decisive. The *Defence*, *Carnarvon*, and *Cornwall* were ordered to concentrate at Montevideo, where the remnant of Cradock's squadron was instructed to join them. Jellicoe was summoned to lend his two battle-cruisers the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible*, each with a tonnage of 17,250, a speed of from 25 to 28 knots, and eight 12-inch guns so placed that all eight could be fired on either broadside. Sir Frederick Doveton Sturdee, the Chief of the War Staff at the Admiralty, was put in charge of the expedition, with the post of Commander-in-Chief of the South Atlantic and Pacific. His business was to take over the ships at Montevideo and seek out von Spee should he attempt to break into the Atlantic by the Horn. If, on the other hand, the German admiral was aiming at the Panama Canal or the Canadian coasts, he would be dealt with by the Anglo-Japanese squadron in the North Pacific.

On 11th November Sturdee sailed, and on the 26th reached the rendezvous, where he found the *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent*, and *Bristol*. Von Spee after Coronel lingered for some time on the coast of Chile, waiting on colliers, and apparently also in the hope that the German battle-cruisers might break out of the North Sea and join him. Then, finding that the Anglo-Japanese squadron was becoming troublesome in the Pacific, he steered for the Horn, which he rounded at midnight on 1st December. He was aiming at the Falklands, where he expected to find a weak British squadron coaling; he meant to draw it out to sea and destroy it, and then occupy the islands and demolish the wireless installation. As a matter of fact only the *Canopus* was there, and the little colony expected that at any moment the blow would fall. But on the afternoon of 7th December, Sturdee appeared with his squadron, intending to coal, and then go round the Horn in search of the enemy. The Falklands with their bare brown moors shining with quartz, their innumerable lochans, their prevailing mists, their grey stone houses, and

their population of Scots shepherds, look like a group of the Orkneys or Outer Hebrides set down in the southern seas. Port Stanley lies at the eastern corner of East Island. There is a deeply cut gulf leading to an inner harbour, on the shores of which stands the little capital. The low shores on the south side almost give a vessel in port a sight of the outer sea. The night of 7th December was spent by the British squadron in coaling. The *Canopus*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Bristol* were in the inner harbour; while the *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, *Carnarvon*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall* lay in the outer gulf.

About daybreak on the morning of the 8th, von Spee arrived from the direction of Cape Horn. The *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg* were ahead, and reported the presence of two British ships, probably the *Macedonia* and the *Kent*, which would be the first vessels visible to a ship rounding the islands. Upon this von Spee gave the order to prepare for battle, expecting to find only the remnants of Cradock's squadron. At 8 o'clock the signal station announced to Sturdee the presence of the enemy. It was a clear, fresh morning, with a bright sun, and light breezes from the north-west. All our vessels had finished coaling, except the battle-cruisers, which had begun only half an hour before. Orders were at once given to get up steam for full speed. The battle-cruisers raised steam with oil fuel, and made so dense a smoke that the German look-outs did not detect them. About 9 the *Canopus* had a shot at the *Gneisenau* over the neck of land, directed by signal officers on shore. At 9.30 von Spee came abreast the harbour mouth, and saw the ominous tripod masts which revealed the strength of the British squadron. He at once signalled to the *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg* not to accept action, and altered his course to east, while Sturdee's command streamed out in pursuit.



*Central News*

ADMIRAL SIR FREDERICK DOVETON STURDEE

First went the *Kent* and then the *Glasgow*, followed by the *Carnarvon*, the battle-cruisers, and the *Cornwall*. The Germans had transports with them, the *Baden* and the *Santa Isabel*, and these fell back to the south of the island, with the *Bristol* and the *Macedonia* in pursuit. The *Canopus* remained in the harbour, where she had been moored in the mud as a fort. At about 10 o'clock the two forces were some twelve miles apart, von Spee steering almost due east. The *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* quickly drew ahead, but had to slacken speed to 20 knots to allow the cruisers to keep up with them. At 11 o'clock about eleven miles separated the two forces. At

five minutes to one we had drawn closer, and opened fire upon the *Leipzig*, which was last of the German line.

Von Spee, seeing that flight was impossible, prepared to give battle. So far as the battle-cruisers were concerned, it was a foregone conclusion, for the British had the greater speed and the longer range. Ever since Coronel he had had a sense of impending doom, and had known that the time left to him was short. He saw, like the great sailor he was, that while his flagship and her consort were in any case doomed their loss might enable his light cruisers to escape, and that these could still do work for his country by harrying British trade. About 1 o'clock he signalled to the latter to disperse and make for the South American coast, while he accepted battle with his armoured ships. His three light cruisers turned therefore and made off to the south, followed by the *Kent*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Cornwall*, while the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Carnarvon* engaged the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*.

About 2 o'clock our battle-cruisers had the range of the German flagship, and a terrific artillery duel began. The British armour-piercing shells from some defect in construction burst on impact, and this explained the long-drawn agony of the German ships, which remained afloat when their decks had become places of torment. The smoke was getting in our way, and Sturdee used his superior speed to reach the other side of the enemy. He simply pounded the *Scharnhorst* to pieces, and just after 4 o'clock she listed to port and then turned bottom upwards with her propeller still going round. The battle-cruisers and the *Carnarvon* then concentrated on the *Gneisenau*, which was sheering off to the south-east, and at 6 o'clock she too listed and went under.

Meanwhile the *Kent*, *Glasgow*, and *Cornwall* were hot in pursuit of the three light cruisers, and here was a more equally matched battle. The *Dresden*, which was farthest to the east, had, with her pace and her long start, no difficulty in escaping. The other two had slightly the advantage of speed of the British ships, but our engineers and stokers worked magnificently, and managed to get 25 knots out of the *Kent*. It was now a thick misty afternoon, with a drizzle of rain, and each duel had consequently the form of a separate battle. The news of the sinking of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* put new spirit into our men, and at 7.30 p.m. the *Nürnberg*, which had been set on fire by the *Kent*, went down with her guns still firing. The *Leipzig*, which had to face the *Glasgow* and the *Cornwall*, kept afloat, fighting most gallantly, till close upon 8 p.m., when she too heeled over and sank.

As the wet night closed in the battle died away. Only the *Dresden*, battered and fleeing far out in the southern waters, remained of the proud squadron which at dawn had sailed to what it believed to be an easy victory. The defeat of Cradock in the murky sunset off Coronel had been amply avenged.

The Battle of the Falkland Islands was a brilliant piece of strategy, for a plan, initiated more than a month before, and involving a journey across the world, was executed with complete secrecy and precision. Tactically it was an easy victory owing to Sturdee's huge preponderance in strength. The British gunnery was good, and the battle might have been won in half the time but for the British admiral's very proper desire to win without loss and return the battle-cruisers intact to Jellicoe. Yet, when this has been said, it was a workmanlike performance, doing honour to all concerned. Technically, the sole blemish was the escape of the *Dresden*, which could not, however, have been prevented; for the speediest of the available ships, the *Glasgow*, had only 25 knots against the 27 which the German cruiser managed to achieve. The result had a vital bearing on the position of Germany. It annihilated the one squadron left to her outside the North Sea, and it removed a formidable menace to our trade routes. After the 8th of December, the *Dresden*<sup>[1]</sup> was the sole enemy cruiser left at large, and she and the armoured merchantmen, the *Kronprinz Wilhelm* and the *Prince Eitel Friedrich*, were the only privateers still at work on the high seas. The British losses were small considering the magnitude of the victory. The *Invincible* was hit by eighteen shells, but had no casualties. The *Inflexible* was hit thrice, and had one man killed. The cruisers suffered more heavily, the *Kent*, for example, having four men killed and twelve wounded, and the *Glasgow* nine killed and four wounded. Every effort was made by the British ships to save life, but in the circumstances most of the efforts were vain. The only sign of a lost vessel was at first the slightly discoloured water. Then the wreckage floated up with men clinging to it, and boats were lowered and sailors let down the sides on bow-lines in order to rescue the survivors who floated past. The water was icy cold—about 40 degrees—and presently many of the swimmers grew numb and went under. Albatrosses, too, attacked some of those clinging to the wreckage, pecking at their eyes and forcing them to let go. Altogether less than two hundred were saved, including the captain of the *Gneisenau*. Admiral von Spee perished, with two of his sons.

The victory was of supreme importance in the naval campaign, for it gave to Britain the command of the outer seas, and enabled her to concentrate all her strength in the main European battleground. Failure would have altered the whole course of the war in Africa, and most gravely interfered with the passage of troops and supplies to the Western front. It is worthy, too, to be held in memory, along with Coronel, as an episode which maintained the high chivalrous tradition of the sea. Let us do honour to a gallant foe. The German admiral did his duty as Cradock had done his, the German sailors died as Cradock's men had died, and there can be no higher praise. They went down with colours flying, and at the last the men lined up on the decks of the doomed ships. They continued to resist after their vessels had become shambles. One captured officer reported that before the end his ship had no upper deck left, every man there having been killed, and one turret blown bodily overboard by a 12-inch shell. But in all that hell of slaughter, which lasted for half a day, there was never a thought of surrender. Von Spee and Cradock lie beneath the same waters, in the final concord of those who have looked unshaken upon death.

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[1] The *Dresden* was caught off Juan Fernandez on March 14, 1915, by the *Kent* and the *Glasgow*, and sunk in five minutes. The *Karlsruhe* had mysteriously blown up in the West Indies on November 4, 1914.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NORTH SEA RAIDS

The Raid on Yarmouth—The Raids on Scarborough and the Hartlepoons.

The war in northern waters now entered upon a phase which had few parallels in the conflicts of the past. An old dread took bodily form, and its embodiment proved farcical. Exasperated by failure, Germany cast from her all the ancient etiquette of war, and the result was that the law of the sea had to be largely rewritten.

The shores of Britain since the days of Paul Jones had been immune from serious hostile attentions. Very properly she regarded her navy as her defence, and paid little heed to coast fortifications, except at important naval stations such as Portsmouth and Dover. But the possibility of invasion remained in the popular mind, and was used as a goad to stir us to activity in our spasmodic fits of national stock-taking. Invasion on the grand scale was admittedly out of the question so long as our fleets held the sea; but a raid in the fog of a winter's night was conceivable, and became a favourite theme of romancers and propagandists. When the war broke out the menace was seriously regarded by the Government, and during October and November, when the German guns across the Channel were within hearing of our southern ports, steps were taken to protect our eastern coast-line. We needed every atom of our strength for the great Flanders struggle, and if a raiding party succeeded in occupying a stretch of shore, the necessity of dislodging him might gravely handicap our major strategy. Accordingly Yeomanry and Territorials entrenched themselves in the eastern counties, and had the dullness of their days enlivened by many rumours. Civilians were perturbed by the thought of how they should conduct themselves if their homes were violated, and there was much activity in the formation of national guards, and a considerable increase in recruiting for the new service armies.

Late on the afternoon of 2nd November, eight German warships sailed from the Elbe base. They were three battle-cruisers—the *Seydlitz*, the *Moltke*, and the *Von der Tann*; two armoured cruisers—the *Blücher* and the *Yorck*; and three light cruisers—the *Kolberg*, the *Graudenz*, and the

*Strassburg*. Except the *Yorck*, they were fast vessels, making at least 25 knots, and the battle-cruisers carried 11-inch guns. Cleared for action, they started for the coast of England, and early in the winter dawn ran through the nets of a British fishing fleet eight miles east of Lowestoft. An old mine-sweeping gunboat, the *Halcyon*, was next sighted, and received a few shots, but the Germans had no time to waste on her. About eight o'clock they were opposite Yarmouth, and proceeded to bombard the wireless station and the naval air station from a distance of about ten miles. For some reason or other they were afraid to venture farther inshore—probably they took their range from a line of buoys marked on the chart, and did not know that after the declaration of war these buoys had been moved 500 yards farther out to sea—so their shells only ploughed the sands and plumped in the water. In a quarter of an hour they grew tired of it, and moved away, dropping many floating mines, which later in the day caused the loss of one of our submarines and two fishing-boats. The enterprise was unlucky, for on the road back the *Yorck* struck a mine and went to the bottom with most of her crew. The raid was a reconnaissance, and a blow aimed at the *sangfroid* of Britain. The latter purpose miscarried, for nobody in Britain gave it a second thought. To bombard the beach front of a watering-place seemed a paltry achievement, when at the moment the opportunity was present to interfere with Admiral Hood on the Belgian coast. It would have been wiser had the authorities taken it more seriously, and issued instructions to civilians as to what to do in case of a repetition of such attempts. For, having found the way, the invaders were certain to return.

They came again on 16th December, when a thick, cold mist lay low on our eastern coasts. Von Spee and his squadron had gone to their death at the Falkland Islands, and it behoved the German navy to strike a blow in return. The raiding force, which was under Rear-Admiral Funke, the second in command of the battle-cruiser squadron, included the *Derfflinger*, the newest of the battle-cruisers, and the *Von der Tann*. The *Blücher* was there, and the *Seydlitz* and the *Graudenz*, and there were also at least two light cruisers present. Before daybreak on the 16th the squadron arrived off the mouth of the Tees, and there divided its forces. The *Derfflinger*, the *Von der Tann*, and the *Blücher* went north to raid the Hartlepoons, and the other two went south against Scarborough.

A few minutes before eight o'clock those citizens of Scarborough who were out of bed saw approaching from the north four strange ships. It was a still morning, with what is called in Scotland a *haar* on the water, and

something of a sea running, for the last days had been stormy. Scarborough was entirely without defences, except an old Russian 60-pounder, a Crimean relic, which was as useful as the flint arrowheads in the local museum. It had once been a garrison artillery depot, and had a battery below the Castle, but Lord Haldane had altered this and made it a cavalry station. Some troops of the new service battalions were quartered in the place, and there was a wireless station behind the town. Otherwise it was an open seaside resort, as defenceless against an attack from the sea as a seal against a killer-whale. The ships poured shells into the coastguard station and the Castle grounds, where they seemed to suspect the presence of hostile batteries. Then they steamed in front of the town, approaching to some five hundred yards from the shore. Here they proceeded to a systematic bombardment, aiming at every large object within sight, including the Grand Hotel and the gasworks, while many shells were directed towards the waterworks and the wireless station in the western suburbs. Churches, public buildings, and hospitals were hit, and some private houses were wrecked. For forty minutes the bombardment continued, and it was calculated that five hundred shells were fired. Midway in their course the ships swung round and began to move northwards again, while the light cruisers went out to sea and began the work of mine-dropping. The streets were crowded with puzzled and scared inhabitants, and, as in every watering-place, there was a large proportion of old people, women, and invalids. At a quarter to nine all was over, and the hulls of the invaders were disappearing round the Castle promontory. They left behind them eighteen dead, mostly women and children, and about seventy wounded.

About nine o'clock the coastguard at Whitby, the little town on the cliffs north of Scarborough, saw two great ships steaming up fast from the south. Ten minutes later the newcomers opened fire on the signal station on the cliff head. Several dozen shells were fired in a few minutes, many striking the cliff, and others going too high and falling behind the railway station. Some actually went four miles inland, and awakened a sleepy little village. The old abbey of Hilda and Cædmon was struck but not seriously damaged; and on the whole, considering the number of shells it received, Whitby suffered little. The casualties were only five, three killed and two wounded. The invaders turned north-eastward and disappeared into the haze, to join their other division.

That other division had visited the Hartlepoons, the only town of the three which came near to fulfilling the definition of a "defended" place. It had a fort, with a battery of antiquated guns. It had important docks and large shipbuilding works, which were busy at the time on Government

orders, and some companies of the new service battalions were billeted in the town. Off the shore was lying a small British flotilla—a gunboat, the *Patrol*, carrying 4-inch guns, and two destroyers, the *Doon* and the *Hardy*. About the same time as the bombardment of Scarborough began, the *Derfflinger*, the *Von der Tann*, and the *Blücher* came out of the mist upon the British flotilla and opened fire. The action took place on the north side of the peninsula on which Old Hartlepool stands. With great gallantry the small British craft tried to close and torpedo the invaders, but they were driven back with half a dozen killed and twenty-five wounded, and their only course was flight. The German ships approached the shore and fired on the battery. Then began the first fight on English soil with a foreign foe since the French landed in Sussex in 1690—the first on the soil of Great Britain since the affair at Fishguard in 1797. The achievement deserves to be remembered. The garrison of the battery consisted of some Territorials of the Durham Royal Garrison Artillery and some infantry of the Durhams. The 12-inch shells of the *Derfflinger* burst in and around the battery, but the men stood to their outclassed guns without wavering, and aimed with success at the upper decks of the invaders. For more than half an hour a furious cannonade continued, in which some 1,500 shells seem to have been fired. One ship kept close to the battery, and gave it broadside after broadside; the other two moved farther north, shelled Old Hartlepool, and fired over the peninsula at West Hartlepool and the docks. The streets of the old town suffered terribly, the gasworks were destroyed, and one of the big shipbuilding yards was damaged, but the docks and the other yards were not touched. Churches, hospitals, workhouses, and schools were all struck. Little children going to school and babes in their mothers' arms were killed. The total death-roll was 119, and the wounded over 300; six hundred houses were damaged or destroyed, and three steamers that night struck the mines which the invaders had laid off the shore, and went down with much loss of life. The spirit in which the inhabitants of the raided towns met the crisis was worthy of the highest praise. There was dire confusion, for nobody had been told what to do; there was some panic—it would have been a miracle if there had not been; but on the whole the situation was faced with admirable coolness and courage. The authorities, as soon as the last shots were fired, turned to the work of relief; the Territorials in Hartlepool behaved like veterans both during and after the bombardment; the girls in the telephone exchange worked steadily through the cannonade. It should be remembered that we cannot compare this attack on the east coast towns with the assaults in a land war on some city in the battle front. In the latter case the mind of the inhabitants has been attuned for weeks to danger, and preparations have been made for defence. But here the bolt came from the blue—the narrow,

crowded streets of Old Hartlepool were a death-trap, and the ordinary citizen was plunged in a second from profound peace into the midst of a nerve-racking and unexpected war.

Somewhere between nine and ten on that December morning the German vessels rendezvoused and started on their homeward course. They escaped only by the skin of their teeth. Before the first shell was fired word of the attempt had reached the British Grand Fleet. Somewhere out in the *haar* Beatty with his battle-cruisers was moving to intercept the raiders, and behind came half a dozen of the great battleships. But for an accident of weather the German battle-cruiser squadron would have gone to the bottom of the North Sea. But the morning *haar* thickened, till a series of blind fog-belts stretched for a hundred miles east from our shores. This lamentable miscarriage was due solely to the weather, and not to any lack of skill and enterprise on the part of our admirals. Our destroyers had been in action with the raiders before dawn; as late as 11.30 p.m. one of our cruisers was in contact with the German light force, and just after noon the enemy was sighted by our battleships. But as the trap seemed about to close the fog thickened, and Admiral Funke slipped through. The German battle fleet, which had followed the battle-cruisers, had turned for home early in the morning. The raiders returned safely to the Heligoland base, to be welcomed with Iron Crosses and newspaper eulogies of this new proof of German valour.

On that same day the Admiralty issued a message pointing out that “demonstrations of this character against unfortified towns or commercial ports, though not difficult to accomplish, provided that a certain amount of risk is accepted, are devoid of military significance.” “They must not,” it was added, “be allowed to modify the general naval policy which is being pursued.” The first was a pardonable over-statement, unless we interpret the word “military” in a narrow sense. These raids had a very serious military and naval purpose, which it would have been well to recognize. The German aim was to create such a panic in civilian England as would prevent the dispatch of the new armies to the Continent, and to compel Jellicoe and the Grand Fleet to move their base nearer the east coast, and undertake the duties of coast protection. The first was defeated by the excellent spirit in which England accepted the disaster. No voice was raised to clamour for the use of the new armies as a garrison for our seaboard. The second, though at first there was some natural indignation on the threatened coast, and a few foolish speeches and newspaper articles, had no chance of succeeding. In vain is the net spread in sight of the bird. The only result was that more stringent measures were taken to prevent espionage, that civilians were at

last given some simple emergency directions, and that recruiting received the best possible advertisement.

Germany made much of the exploit, till she discovered that neutral nations, especially America, were seriously scandalized, and then she had recourse to explanations. Scarborough had been bombarded because it had a wireless station, Whitby because it had a naval signal station, Hartlepool because it had a little fort. Technically she could make out a kind of argument, and Hartlepool might fairly be said to have come within the category of a defended place. It was true that the fortifications were lamentably inadequate, but she could retort that that was Britain's business, not hers. But the real answer is that she did not aim at the destruction of military and naval accessories, except as an afterthought. The sea-front of Scarborough and the streets of Old Hartlepool were bombarded not because they were in the line of fire against a fort or a wireless station, but for their own sakes—because they contained a multitude of people who could be killed or terrorized. If Germany had the exact plans of the coast ports and of their condition at the time, as she certainly had, she knew very well how far they were from being fortified towns or military and naval bases. She selected them just because they were open towns, for “frightfulness” there would have far greater moral effects upon the nation than if it had been directed against Harwich or Dover, where it might be regarded as one of the natural risks of war. Her performance was not a breach of a technicality, for it was only a logical extension of an admitted principle; but such a barbarous extension was in itself a breach of the unwritten conventions of honourable campaigning.<sup>[1]</sup> The slaughter of civilians to produce an impression was one of those things repellent to any man trained in the etiquette of a great service. The German navy had been justly admired, but it was beginning to show its parvenu origin. Individual sailors might conduct themselves like gentlemen, but there was no binding tradition of gentility in the service, and, as in the army, those at the head disliked and repudiated any such weakness. The last word was with the Mayor of Scarborough. “Some newcomers,” he wrote, “into honourable professions learn the tricks before the traditions.”

The British casualties by sea, apart from the losses in battle, were not serious during the last months of the year, but on the first day of 1915 there was a grave misfortune. On the 31st of December eight vessels of the Channel Fleet left Sheerness, and about three o'clock on the morning of 1st January in bright moonlight, the eight were steering in single line at a moderate speed near the Start Lighthouse. There was no screen of

destroyers, and the situation invited an attack from submarines, several of which had been reported in these waters. The last of the line was the *Formidable*, Captain Loxley, a pre-Dreadnought of 15,000 tons, and a sister ship to the *Bulwark*, which had been blown up at Sheerness on 26th November. Some time after three she was struck by two torpedoes, and went down. Four boats were launched, one of which capsized, and out of a crew of some 800 only 201 were saved. The rescue of part of the crew was due to the courage and good seamanship of Captain William Pillar, of the Brixham trawler *Provident*, who in heavy weather managed to take the inmates of the *Formidable's* cutter aboard his vessel. The misfortune showed that the lesson of the loss of the *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir* had been imperfectly learned. For eight battleships to move slowly in line on a moonlit night in submarine-infested waters without destroyers was simply to court destruction.

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[1] “Military proceedings are not regulated solely by the stipulations of international law. There are other factors—conscience, good sense. A sense of the duties which the principles of humanity impose will be the surest guide for the conduct of seamen, and will constitute the most effectual safeguard against abuse. The officers of the German navy—I say it with emphasis—will always fulfil in the strictest manner duties which flow from the unwritten law of humanity and civilization.”—Baron Marschall von Bieberstein at the Hague Conference, 1907.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BATTLE OF THE DOGGER BANK

Admiral Hipper puts to Sea—Beatty goes out to meet him—  
Destroyers versus Capital Ships—Significance of the Battle.

Early on the morning of Sunday, 24th January, Rear-Admiral Hipper, who commanded the German Battle-Cruiser Squadron, left Wilhelmshaven with a strong force to repeat the exploit of Admiral Funke. The *Von der Tann* was still undergoing repairs, but he had with him the *Seydlitz*, in which he flew his flag, the *Moltke*, the *Derfflinger*, the *Blücher*, six light cruisers, one of which was the *Kolberg*, and a destroyer flotilla. To recapitulate their strengths: the *Derfflinger* had 26,200 tons, a speed of nearly 27 knots, an armour belt of 12 inches, and eight 12-inch guns; the *Seydlitz* had 24,600 tons, the same speed, and ten 11-inch guns; the *Moltke* had 22,640 tons, 25 knots, and ten 11-inch guns; the *Blücher* had 15,550 tons, 29 knots, and twelve 8.2-inch guns. Before starting Admiral Hipper took certain precautions. He enlarged the mine-field north of Heligoland, and north of it concentrated a submarine flotilla, while he arranged for Zeppelins and seaplanes to come out from the island in certain contingencies. His main motive, assuming that he encountered part of the British fleet, was to retire and fight a running action, and entice our vessels within reach of his submarines or the Heligoland mine-field.

The same morning the British battle-cruisers, under Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, put to sea. A hint of the German preparations had reached the Admiralty, and developments were anticipated. He flew his flag in the *Lion*—Captain A. S. M. Chatfield—a vessel of 26,350 tons, nearly 29 knots, and an armament of eight 13.5-inch guns. With him sailed five other battle-cruisers: the *Tiger*—Captain Henry Pelly—28,000 tons, 28 knots, eight 13.5-inch guns; the *Princess Royal*—Captain Osmond Brock—a sister ship of the *Lion*; the *New Zealand*—Captain Lionel Halsey—18,800 tons, 25 knots, and eight 12-inch guns; the *Indomitable*—Captain Francis Kennedy—a sister ship of the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, which were in the Battle of the Falkland Islands. With the battle-cruisers went four cruisers of the “town” class—the *Southampton*, the *Nottingham*, the *Birmingham*, and the *Lowestoft*; three light cruisers—the *Arethusa*, the *Aurora*, and the *Undaunted*; and destroyer flotillas, under Commander Reginald Tyrwhitt.

Admiral Beatty's squadron completely outclassed Admiral Hipper's alike in numbers, pace, and weight of fire, and the Germans were heavily handicapped by the presence of the *Blücher*, whose low speed of only 24 knots marked her out as a predestined prey.

The night of Saturday, the 23rd, had been foggy, and the destroyers scouting east of the Dogger Bank had a difficult time. Sunday morning, however, dawned clear and sharp, for the wind had changed to the north-east, and swept the mist from the seas. About seven o'clock the *Aurora*, Captain Wilmot Nicholson, sighted the Germans off the Dogger Bank, signalled the news to Beatty, and presently opened fire. Beatty steered to the direction of the flashes, and Hipper, who had been moving north-west, promptly turned round and took a course to the south-east. This sudden flight, when he could not have been informed of the enemy's strength, made it plain that the German admiral's main purpose was to lure our vessels to the dangerous Heligoland area. About eight o'clock the situation was as follows: the Germans were moving south-east in line, with the *Moltke* leading, followed by the *Seydlitz*, *Derfflinger*, and *Blücher*, with the destroyers on their starboard beam, and the light cruisers ahead. Close upon them were the British destroyers and light cruisers, who presently crossed on the port side to prevent their smoke from spoiling the marksmanship of the larger vessels. Our battle-cruisers did not follow directly behind, but, in order to avoid the mines which the enemy was certain to drop, kept on a parallel course to the westward. The *Lion* led, followed by the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal*, the *New Zealand*, and the *Indomitable*. What followed was an extraordinary tribute to the engineers. The first three ships could easily be worked up to 30 knots, but the last two, which had normally only 25 knots, were so strenuously driven that they managed to keep in line. Our leading ships had the pace of the Germans, and no one of our squadron was seriously outclassed, while the unfortunate *Blücher*, on the other hand, was bound to drop behind.

Fourteen miles at first separated Beatty from the enemy, and by nine o'clock he was within 11½ miles of the last ship. The *Lion* fired a ranging shot which fell short, but soon after nine, when the squadrons were ten miles apart, she got her first blow home on the *Blücher*. As our line began to draw level, the *Tiger* continued to attack the *Blücher*, while the *Lion* attended to the *Derfflinger*. At 9.30 the *Blücher* had fallen so much astern that she came within range of the guns of the *New Zealand*, and the *Lion* and the *Tiger* were busy with the leading German ship, the *Seydlitz*, while the *Princess Royal* attacked the *Derfflinger*. The *Moltke*, first in the line, got off lightly, because of the smoke which obscured the target. Our destroyers and light

cruisers had dropped behind, but presently, when the German destroyers threatened, the *Meteor* and "M" division, under Captain the Hon. Herbert Meade, went ahead and took up a position of great danger in the very thick of the firing. The British gunnery was precise, shell after shell hitting a pin-point ten miles off—a pin-point, too, moving at over thirty miles an hour. It was not a broadside action, for the ships at which we aimed were stern-on. At first sight this looks like a disadvantage, but, in practice, it had been found to give the best results, and that for a simple reason. To get the line is an easy matter; the difficulty is to get the right elevation. In a broadside action a shell which is too high falls harmlessly beyond the vessel, because the target is only the narrow width of the deck. But in a stern-on fight the target is the whole length of the vessel, 600 feet or more, instead of 90.

By eleven o'clock the *Seydlitz* and the *Derfflinger* were on fire. The *Blücher* had fallen behind in flames, and was being battered by the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable*. An hour later the *Meteor* torpedoed her, and she began to sink. The crew lined up on deck, ready for death, and it was only the shouts of the *Arctusa* that made them jump into the water. With a cheer they went overboard, and none too soon, for presently the *Blücher* turned turtle and floated bottom upwards. Our boats rescued over 120 of the swimmers, and would have saved more had not some German aircraft from Heligoland dropped bombs upon the rescue parties and killed several German sailors. The airmen clearly thought that the *Blücher* was a sinking British cruiser, and this may have been the basis of the preposterous tale of our losses which the German Admiralty subsequently published.

We return to the doings of the three leading battle-cruisers. The German destroyers managed to get between them and the enemy, and under cover of their smoke the Germans made a half turn to the north, and increased the distance. Beatty promptly altered his course to conform. The destroyers then attacked at close quarters, hoping to torpedo, but the 4-inch guns amidships in the battle-cruisers drove them off. Presently submarines were sighted, and Beatty himself saw a periscope on the starboard bow of the *Lion*. The flagship at this time was much under fire, but suffered remarkably little damage. Just before eleven, however, as her bow lifted from the water it was struck by a shell which damaged the feed tank. She had to reduce her speed, and fell out of the line. This accident had unfortunate effects on the battle, which up to now had been going strongly in the British favour. Beatty had to transfer his flag to the destroyer *Attack*, and the charge of the pursuing battle-cruisers passed to the next senior officer, Rear-Admiral Moore, whose flag flew in the *New Zealand*. The *Lion* moved away to the north-west, and in the afternoon her engines began to give serious trouble. The *Indomitable*,

released by the sinking of the *Blücher*, took her in tow, and after some anxious hours she was brought safely into an English port.

The *Attack*, meantime, followed hard on the battle-cruisers, but it was not till twenty minutes past twelve that she overtook the *Princess Royal*, to which Beatty transferred his flag. He found that the squadron had broken off the fight and was retiring. The reason which led Admiral Moore to this step was fear of a German mine-field, but it would appear that the British squadron at the moment of turning was seventy miles from Heligoland, and probably at least forty from the new mine-field which Admiral Hipper had laid. The consequence was that what might have been a crushing victory was changed to a disappointment. The British losses were few—ten men killed on the *Tiger*, four on the *Meteor*, and six wounded on the *Lion*; no British vessel was lost, and the hurt to the flagship was soon repaired. The Germans lost the *Blücher*; the *Derfflinger* and the *Seydlitz* were seriously damaged, and many of their crews must have perished. But such minor successes were little better than a failure when we were within an ace of destroying the whole German force of battle-cruisers.

The Battle of the Dogger Bank is chiefly of interest as the first action where destroyers were employed to make torpedo attacks on capital ships. To Germany the result was a grave annoyance, which was covered by a cloud of inaccurate reports. Hipper was apparently not held responsible, but Ingenohl became the target of criticism. He was shortly afterwards removed from the command of the High Seas Fleet, and his place was taken by Admiral von Pohl. Three weeks later the British First Lord of the Admiralty made a statement in the House of Commons which summed up the recent work of the navy, and drew the attention of the nation to the lessons of the Dogger Bank action—the power of the great guns, the excellence of British gunnery, the immense advantage of speed. He pointed out that at five to four in representative ships the enemy did not think it prudent to engage; that, should the great fleets join in battle, Britain could put into line a preponderance both in quality and numbers far greater than five to four; and that this extra margin might be regarded as an additional insurance against unexpected preliminary losses by mines and submarines. The total naval losses, mainly by submarine, had been 5,500 officers and men.

“For the loss of these British lives we have lived through six months of this war safely and even prosperously. We have established for the time being a command of the sea such as we

had never expected, such as we have never known, and such as our ancestors have never known at any other period of our history.”

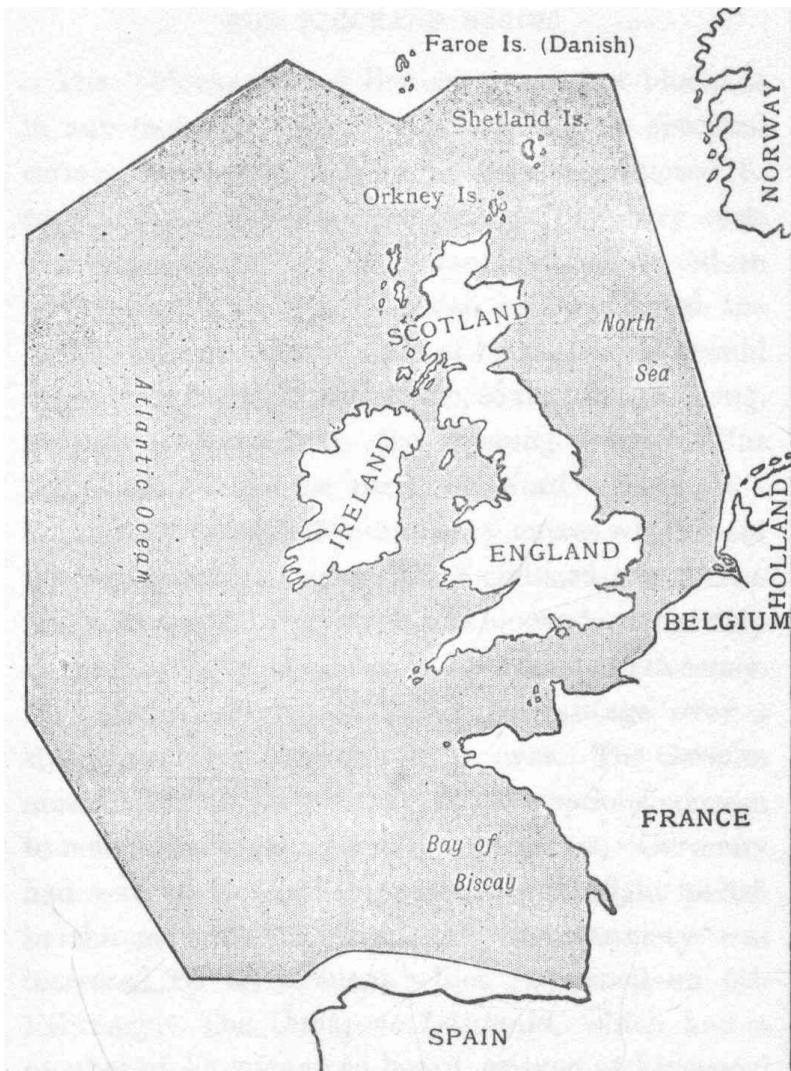
In the concluding words of this speech Mr. Churchill foreshadowed the possibility of further naval pressure against an enemy “who, as a matter of deliberate policy, places herself outside all international obligations.” He referred especially to the imports of food, hitherto unhindered, and his prognostication was soon verified.

## CHAPTER X

### THE BLOCKADE BEGINS

Britain's Action as to Contraband—Germany declares a Blockade of Britain—Britain closes the North Sea—The Blockade of Germany.

From the beginning of the struggle merchandise which was not contraband of war had been allowed to pass into Germany in neutral vessels. But on the 26th of January the German Government announced their intention of seizing all stocks of corn and flour, and forbade all private transactions as from that morning. This meant that grain had become a munition of war, for it was no longer possible to distinguish between imports for the civilian population, and for the army in the field. Accordingly the British Government had to revise its practice. The American steamer *Wilhelmina*, laden with a cargo of foodstuffs for Germany, was stopped at Falmouth, and the case referred to the Prize Courts. In this policy Britain did not depart from the traditional principles of international practice. She did not as yet propose to seize non-contraband goods in neutral vessels. All that happened was that certain goods, which were normally non-contraband, were now made contraband by the action of Germany. The economic and legal bearing of these events will be discussed later in this chapter; here it is sufficient to note the actual consequences. Germany, much perturbed by the unforeseen results of her declaration, attempted to modify it by announcing that imports of food would not be used for military purposes; but such a declaration could not be accepted by Britain, for it was not possible in practice. Then in a fit of wrath Germany took the bold step of declaring war against all British merchandise—war which would follow none of the old rules, for it would be conducted by submarines, who had no facilities, even if they had the disposition, to rescue the crews. She further announced that from 18th February onward the waters around the British Isles would be considered a war region, and that any enemy merchant vessels found there “would be destroyed without its always being possible to warn the crew or passengers of the dangers threatening.” The sea passage north of the Shetlands and the coastal waters of the Netherlands were declared to be exempt from this menace.



The Submarine "Blockade"—"the barred region" in the North Sea and the Atlantic proclaimed by Germany.

The "blockade" of Britain was not a blockade in any technical sense. Germany merely specified certain tracts of water in which she proposed to commit acts which were forbidden by every code of naval warfare. In 1806 Napoleon had issued an earlier Berlin Decree, in which he proclaimed the British Isles to be in a state of blockade. He could not enforce it, and British trade, so far from suffering, actually increased in the ensuing years. But Napoleon, though he used the word "blockade" improperly, sought his purpose by means which were not repugnant to the ethics of civilized war.

Germany, utterly incapable of a real blockade, could only succeed by jettisoning her last remnants of decency. An inferior boxer may get an advantage over a strong opponent if he gouges his eyes. The German announcement not unnaturally gave serious concern to neutral nations, especially to America. Germany had warned them that neutral ships might perish in the general holocaust, and their anxiety was increased by an incident which happened on 6th February. The Cunarder *Lusitania*, which had a number of Americans on board, arrived at Liverpool flying the American flag. Such a use in emergencies is a recognized practice of war—one of Paul Jones's lieutenants passed successfully through the British Channel Fleet by hoisting British colours—and the British Foreign Office was justified in defending the custom. But clearly if it was made habitual it would greatly increase the risks of neutrals, and America had some grounds for her request that it should not be used "frequently and deliberately."

The next step of the British Government was to close absolutely to all ships of all nations the greater part of the North Channel leading from the Atlantic to the Irish Sea. Then on 1st March Mr. Asquith announced in the House of Commons that the Allies held themselves free to detain and take into port all ships carrying goods of presumed enemy origin, ownership, or destination. No neutral vessel which sailed from a German port after 1st March would be allowed to proceed, and no vessel after that date would be suffered to sail to any German port. It was not proposed to confiscate such vessels or their contents, but they would be detained. Thus tardily, in the eighth month of war, did Britain make use of her chief asset in the struggle, and reveal the paradoxical spectacle of the greatest of the world's naval Powers waiting to declare a blockade of her enemy till her enemy had first proclaimed a blockade of her. Mr. Asquith's announcement implied the strict blockade of Germany, and was defended by him not as a fulfilment of, but as a departure from, international law upon the subject. It was, in his view, a legitimate retaliation against a foe which had broken not only every international rule but every moral obligation. Clearly it could not be an "effective" blockade in the strictest sense, but it may be noted that it was at least as effective as the blockade proclaimed by the North in the American Civil War, when a highly indented coast-line of 3,000 miles was watched by only twelve ships.

Before 18th February, the day of destiny, German submarines had been busy against British merchantmen. They had succeeded from the beginning of the year in sinking eight, and they had been wholly unscrupulous in their proceedings, as was proved by the attack off Havre upon the hospital ship *Asturias*. By 24th February they had sunk seven more, by 10th March

another four, by 17th March another eight, by 24th March another three, by 31st March another three. If we take the total arrivals and sailings of oversea steamers of all nationalities above 300 tons to and from ports in the United Kingdom during that period, we shall find that the losses worked out at about three per thousand. It was not a brilliant achievement. The mountain which had been in travail with awesome possibilities brought forth an inconsiderable mouse. The "blockade" hindered the sailing of scarcely a British ship. It did not raise the price of any necessary by a farthing. But it damaged what was left of Germany's reputation in the eyes of the civilized world, and it increased, if increase were needed, the determination of the Allies to make an end of this crazy international anarchism. Some of the commanders of the German submarines—notably Captain Weddigen, who lost his life—went about the business as decently as their orders allowed. Others, such as the miscreant who sank the *Falaba*, torpedoed the vessel before the passengers were in the boats, and jeered at the drowning. In the German navy, as in the German army, humanity depended upon the idiosyncrasies of individual commanders, for it had small place in the logic of her official traditions. It was a curious comment upon Baron Marschall von Bieberstein's proud boast at the Hague: "The officers of the German navy—I say it with emphasis—will always fulfil in the strictest manner duties which flow from the unwritten law of humanity and civilization."

If a great war is a packet of surprises for the strategist, it is not less so for the economist and the jurist. It is proposed in the present chapter to examine briefly some of the phenomena which at the outset appeared in the provinces of the two latter; and the task can scarcely be neglected, for they were vital matters to the civilian part of the nations concerned. War is fought with a weapon of which the steel point is the armies, and the shaft which gives weight to the blow the civilian masses pursuing their ordinary avocations. The lustiest stroke will miscarry if the shaft be rotten.

For a generation economists had prophesied that in a world war the dislocation of credit and the destruction of wealth would be so stupendous that the whole machinery of modern life would come to a standstill. Their prophecies were curiously wrong; not unnaturally, perhaps, for political economy is a bad ground for forecasts; it is not an exact science, except within the narrowest limits; it selects and abstracts its data, and its rules work strictly only in a rarefied and unnatural world. This war left the economist, if he were pedantically inclined, in a state of bewilderment. Wild heresies were applied, and worked sufficiently well. Deductions, mathematically exact, were falsified. Certain things which by every law should happen were never heard of. The jurist had surprises also, but of a

different kind. He saw a stock of laws on which it seemed the world had agreed flung again into the melting-pot. He began to realize the dependence of law upon opinion, its malleability, the delicacy of its sanctions. For him it was a bracing experience and highly educative; for the more rigid type of economist it was a penance and a confusion.

War both complicates and simplifies the economic situation. The ribs of the state show when the comfortable padding falls off. In examining the economics of the struggle we must first of all make a distinction between a country like Britain, where the normal life still in essentials continued, and a country like Germany, where everything, necessarily, was mobilized for war. Britain had all the world open to her, except the belligerent countries. Her factories were still working largely on private contracts; she was still exporting and importing, and paying for imports by exports. She was still the financial centre of the world, with relations with foreign bourses and banks, financing her Allies and her oversea dominions, with ships on every sea doing the carrying trade of other nations besides herself. Britain's economic problem, therefore, was rather complicated than simplified. She had to keep her ordinary life going, and adopt special measures to repair those parts of the mechanism which had been crippled by war. The same was true of France and Russia in a less degree. The one had universal service and the enemy inside her frontiers; the other had no trade outlets to the west during most of the winter months; but both were in touch with the outer world.

Germany and Austria, on the other hand, were approaching the position of a beleaguered garrison. They could do no trade except with or through their adjacent neutral countries, and every day the volume of this must diminish. What imports they got must be paid for by gold or foreign securities, for they had no exports. They must be self-sufficing and self-sustaining, and revert to the economy of the primitive state. Their problem was therefore greatly simplified. All the machinery of foreign bills and foreign exchanges and foreign debts or credits had stopped short. They had one great occupation—to provide out of their existing resources sufficient war material and sufficient food for army and people. So long as the nation was agreed, internal payments could be easily regulated, and paper money could be indefinitely created. If Germany were destined to win, the highest note circulation would be redeemed with ease. External payments did not trouble her, for there were none that mattered.

Let us imagine a case where a hundred men shut up fifty in a castle, and sit down to invest it. The besiegers will get their food from a wide

neighbourhood, and must pay for it in cash, or get it on credit. They must keep up good relations with the people who sell bread and gunpowder, and be able to send to their homes and fetch what they want. They will live, in short, the ordinary economic life of the rest of the world. But the fifty in the fortress are in a very different case. They cannot get out, and nothing can come in; so they must use the food in the castle larder and the ammunition in the castle magazine, and make more if the castle garden is large enough to grow potatoes, and there is any stock of charcoal and saltpetre in the cellars. Their captain will have to take charge of the stores, and dole them out carefully. He will pay his men their wages from the gold he may happen to have with him, or more nicely in promissory notes, to be redeemed when they are relieved or hack their way out to their own land. The economic problem which he has to face may be desperate and urgent, but it is simple.

The British situation represented the extreme antithesis to that of Germany. It developed on lines mainly normal in a world mainly abnormal. But at the beginning, when men's minds were uneasy, certain emergency measures had to be adopted, and throughout the war the State had to use, or promise the use of, its whole credit—that is, every stick and stone in the land—to strengthen weak spots in the line. *Salus populi suprema lex* was definitely the maxim, and the State became Leviathan in a sense undreamed of by Hobbes. The main tasks of the Government from the economic point of view were three: To ensure an adequate supply of food at reasonable prices; to provide an adequate supply of cash and credit—largely a psychological problem, for if people are persuaded that all lawful obligations will be met as usual the battle is more than half won; and to finance the war, which meant not only paying their own bills, but giving certain assistance to their Allies.

The measures taken to preserve the food supply have been already glanced at. Cargoes were insured at a rate which began at five guineas per cent., and fell in a month to two guineas. After the destruction of the *Emden* the rate fell back to little above that of peace time, and business resumed its ordinary channels. Hulls were insured through associations, the Government taking 80 per cent. of “King's enemy” risks. The report of one of the largest of these, issued on February 12, 1915, described the work done. Up to that date the losses paid on vessels insured with this association, during voyages started since the outbreak of war, were over £800,000, and the premiums received, £1,500,000. “From November,” said the report, “members have been able in many instances to obtain in the open market rates below those fixed by the State, and therefore the amount insured with the association has been diminished.” Again, a Cabinet Committee fixed maximum prices for

certain articles of food, which, after various revisions, were abandoned as business became normal. The cost of living rose during the winter, and there were proposals for a further official price scale, which the Government after consideration rejected. In a speech in February 1915 the Prime Minister pointed out that the prices of certain foodstuffs, such as wheat, were fixed not in Britain but in America; that prices had not risen beyond the point attributable to the increased consumption of food at home owing to the new armies, the closing of the Dardanelles to Russian grain, and the lateness of the Argentine crop. A few minor steps were taken in this matter—such as a not very fortunate Government purchase of sugar, and a half-hearted attempt by the Board of Agriculture to increase and organize home-grown supplies of foodstuffs.

Germany, as we have seen, was now in the widest sense a beleaguered city, and her economics were the economics of a fortress. By the end of 1914 she could not hope to receive any large quantity of foodstuffs or war munitions from abroad, and by March of the new year all imports ceased except from existing stocks held in Scandinavia, Holland, and Italy. Her problem was simply to organize the distribution of her domestic stocks, and to see that so far as possible they were replenished from home sources. New foodstuffs must be won from the soil, new supplies of chemicals and ore from the mines, as far as was consistent with the preoccupations of war. Her task was one of internal production and administration. The financial side was simple. So long as the nation was confident, the credit of the State could be used indefinitely.

The harvest of 1914 had been poor; but at first the food question was little considered, since the public expectation was of an immediate and final victory. Apparently there was some miscalculation as to the amount of corn available, and in the autumn there was a good deal of careless waste. Early in the new year the German Government suddenly realized that the national supplies under this head were running short, and might vanish before the harvest of 1915 reinforced them. Accordingly elaborate provisions were made to husband the stores of flour. Municipalities were given the right to confiscate private stocks, the bakers became Government servants, and bread cards were issued which fixed the amount which the holder was entitled to buy. Bread became dear and bad. All the industries depending on grain were restricted, little beer was brewed, and pigs no longer could be fattened. Millers were compelled by law to mix 30 per cent. of rye flour with wheat flour before delivery, and the bakers were compelled to sell as wheaten bread a compound of this already blended flour and 20 per cent. of potato starch flour. Rye bread might be 30 per cent. potato. Such a shortage,

however, was a long way removed from famine. Most foodstuffs in Germany were still cheap and plentiful. A dinner in Berlin in January did not cost more than a meal in London; only the bread was indifferent. Luxuries, as in all such cases, were more plentiful and relatively cheaper than necessities. The future, however, was darkening. The harvest of 1915 must be a bad one, and the most meticulous thrift could not spread out supplies indefinitely. What was felt in January as merely an inconvenience might by July be a pinch, and by the winter an agony.

Most industrial stocks ran short, but they mattered little. The grave question was that of materials which formed the bases for the manufacture of war munitions. Before the war Germany had consumed annually 785,000 tons of saltpetre, 16,000 tons of rubber, 1,100,000 of petroleum, and 224,000 of copper. In the last two cases there was some small local production—about 10 per cent. of the whole. She had also made large importations of nitrates. The Allied blockade cut off much of the saltpetre, all the rubber, and most of the copper, petroleum, and nitrates. War such as Germany waged, with its immense use of artillery and motor transport, was simply impossible without these materials. Some, such as petroleum, could be replaced to a certain extent by substitutes; nitrates could be chemically produced; and the large stocks of copper in private use could be drawn upon for a considerable time. But no substitute could be found for rubber, and this commodity was Germany's sorest need during the early months of 1915. The Allies at this time were inclined to exaggerate Germany's shortage of war material, and to underestimate the ingenuity of German scientists. But the pinch existed, as in the case of food, and in time would become a menace.

To sum up, it may be said that the Allies, owing to the command of the sea, conducted—under difficulties—their usual economic life; while Germany was almost wholly on a war basis, in spite of the fact that scarcely any German territory was in enemy possession, and large areas of French and Russian soil were in German occupation. Germany was short in some classes of foodstuffs and badly crippled in several forms of war material, but endeavoured to meet the first by a rigorous control of distribution and the second by the use of substitutes. The war finance of all the belligerents was a matter of gigantic loans, but the security differed. With the Allies it was a weakened, but in its main lines a normal, economic life; with Germany it was solely the prospect of victory and the fruits of victory. Defeat for Germany would mean a colossal bankruptcy. She had made all her assets a pawn in the game of war.

The questions of international law which arose in the early months of 1915 were in themselves so curious, and their importance in our relations with America and other neutrals was so great, that they demand some notice. In order to understand the situation we must realize the international practice at the outbreak of war. We may leave out of account the Declaration of London, for a coach and four had been driven through that unlucky arrangement before August was gone, and a handle was thereby given for Germany's charge that Britain had been the first to play fast and loose with international arrangements. Under the ordinary practice enemy's ships were liable to capture and enemy's goods on board to confiscation, neutral goods going free. Neutral ships could sail with impunity to and from enemy ports, and any enemy goods which they carried were exempt from capture unless they happened to be contraband of war.

Contraband of war was anything of direct use to the enemy's fleets and armies, not only weapons and explosives, but materials which were capable of a double use, the latter being known as conditional contraband. In the Napoleonic wars conditional contraband was usually things like tar, hemp, and timber; later it became such commodities as petroleum and copper. If conditional contraband was destined for an enemy port it was liable to capture in a neutral bottom. Food for the civilian population of the enemy was not contraband; it might become so if destined for the enemy's soldiers or sailors, but this destination was obviously almost impossible to prove. Contraband, conditional or otherwise, was liable to seizure if it were assigned to a neutral port but could be shown to be destined for the enemy.

These principles were fairly clear, but they involved a large number of questions of fact—such as the real destination of a cargo, and the precise ownership of a hull. Such questions of fact were decided by Prize Courts, which condemned or released the captured vessels submitted to them, and arranged for compensation, sale, and the other consequences of their verdicts. Prize Courts did not administer the domestic law of the country which appointed them. They sat, in Lord Stowell's famous words, "not to administer occasional and shifting opinion to serve present purposes of particular national interests, but to administer with indifference that justice which the law of nations holds out without distinction to independent states, some happening to be neutral and some to be belligerent."

Unhappily, while there may be agreement in peace on the main international principles, there is apt to be very little unanimity in war, for a Power puts the emphasis differently according as it is a neutral or a belligerent. A great maritime Power like Britain was subject to a special

temptation. In her own wars she was apt to ride belligerent rights hard, for she desired to use her naval strength to destroy the enemy. If she was a neutral she pressed neutral rights to the furthest points conceivable, for she sought to get the benefit of her large mercantile marine. The United States, in their Civil War, were rigid sticklers for belligerent rights, while Britain pled the cause of neutrals. In this way Britain stood for belligerents, and they were the advocates of neutrals. If the situation had been reversed, and Britain had been neutral, undoubtedly she would have done as America did. There is a human nature in states as in individuals, and human nature is rarely consistent.

The first difficulty arose in connection with conditional contraband, especially copper. Germany needed copper, and she could only get it from foreign countries, notably America. Now, copper if shipped to Hamburg would be clearly contraband, and would be seized; but what if it were shipped to Genoa or Bergen? Suddenly the exports of American copper to Europe began to grow prodigiously. In 1913, from August to December, the imports to Italy had been £15,000,000; in 1914 for these months they were £26,000,000. Scandinavia and Holland for the same period in 1913 had imported £7,000,000; in 1914 the figures were £25,000,000. This looked suspicious enough, for these countries were not in the enjoyment of an industrial boom, and such high copper stocks could only be meant for Germany.

Britain's position was extremely difficult. If she allowed them to land, Germany would get them. If she arrested them on the high seas, she had little or no evidence of a German destination to go on. She could only presume that, in the state of the Dutch, Scandinavian, and Italian copper trade, they must be destined for Germany. The consequence was that she adopted the doctrine of "continuous voyage," against which she had often made outcry in the past, and she pressed it very hard. That doctrine was first heard of in the Seven Years' War, and came to great notoriety during the American Civil War. When the North was blockading the South, Northern warships would discover a British merchantman bound for Nassau in the Bahamas with a cargo of rifles, or to Matamoros, just across the Rio Grande from Texas, with shells. These were war stores, and of no use to the quiet civilian; and since Mexico and the Bahamas were not at war, the presumption was that the cargoes were destined for the Confederacy. Accordingly these innocent merchantmen were seized and condemned, after some highly interesting decisions by the United States Prize Courts. Britain protested vigorously, especially the lawyers, but the Government happily took no steps. When the Boer War came she showed some disposition to

accept the American view; for, since the Transvaal had no sea coast, contraband could only come by a neutral port like Delagoa Bay, and she stopped several vessels on this suspicion. Presently she had accepted wholeheartedly the American doctrine, and it was for the United States to repine at the consequences of their teaching. Indeed, she greatly improved on it. The Northern cruisers took only cargoes of absolute contraband where the presumption of enemy destination was un rebuttable. Britain took cargoes of conditional contraband, part of which might easily have been used by neutral civilian industries, and she defined conditional contraband in a way which played havoc with that Declaration of London which in early August she had proudly declared to be her guide.

The United States made a temperate protest on 28th December 1914, and Sir Edward Grey replied on 7th January with some friendly observations, pleading the *force majeure* of necessity, and on 18th February with a long statement, setting forth the whole British case, referring to American usage in the past, and pointing out that, whatever our restrictions, America was prospering over the business. In this statement he outlined a far more startling departure from international practice than the seizure of American copper, and on 1st March a Declaration of the British Government expounded the new policy.

On 26th January, as we have seen, the German Government had announced the future control of all foodstuffs, including imports from overseas. This abolished the distinction between food destined for the civil population and that for the armed forces. "Experience shows," ran Sir Edward Grey's statement, "that the power to requisition will be used to the fullest extent in order to make sure that the wants of the military are supplied, and however much goods may be imported for civil use it is by the military that they will be consumed if military exigencies require it, especially now that the German Government have taken control of all the foodstuffs in the country." In these circumstances it was natural that Britain should treat as contraband of war all food cargoes for Germany, and for a neutral port if their ultimate destination was patent. Germany replied by announcing a blockade of Britain as from 18th February. British vessels or neutral vessels in British waters would be sunk by submarines without notice, and without any provision for the safety of crew and passengers. This threat was put into action, and on 1st March came the Declaration of Britain of a counter-blockade. The chief sentences of this Declaration may be quoted:—

“Germany has declared that the English Channel, the north and west coasts of France, and the waters round the British Isles are a ‘war area,’ and has officially notified that ‘all enemy ships found in that area will be destroyed, and that neutral vessels may be exposed to danger.’ This is in effect a claim to torpedo at sight, without regard to the safety of the crew or passengers, any merchant vessel under any flag. As it is not in the power of the German Admiralty to maintain any surface craft in these waters, this attack can only be delivered by submarine agency. . . . A German submarine . . . enjoys no local command of the waters in which she operates. She does not take her captures within the jurisdiction of a prize court. She carries no prize crew which she can put on board a prize. She uses no effective means of discriminating between a neutral and an enemy vessel. She does not receive on board for safety the crew of the vessel she sinks. Her methods of warfare are therefore entirely outside the scope of any of the international instruments regulating operations against commerce in time of war. The German declaration substitutes indiscriminate destruction for regulated capture.

“Germany is adopting these methods against peaceful traders and non-combatant crews with the avowed object of preventing commodities of all kinds (including food for the civil population) from reaching or leaving the British Isles or northern France. Her opponents are, therefore, driven to frame retaliatory measures in order in their turn to prevent commodities of any kind from reaching or leaving Germany. These measures will, however, be enforced by the British and French Governments without risk to neutral ships or to neutral or non-combatant life, and in strict observance of the dictates of humanity. The British and French Governments will therefore hold themselves free to detain and take into port ships carrying goods of presumed enemy destination, ownership, or origin. It is not intended to confiscate such vessels or cargoes unless they would otherwise be liable to condemnation. The treatment of vessels and cargoes which have sailed before this date will not be affected.”

Obviously this policy did not fulfil the conditions of a technical blockade, and the Government did not claim it as such. A complete effective blockade of Germany was impossible. Britain did not control the Baltic, and Sweden and Norway would therefore be in a different position from another

neutral like America. Further, most of the German imports went through neutral ports, and to meet this difficulty Britain had gone far beyond the ordinary blockade. She had proclaimed the right to “detain and take into port ships carrying goods of presumed enemy destination, ownership, or origin.” This was not the old “conditional contraband” and “continuous voyage” question about which she had been arguing with America before Christmas. It was a claim to capture enemy merchandise of the most innocent kind, even when carried in neutral bottoms—a wholesale rejection of the Declaration of Paris. Further, instead of presuming cargoes of conditional contraband to have an innocent destination unless a guilty were proved, she was compelled to presume guilt unless innocence were clearly made out, and the bias of presumption leaned heavily against the possibility of innocence.

These measures, which involved a very comprehensive rewriting of international law, were avowedly “reprisals”<sup>[1]</sup> against Germany. Germany had crashed through the whole system like Alnaschar’s basket. Her methods of waging war, her treatment of civilian inhabitants in France and Belgium, her conduct towards prisoners, her laying of mines on the high seas, her sinking of merchant vessels and crews, her bombardment of undefended towns—the roll was damning enough to justify any reprisals. But the British measure bore heavily upon innocent neutrals, and it is fair to recognize the very grave inconvenience to which a Power like America was put. She did not know where she stood, and it is greatly to her credit that she recognized the novel situation created by German modes of warfare, and did not quibble about the letter of the law. The Allied Governments admitted the difficulty, and did not propose to confiscate the vessels and cargoes detained, unless they were confiscable on the normal grounds of contraband. Whether damages should be paid for detention, or the goods bought by Britain, was left to the Prize Courts and the executive officers. Germany in her blockade intended to sink neutral ships and sacrifice non-combatant lives. The British blockade involved no more than detention. The latter was therefore much less than a blockade, in which it is the custom of the captor to confiscate any blockade runners. As our blockade was technically incomplete, so the penalties we exacted were technically inadequate.

It is difficult to see what other course was possible. The British Government had the courage to frame a novel measure to meet novel conditions, and declined, in the Prime Minister’s words, “to be strangled in a network of juridical niceties.” Germany was out of court, and apart from the justification afforded by her recent conduct, the principles on which Britain acted had been approved by Bismarck, Caprivi, and Bernhardt. To neutrals,

who had a real grievance, she defended her action on the ground of sheer necessity—a necessity which may override the technical provisions but not the eternal principles of international equity. If your opponent breaks the rules of the game it is impossible to remain bound by them without giving him an undue advantage, but an honourable man will not lower himself by adopting the baser kind of trick. She proclaimed a blockade which was not formally perfect according to the text-books, though it was not unlike that proclaimed by the United States in 1861; she justified its formal imperfections by the fact that she was fighting with an enemy who owned no allegiance to any law. Mr. Balfour, on 29th March, published a defence of her action, to which it was hard to see an answer. He asked what international morality required of one belligerent when the other trampled international law in the dust. Clearly the policy of the first must be modified, and those who declared that the crimes of one party should in no way affect the conduct of the other confounded international law and international morality. The obligation of the second was absolute; that of the first only conditional, and one of its conditions was reciprocity. If a state lost all power to enforce obligations or punish the guilty, ought the community to submit tamely and behave as if social conditions were normal? Clearly not; and in the same way in the international world, where the law had no sanctions, if rules were allowed to bind one belligerent and leave the other free they would cease to mitigate suffering, and only load the dice in favour of the unscrupulous. “Let them [neutrals] remember that impotence, like power, has duties as well as privileges; and if they cannot enforce the law on those who violate both its spirit and its letter, let them not make haste to criticize belligerents who may thereby be compelled in self-defence to violate its letter while carefully regarding its spirit.”

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[1] “Reprisals” is a technical term in international law, and has been defined as “retaliation to force an enemy guilty of a certain act of illegitimate warfare to comply with the laws of war” (Oppenheim, II., p. 41). The main rules connected with them are: (1) that they should not be disproportionate to the offence committed by the enemy; and (2) they must respect the laws of humanity and morality.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NAVAL ATTACK ON THE DARDANELLES

The First Hint of an Eastern Diversion—Discussions in the War Council—Lord Kitchener, Lord Fisher, and Mr. Churchill—The Dardanelles—Justification for the Naval Attack—Fortifications of the Straits—The Naval Attack and its Results.

#### I

Towards the close of 1914 the mind of the British Cabinet was much exercised by the deadlock in the West. To some of its members it seemed, in spite of Sir John French's hopefulness, that the German defence was impenetrable except by an attrition so slow that success would entail the bankruptcy of the conqueror. They believed victory to be certain, but wished it to come soon, and would fain have ended the war before the great drafts on Britain's man-power fell due. In this impatience there was a sound strategical instinct. There were no flanks to be turned in France and Flanders, but vulnerable flanks might be found elsewhere. The main gate of the enemy's beleaguered fortress was strongly held, but there were various back doors which might be found unguarded. Above all, they desired to make use of all the assets of Britain, and in the campaign in the West, since Sir John French's scheme of an advance by the coast road had been discarded, there was no direct part which the British navy could play. But in other regions a joint enterprise might be possible, where the sea-power of Britain could be used to decisive purpose. Accordingly, we find during the winter a great scheme-making among Ministers and their technical advisers. Lord Fisher favoured a combined military and naval attack on the Schleswig-Holstein coast, for which he produced a colossal programme of new construction. His aim was to get behind the German right wing on land, and with the assistance of Russia to clear the Baltic. The enterprise seems to have been blessed at various times by Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill, but it faded from the air as it became clear that an immediate attack by Sir John French on a large scale was out of the question. The entry of Turkey into the war convinced the Government that, if a blow was to be struck in a new area, that area must be the Near East. Mr. Lloyd George's fancy dwelt on Salonika. He was anxious, with the co-operation of Greece and Russia, to strike at the flank of the Teutonic League, and for the purpose to transfer a

large British army to Serbia. The scheme was strongly opposed by military opinion, which pointed to the poor communications in Serbia for an advance and the extreme danger of depleting the British front in the West; and, though Lord Kitchener was prepared at one time to agree to a modification of it, the project died when Greece refused her assistance. A third alternative remained, which, compared with the other two, was sane and reasonable—to clear the Dardanelles and strike at Constantinople.



*Press Portrait Bureau*

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL

The Dardanelles campaign is one of the most pitiful, tragic, and glorious episodes in British history. As early as 1st September, Mr. Winston Churchill had suggested to Kitchener the plan of seizing the Dardanelles by means of a Greek army, and so admitting a British fleet to the Sea of Marmora. On 25th November he proposed to the War Council to strike at the Gallipoli peninsula as a feint, but Kitchener decided that the movement was premature. But the matter remained in the minds of the War Council, and during December we find Kitchener discussing with Sir John Maxwell, then commanding in Egypt, the possibility of landing forces at Alexandretta in the Gulf of Iskanderun, to strike at the communications of any Turkish invasion of Egypt. On January 2, 1915, a new complexion was given to things by an appeal for help from Russia, then struggling on the Bzura and in the Caucasus. Kitchener resolved that Russia's request must be met, and next day pledged himself to a demonstration against the Turks, telling Mr. Churchill that he considered the Dardanelles the only likely plan. On the 2nd, too, Lord Fisher had also informed the First Lord that he thought that the attack on Turkey held the field, "but only if it is immediate." Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Vice-Admiral Carden on the 3rd asking if he considered that it was possible to force the Dardanelles by the use of ships alone, and received the answer that they might be forced "by extended operations with a large number of ships." As far back as 1906 the General Staff had reported on this very point and had come to an adverse decision, and Admiral Sir Henry Jackson, whom Mr. Churchill had asked for a memorandum, was no less discouraging. On the 11th, Vice-Admiral Carden telegraphed his plan in detail, and the Admiralty Staff which examined it were more than dubious about its merits. At a meeting of the War Council on the 13th Mr. Churchill explained the Carden scheme, and Kitchener declared that it was worth trying. The Council accordingly instructed the Admiralty to prepare for a naval expedition in February "to bombard and take the Gallipoli peninsula, with Constantinople as its objective."

It is clear that the chief patron of the scheme was Mr. Churchill. His principal naval advisers were either hostile or half-hearted, and assented only on the understanding that in case of failure the attack could instantly be broken off. In the Council itself Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson kept silence, conceiving it to be their duty to answer questions when asked, but not to volunteer advice. But the former, though wavering sometimes between two opinions, was on the whole against the enterprise. He knew a good deal about the subject, having served under Hornby during the Russo-Turkish War when that admiral lay off Constantinople, and having, as First Sea Lord in 1904, fully investigated the whole problem of forcing the

Dardanelles. The more he looked at Mr. Churchill's policy the less he liked it, and on the 25th he wrote to the Prime Minister stating his objections. After a private meeting between Mr. Asquith, Mr. Churchill, and Lord Fisher on the 28th, a War Council was held, in which the First Lord carried his colleagues with him. For a moment it seemed as if Lord Fisher would resign, but he was persuaded to remain, apparently because he thought that the naval attack, even if it failed, need not involve serious losses. But on the feasibility of the operation he was still unconvinced, and he had with him the best naval opinion. Unfortunately, the naval authorities, out of a scrupulous regard for etiquette, left on the minds of the War Council the impression that they were not hostile to the scheme so much upon its technical merits as because they would have preferred a different objective in a totally different region. That appears to have been the view of Mr. Asquith and Lord Kitchener; it cannot have been Mr. Churchill's, who had precise knowledge of the technical naval objections but believed that new developments in gunnery had nullified them, and was prepared to force his opinion against the experts. That day, the 28th of January 1915, the decision to attack the Dardanelles by the fleet alone was finally ratified.

At this point it will be well to pause and consider two points which are vital if we are to form a judgment on the enterprise—the relation of such a plan to the general strategy of the war, and the kind of problem which an unsupported naval attack involved.

In the first place, it is necessary to be clear on the meaning of the terms “subsidiary” and “divergent” operations. The first is properly a term of praise; the second of blame. Every great campaign must produce one or more subsidiary operations. A blow may be necessary at the enemy's line of supply, or a halting neutral may require to have his mind made up for him, or some piece of enemy property, strategically valuable, deserves to be gathered in. Such operations are, strictly speaking, part of the main campaign, and success in them directly subserves the main object of the war. A “divergent” operation, on the contrary, has no relation to the main effort, except that it is directed against the same enemy. Success in it is compatible with utter failure in the chief campaign, and does not necessarily bring the issue one step nearer. It usually involves some wasting of the force available for the main theatre, and it means a certain dissipation of the energy and brain-power of the high commands.

Our history is strewn with the wrecks of divergent operations, and a few instances may make their meaning clear. In the years 1793-94, when it was

our business to scotch the Revolutionary Government of France by striking at its head, we set out on adventures in every quarter of the globe. We took six West Indian islands—strategically as important as the North Pole; we landed in Haiti; we sent a force under the Duke of York to the Netherlands; we held Toulon as long as we could; we seized Corsica; we sent an expedition to La Vendée. The consequence was that we succeeded nowhere, and the Revolutionary Government at the end of that time was stronger than ever. Next year, 1795, while things were going badly for us on other battlegrounds, we chose to send an expedition to Cape Town, to attack Demerara, and to make a disastrous landing on an island in Quiberon Bay. And so we continued to indulge our passion for outlandish geography, while France grew in strength and the star of Napoleon rose above the horizon. Take the year 1807. We sent a force under Sir Hume Popham to the Cape, which proceeded to South America, took Buenos Aires, and presently lost it. We projected an expedition to Valparaiso, and another against Mexico. These ventures, as a matter of fact, were utter failures; but had they been successful they would have in no way helped the main purpose of the war. For in Europe Napoleon was moving from strength to strength. Eighteen hundred and seven was the year of Friedland and of the Treaty of Tilsit.

Let us attempt to set down the principles which govern legitimate subsidiary operations, and separate them from the illegitimate divergent type. There is first the question of locality. Obviously it is not necessary that the minor campaign should be fought in the same area as the major. Wellington wore down the strength of the French in the Peninsula, though the main theatre of war, the place where the big stake lay, was central Europe. In the American Civil War the eyes of the world were fixed on the lines of the Potomac, but the real centre of gravity was Vicksburg and the operations on the Mississippi. Nor, again, is it necessary that even the major campaign should be fought in or adjoining the enemy's home country. In the Seven Years' War France was conquered at Plassey and at Quebec, because it was for an overseas empire, for the domination of India and America, that the combatants fought. The locality of a subsidiary operation matters nothing, provided—and this is the first principle—the operation directly subserves the main object of the war. In other words, the operation, if successful, must be profitable. In the second place, there must be a reasonable chance of success. A subsidiary operation, thoroughly justified by general strategy, may be a blunder if it is undertaken with forces too weak to surmount the difficulties. If the force is not strong enough to effect the object, then, however desirable the object, the force would have been better left at home. Thirdly, any force used for the subsidiary operation must

not seriously weaken the operations in the main theatre, unless the former operation is so vital that in itself it becomes the centre of gravity of the campaign.

Waterloo is rightly regarded as one of the decisive battles of the world, but the Allies at Waterloo won by a very narrow margin. At the time Wellington's seasoned veterans of the Peninsula were for the most part involved in the woods and swamps of the Canadian frontier. That was inevitable; but had they been sent there as part of a strategic purpose with the European situation what it was on Napoleon's return from Elba it would have exactly illustrated the danger we are discussing. In the present war it was clear from the start that Germany must be conquered in Europe, and that the main campaign must be that on the lines from the North Sea to the Alps, and from the Baltic to the Bukovina. Germany had set the battle plan, and her antagonists could not choose but accept the challenge. Any weakening of these lines so as to compromise their strength for the sake of a subsidiary operation was clearly inadvisable by all the principles of war.

Whether the Dardanelles expedition violated the second and the third of these canons will be discussed in due course. But the application of the first—the value of the objective sought, and its relation to the central purpose of the Allies—can be made clear by a few general considerations. What were the ends to be attained by the forcing of the Dardanelles?

The Sea of Marmora and the winding straits that link it with the Ægean and the Euxine form a water frontier of some two hundred miles between Asia and Europe. These straits are of the utmost importance to Turkey. Against a naval Power like Britain or France they were the last defence of the capital, and that capital, more than any other great city of the world, was the palladium of the Power which had its seat there. It was almost all that was left to the race of Osman of their once splendid European possessions. It had been the base for those proud expeditions against Vienna and the Hungarian plains when Turkey was still a conquering Power. It had been the prize for which her neighbours had lusted, and which she had still retained against all rivals. It was, in a real sense, the sign visible of Turkey's existence as a sovereign state. If Constantinople fell Turkey would fall, and the doom of the capital was sealed so soon as the Allied battleships, with their communications secure behind them, entered the Sea of Marmora.

The strategic importance of the forcing of the Dardanelles in a war with Turkey was therefore clear beyond all doubt. But in how far would the fall of Constantinople influence the decision of the main European conflict? In the first place, it would to some extent simplify Russia's problem, and

release troops for Poland and Galicia. There was the possibility that a mere threat to the capital might lead to a revolution which would overthrow the shaky edifice of Enver's rule. The bulk of the Turkish people did not share the passion for Germany felt by the Committee of Union and Progress, and advices from Constantinople during those days seemed to point to the imminence of a rising which would make a clean sweep of the Young Turk party and restore the Sultan to his old place at the side of France and Britain. Again, the opening of the passage between the Black Sea and the Ægean would give Russia the means for exporting her accumulated wheat supplies. The lack of these was increasing the cost of bread in western Europe, and the restriction of Russian exports had made the rate of exchange set violently against her, so that she was paying in some cases thirty times the normal price for her foreign purchases. She also stood in sore need of a channel for the entrance of war munitions. Archangel had been closed since January, the trans-Siberian line was a costly and circuitous route for all but her imports from Japan, while entries by Norway and Sweden were at the best precarious. But the main strategic value of the Dardanelles plan lay in its effect upon hesitating neutrals. Italy at the moment was still in the valley of indecision, and the downfall of Turkey and its influence upon the Balkan States would impel her to action. Turkey's defeat would have an effect upon the Balkan position like the addition of a new chemical to a compound—it would leave none of the constituents unaltered.



*Stanford, London*

### THE BALKAN AREA

Greece, Rumania, and Bulgaria all had national interests and purposes which compelled them to keep a watchful eye on each other, and which

made it difficult for any one of them to move without its neighbour. Bulgaria, who had borne the heavy end of the Turkish campaign, had lost the prize of victory. Three compacts had been violated to her hurt, and she was deeply distrustful of all the Great Powers, and especially of Russia. German financiers had befriended her in 1913, when France and Britain had stood aside, and her Stambolobists had always looked to Austria as their ally. A secret treaty with Austria had indeed been concluded a month after the outbreak of the war. With Greece and Serbia—especially with the latter—she had a bitter quarrel over the delimitation of territory after the Balkan wars, and she had little cause to forget Rumania's intervention. At the same time her geographical position made it highly perilous for her to join the Teutonic League, unless its victory were assured. Her attitude was therefore a circumspect neutrality; but the first Allied guns that spoke in the Sea of Marmora would compel her to a decision.

With Bulgaria decided, Greece and Rumania would soon follow suit. Rumania was faced with a complex situation from which she was slowly disentangling herself under the pressure of events. If her southern frontiers were safe it seemed likely that she would make her choice, and her geographical situation and her well-equipped army of nearly half a million would make her an invaluable ally. Greece in such circumstances could not stand apart. With Turkey out of action and the Balkans united on the Allies' side, the most critical part of the main campaign—the long front of Russia—would be greatly eased. When the Italian guns sounded on the Isonzo and the Rumanian force took the Austrian right wing in flank, the balance against Russian arms might be redressed.

In a speech made later in the year Mr. Churchill defined the prize at which he aimed: "Beyond those four miles of ridge and scrub on which our soldiers, our French comrades, our gallant Australian and New Zealand fellow-subjects are now battling, lie the downfall of a hostile empire, the destruction of an enemy's fleet and army, the fall of a world-famous capital, and probably the accession of powerful allies. The struggle will be heavy, the risks numerous, the losses cruel; but victory when it comes will make amends for all. There never was a great subsidiary operation of war in which a more complete harmony of strategic, political, and economic advantages has combined, or which stood in truer relation to the main decision which is in the central theatre. Through the Narrows of the Dardanelles and across the ridges of the Gallipoli peninsula lie some of the shortest paths to a triumphant peace." The language may have been over-coloured, but substantially the claim was just. A Dardanelles expedition directly subserved the main object of the war. An attack by ships alone, an attack that in case of

failure could be promptly suspended, would not, it may fairly be argued, have weakened the Allies' strength in the main theatre, though Kitchener may well have reflected that in the East it was not wise for Britain to put her hand to the plough and then turn back. It remains to consider whether the enterprise fulfilled the third of the conditions of a wise subsidiary operation: whether the plan gave a reasonable chance of success.

A naval attack on the Dardanelles without the co-operation of a military force would be a battle of ships against forts, and it had long been widely held by experts that in such a contest the advantage would lie with the forts. This conclusion was so generally accepted that during the Spanish-American War the United States Navy Department repeatedly warned the admirals that battleships and heavy cruisers must not be risked in close-range action with forts. All that the navy ventured upon was a long-range bombardment of the Spanish coast fortifications, attacks that were little more than demonstrations, for no serious attempt was made to silence the land batteries. A few guns mounted on Socapa Point at Santiago, and very badly served, were sufficient to prevent Admiral Sampson from risking a close attack. It was the same in the Russo-Japanese War. Admiral Togo never risked his battleships and cruisers in a close attack on the sea batteries of Port Arthur. There were occasional long-range bombardments with no result, and the reduction of the fortress was due to the attack by land. Similarly Tsing-tau in the present war fell not to Admiral Kato's squadron, but to General Kamio's army.

It might be said, however, that though ships were not likely to silence forts, forts could not prevent ships running past them. The argument was not relevant to the case of the Dardanelles, where in the long run not only a passage, but the occupation of the passage, was necessary, as Hornby found in 1878. But in any case it was unsound, for the development of submarine mines and torpedo warfare had made it all but impossible to evade the fort. A mine-field in a channel, protected by a few well-mounted guns, with searchlights and quick-firers to prevent mine-sweeping by night, was for a fleet a practically impassable barrier. The mine-field could not be disposed of until the fort had been destroyed.

Such being the accepted doctrine among naval and military students of the question, it may well be asked why the scheme of forcing the Dardanelles by a naval attack alone was ever accepted by the British Government. It was known that very high naval authority was opposed to it; it was equally true that certain naval authorities approved of it, and that Mr.

Churchill was its impassioned advocate. On what grounds? There was an idea abroad that new conditions had been introduced into the problem, and there was the usual tendency to exaggerate the effect of a new weapon. The Dreadnought, the long-range gun, the submarine, had each been hailed as about to revolutionize warfare. It was presumed that the huge high-explosive shells of the modern warship would make land batteries untenable, not by silencing their guns one by one, but by acting like flying mines, the explosion of which would shatter the defences and produce a panic among the gunners. Once the forts were thus temporarily overcome, landing-parties would complete the task, the mine-fields would be cleared, and the passage be won. It was also anticipated that with the long range of the newest naval guns the forts could be bombarded from a distance at which their own armament would be ineffective. The notion was that the outer forts at the entrance to the Straits could be silenced by the converging fire of a number of ships from the open sea, while the attack on the inner forts would be carried on by individual fire from ships in the Gulf of Saros, which, with airplanes to direct them, would send their shells over the hills of the Gallipoli peninsula. These two factors—aerial reconnaissance and the increased range of naval guns—were believed to have changed the whole conditions of the enterprise.

It would be unfair to say that there was no colour for this forecast. But it erred in strangely neglecting and underestimating other factors in the situation, and in unduly simplifying the problem. It was not a mere question of a duel between the guns of the fleet and those of the permanent fortifications. Had it been, there would have been much to be said for the optimistic view. But the defences of the Dardanelles had been organized on a system which took the fullest advantage of natural features, and was based on past experience and a scientific knowledge of modern warfare. It was no improvised Turkish expedient, but the work of the German General Staff. It contemplated an attack, not only by a fleet, but by a large military force acting in conjunction. When, therefore, the Allies, to the surprise of their enemies, decided upon a mere naval attack, the problem of the defence was immensely simplified.

To appreciate the difficulties of the attack we must consider briefly the topography of the Straits. Their northern shore is formed by the peninsula of Gallipoli, a tongue of land some fifty miles long, which varies in width from twelve to two or three miles. The country is a mass of rocky ridges rising to a height of over 700 feet from the sea. The hills are so steep and sharply cut that to reach their tops is in many places a matter of sheer climbing. There was little cultivation; there were few villages, and no properly engineered

roads. Most of the land was covered with a dense scrub from three to six feet high, with stunted forests in the hollows. Communications were so bad that the usual way from village to village was not by land, but by boat along the inner or outer coast. At the head of the Dardanelles, on the European side, lay the town and harbour of Gallipoli, the headquarters of the naval defence of the Straits. The southern shore is also hilly. Near the entrance on the Asiatic side there is the flat and marshy plain of Troy, which is bounded on the east by hills running to 3,000 feet. On both sides the high ground overhangs the sea passage, and on the north side for about twelve miles the hills form a line of cliffs, with narrow half-moons of beach at the base, and here and there a stream making a gully in the rampart. As everywhere in the Mediterranean, there is practically no tide, but a strong current, rising to four knots, sets continuously down the Straits from the Sea of Marmora. North-easterly winds are prevalent, and before the days of steam these often closed the passage for weeks at a time to ingoing traffic.

There were two groups of forts. The first was at the entrance—on the north side, Cape Helles and Sedd-el-Bahr, with one or two adjacent batteries; on the opposite shore, Kum Kale and Orkanieh. None of these forts were heavily armed, for it was recognized that in any case they would be at a disadvantage against a long-range attack from a fleet in the open sea. The entrance forts were merely the outposts of the real defence. The second group was at the Narrows. Fourteen miles from the mouth the Straits close in to a width of about three-quarters of a mile. Up to this point their general course has been from south-west to north-east, but now the channel makes a short turn directly northward before resuming its original direction. There is thus within a distance of a few miles a sharp double bend, and guns placed in position at the water's edge could cross their fire against ships ascending the Straits, which would also be brought under end-on fire from guns at the top of the Narrows. At the entrance to the Narrows were the forts of Chanak, or Sultanieh Kalessi, on the Asiatic side, and Kilid Bahr, on the European. The slopes above the latter were studded with batteries, some commanding the approach to the Narrows, others commanding the seaway towards Gallipoli. Along both sides, but especially between Chanak and Nagara, the low ground was lined with batteries. It was possible to attack the forts at the entrance to the Narrows at fairly long range from the wider channel below the bend, but there was no room to bring any large number of ships into action at the same time. Once the entrance was passed all fighting must be at close range.



*Stanford, London*

## GALLIPOLI PENINSULA

But the strength of the defence did not depend only on the batteries. An attacking fleet had other weapons to face besides the guns. There was first

the obstruction of the channel by submarine mines. To get rid of these by sweeping was nearly impossible, for the light vessels, which alone could be employed, had to face not only the fire of the forts but that of mobile guns on the higher ground. Again, the descending current could be used to send down drift-mines upon the attacking ships. The artillery defence was further supplemented by howitzer batteries on the heights, difficult to locate, easy to move if located, and therefore almost impossible to silence. It was clear that a fleet endeavouring to force a channel thus defended was at the gravest disadvantage. There was only one way to complete success—the co-operation of a land army. By that means there was a chance of gaining possession of the heights behind the forts, attacking them in reverse, assisting the fleet to silence them, and then destroying the mine-field. Only a landing force, too, could deal with the mobile batteries.

It is a simple matter to be wise after the event, and it is easy to judge a military problem pedantically, without allowing for the chances of war. Every operation is to some extent a gamble, even after all the unknown quantities seem to have been determined. History showed a clear verdict on the handicap of a contest between ships and forts, without the assistance of a land army. History, too, showed that to pass the Dardanelles was a perilous achievement, unless the invader held the Gallipoli peninsula, and so could secure his supplies and his retreat. But it is permissible sometimes to defy history and create new precedents—laudable if the attempt succeeds, excusable if it fails. The attack by ships alone cannot be fairly classed as a divergent operation. Even if the weight of historical evidence was against success, there were new features in the problem not yet assessed, and on account of that unknown  $x$  and of the extreme value of the prize to be won even a prudent statesman might have felt justified in taking the odd chance. Again, the question of keeping open the communications behind was not so vital as in Hornby's day, for a fleet which passed the Dardanelles could pass the undefended Bosphorus, join up with the Russians in the Black Sea, and find a new base at Odessa or Sebastopol. We must judge the mind of the originators by the knowledge which they possessed in January, not by the damning revelations of March. The chief responsibility for the naval attempt must rest with Mr. Churchill, and it seems fair to conclude that that attempt, since it seemed possible to make it with a strictly limited liability, was a legitimate venture of war.

## II

On November 3, 1914, an Anglo-French squadron had appeared at the Dardanelles and for ten minutes bombarded the forts at the entrance. The

order had been given by the British Admiralty, and the purpose seems to have been to draw the fire of the forts and ascertain if they possessed long-range guns. Such premature action was a blunder, for it put the enemy on the alert, and during the three months that followed no further step was taken, though by the end of January 1915 the island of Tenedos had been seized, while Greece tolerated the use of Lemnos, where the great inlet of Mudros supplied a valuable base for naval operations. By the middle of February a considerable naval force, French and British, had been concentrated at the entrance to the Straits. With two exceptions, the larger British ships were of the pre-Dreadnought class; but there were also present the *Inflexible*, which had been in the Battle of the Falkland Islands, and the new super-Dreadnought, the *Queen Elizabeth*. The latter belonged to the most recent and most powerful class of battleship in the world. She was one of a group of five which, when war began, were still in the builders' hands, and in the ordinary course she would not have been commissioned till the late summer of 1915. Her main armament was made up of eight 15-inch guns, so mounted as to give a fire of four guns ahead or astern, and of the whole eight on either side.

The operations against the outer forts began on Friday, 19th February. The ships engaged were the *Inflexible*, *Agamemnon*, *Cornwallis*, *Vengeance*, and *Triumph*—British; and the *Bouvet*, *Suffren*, and *Gaulois*—French; covered by a flotilla of destroyers.<sup>[1]</sup> The naval force was under the command of Vice-Admiral Sackville Carden, and the French squadron was under Rear-Admiral Guépratte. Behind the battle-line lay the new mother-ship for seaplanes, the *Ark Royal*, named after Howard's flagship in the war with the Spanish Armada. From her aircraft were sent up to watch the fire of the battleships and signal the result. The action began at 8 a.m. It was clear that the forts at Cape Helles, on the point of the peninsula, and at Kum Kale, on the opposite shore, were frequently hit, and at times seemed to be smothered in bursting shells. It was harder to make out what was happening to the low earthworks of the batteries about Sedd-el-Bahr. All morning the bombardment continued; it was like target practice, for not a single shot was fired in reply. Admiral Carden came to the conclusion that the forts had been seriously damaged, and at a quarter to three in the afternoon gave the order to close in. What followed showed that aerial observation of long-range fire was no easy matter. As the ships steamed nearer, the hitherto silent and apparently destroyed forts began to shoot. They made bad practice, for no one of the six ships that had shortened range was hit. By sundown the European batteries were quiet again, but Kum Kale was still firing, when, on account of the failing light, Admiral Carden withdrew the fleet.

For some days there was bad weather, but by the morning of Thursday, 25th February, it had sufficiently improved for operations to be resumed. At 10 a.m. on that day the *Queen Elizabeth*, *Agamemnon*, and *Irresistible*,<sup>[2]</sup> and the French battleship *Gaulois*, renewed the long-range bombardment of the outer forts. It was clear that these had not been seriously damaged by the action of the 19th, and what injury had been done had been repaired in the interval. Once again the four forts, Sedd-el-Bahr, Cape Helles, Kum Kale, and Orkanieh, were attacked. Of these the first mounted six 10.2-inch guns, the second two 9.2-inch, the third four 10.2-inch and two 5.9-inch, and the fourth two 9.2-inch. Against the sixteen heavy guns of the forts the four ships brought into action twenty pieces heavier than anything mounted on the land, including the 15-inch guns of the *Queen Elizabeth*, the most powerful weapon ever used in naval war. The forts were thus greatly outmatched, and the long range of the *Queen Elizabeth's* guns enabled her to come into the fight at a distance where nothing from the land could possibly touch her. In an hour and a half the *Queen Elizabeth* and the *Agamemnon* had silenced the Cape Helles guns, but not before these had hit the latter ship, a shell fired at a range of six miles bursting on board her, with a loss of three men killed and five wounded. This was the only casualty suffered during the first stage of the bombardment. At 11.30 a.m. the *Vengeance* and *Cornwallis* came into action, and, running into close range, silenced the lighter armament of the Cape Helles battery. The attack on the Asiatic forts was at the same time reinforced by two of the French ships, the *Suffren* and the *Charlemagne*, which poured in a heavy fire at a range of only 2,000 yards. Early in the afternoon the *Triumph* and the *Albion*<sup>[3]</sup> attacked Sedd-el-Bahr at close range. It said much for the courage and discipline of the Turkish artillerymen that, though they faced overwhelming odds, their last gun was not silenced till after 5 p.m.

Little daylight remained, but, covered by the battleships and destroyers, a number of North Sea trawlers at once set to work to sweep for mines in the entrance. The work was resumed next morning at sunrise, and the mine-field was cleared for a distance of four miles up the Straits. Then the *Albion*, *Vengeance*, and *Majestic*<sup>[4]</sup> steamed in between the headlands, and opened a long-range fire on Fort Dardanos, a work on the Asiatic side some distance below the Narrows. It was not heavily armed, its best guns being four 5.9 Krupps. As the battleships opened fire, a reply came not only from Dardanos but from several unlocated batteries at various points along the shore. The Turkish fire, however, did little harm, and we were able to attack the rear of the entrance forts and drive off several bodies of Turkish troops. One party near Kum Kale was driven across the bridge near the mouth of the river

Mendere (the ancient Simois), and the bridge itself destroyed by shell fire. We believed that by this time the Turks had everywhere been forced to abandon the defences at the entrance, and landing parties of Royal Marines were sent ashore with explosives to complete the destruction of the guns in the forts. This they successfully accomplished, but near Kum Kale they encountered a detachment of the enemy, and, after a hot skirmish, had to fall back to their boats with a few casualties. On such slender basis the Turkish bulletins built up a report of landing-parties everywhere repulsed with heavy loss. At this date it is clear that the Turks had nothing in the way of defences on the Gallipoli peninsula, apart from the shore forts.

The result of the day's operations was that we had cleared the entrance to the Straits. This was the easiest part of the problem, and only the beginning of the formidable task assigned to the Allied fleets. The real defence of the Dardanelles—the forts at the Narrows—had not been touched. Nevertheless, with that misleading optimism which has done so much to paralyse national effort, the press of France and Britain wrote as if the fall of the outer forts had decided the fate of Constantinople. In that city at the moment there was undoubtedly something of a panic among civilians, but the German and Turkish Staffs were in the best of spirits. They were greatly comforted by the time it had taken the powerful Allied fleet to destroy the outer forts, and they believed that the inner forts were impregnable. There long-range attacks would be impossible; no large number of ships could be brought simultaneously into action, and drifting mines and torpedoes could be used to supplement the artillery defence. Enver, not usually partial to the truth, was for once in a way correct when he told a correspondent: "The real defence of the Straits is yet to come. That lies where the difficult waterway deprives ships of their power to manœuvre freely, and obliges them to move in a narrow defile commanded by artillery and mines."



*Sport & General*

ADMIRAL SACKVILLE CARDEN

For a few days there were strong northerly winds, but in spite of the rough weather the mine-sweepers continued their work below the Narrows. On Thursday, 4th March, the battleships were again in action. Some attacked the forts inside the Straits, Dardanos and Soghandere, and a French cruiser in the Gulf of Saros demolished a look-out station at Cape Gaba Tepe. Among the ships engaged were the *Ocean* and the *Lord Nelson*.<sup>[5]</sup> A landing-party of Royal Marines near Kum Kale were driven back to their boats by a superior Turkish force with the relatively large loss of 22 killed, 22 wounded, and 3 missing. On 5th March there was a demonstration against

Smyrna, a British and French detachment, under Vice-Admiral Peirse, bombarding the outer forts. The attack was not pushed, and was only intended to induce Enver to keep a considerable force in that neighbourhood.

On 6th March the weather was again fine, with a smooth sea, and a preliminary attempt was made on the Narrows forts. On the preceding day some of the ships had entered the Straits and drawn the fire of the forts at Kilid Bahr. There was an explosion in one of them, and after that it ceased firing. On the morning of the 6th the *Vengeance*, *Albion*, *Majestic*, *Prince George*,<sup>[6]</sup> and *Suffren* steamed into the Straits and attacked the forts on both sides just below the Narrows. The fire was chiefly directed against Dardanos on the Asiatic, and Soghandere on the European shore—works which may be regarded as the outposts of the main Narrows defence. The attacking ships were struck repeatedly by shells, but no serious damage was done, and there was no loss of life. This attack from inside the Straits was, however, a secondary operation. The main attack, from which great results were expected, was made by the *Queen Elizabeth*, *Agamemnon*, and *Ocean* from the Gulf of Saros, on the outer side of the Gallipoli peninsula. Lying off the point of Gaba Tepe, they sent their shells over the intervening hills, with airplanes directing their fire. Their target was two of the forts at Chanak, on the Asiatic side of the Narrows, about twelve miles off. These forts had a very heavy armament, including 14-inch guns, and it was hoped to destroy them by indirect fire, to which they had no means of replying. The Turks replied from various points on the heights of the peninsula with well-concealed howitzers and field guns, and three shells struck the *Queen Elizabeth*.

Next day, 7th March, the attack was renewed. The *Agamemnon* and *Lord Nelson*, firing at a range of from 12,000 to 14,000 yards, supported by four French battleships, the *Bouvet*, *Charlemagne*, *Gaulois*, and *Suffren*, attacked from inside the Straits and engaged the forts on both sides of the Narrows. Chanak, which the *Queen Elizabeth* had been trying to demolish the day before, brought its heavy guns into action. The *Gaulois*, *Agamemnon*, and *Lord Nelson* were hit several times, but we believed that we had put the forts below Chanak and Kilid Bahr out of action. Subsequent experience showed that it was a difficult matter permanently to silence forts. Under the heavy fire of the ships it was hard to keep the guns constantly in action, not so much on account of any serious damage, but because the batteries were flooded with stifling vapours from the shells, and it was necessary to withdraw the men until the air cleared. Further, the defenders had been ordered to economize ammunition, and to reserve their fire for the closer

attack which they believed would follow. The fact, therefore, that a fort ceased firing was no proof that it had been really silenced. Again and again during these operations we heard of forts being silenced which next day or a few days after could bring most of their guns into action.

The following week saw nothing but minor operations. On the 10th an attempt was made to shell the Bulair defences at long range, and the British warships shelled some new batteries of light guns which the Turks had established near Morto Bay, on the European side of the entrance to the Straits. The Turkish Government sent out a report that the Allied fleets had been unsuccessfully bombarding the defences at Sedd-el-Bahr and Kum Kale. The Allied press treated this as an impudent fiction, and pointed out that the forts there had been destroyed many days before. But the Turkish communiqué told the truth. We had destroyed the forts, but we had not occupied the ground on both sides of the entrance. The Turks had accordingly entrenched themselves strongly near the ruins and mounted guns, and these we attacked on 10th and 11th March.

At that time, misled by the optimism of the newspapers, the ordinary man in France and Britain counted with certainty on the speedy news that our fleet was steaming through the Sea of Marmora on the way to Constantinople. When tidings came that the light cruiser *Amethyst* had on 15th March made a dash into the Narrows, he believed that the Turkish defence had collapsed. The *Amethyst's* enterprise was part of a mine-sweeping expedition, and also a daring reconnaissance in which the little ship drew the fire of the upper forts. She got but a short way, and lost heavily in the attempt. But her exploit, magnified through Greek channels, made the world believe that the Narrows defences had been seriously damaged, and that the time was ripe for a determined effort to force a passage. The combined fleet had now grown to a formidable strength, and included a Russian cruiser, the *Askold*, which appeared on 3rd March. Vice-Admiral Carden had been compelled by ill-health to relinquish the command, and Vice-Admiral John Michael de Robeck succeeded him.

The great effort was made on Thursday, 18th March. It was a bright, clear day, with a light wind and a calm sea. At a quarter to eleven in the forenoon the *Agamemnon*, *Lord Nelson*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Inflexible*, *Triumph*, and *Prince George* steamed up the Straits towards the Narrows. The first four ships engaged the forts of Chanak and the battery on the point opposite, while the *Triumph* and *Prince George* kept the batteries lower down occupied by firing at Soghandere, Dardanos, and Kephez Point. After the bombardment had lasted for an hour and a half, during which the ships

were fired upon not only by the forts but by howitzers and field guns on the heights, the French squadron, *Bouvet*, *Charlemagne*, *Gaulois*, and *Suffren*, came into action, steaming in to attack the forts at short range. Under the combined fire of the ten ships the forts once more ceased firing. A third squadron then entered the Straits to push the attack further. This was made up of six British battleships, the *Albion*, *Irresistible*, *Majestic*, *Ocean*, *Swiftsure*,<sup>[7]</sup> and *Vengeance*. As they steered towards Chanak the four French ships were withdrawn in order to make room for them in the narrow waters. But in the process of this change all the forts suddenly began to fire again, which showed that none of them had been seriously damaged. According to Turkish accounts, only one big gun had been dismantled.

Then came the first disaster of the day. The French squadron was moving down to the open water inside the Straits, being still under fire from the inner forts. Three large shells struck the *Bouvet* almost simultaneously, and immediately after there was a loud explosion, and she was hidden in a cloud of smoke. The first impression was that she had been seriously damaged by shell fire, but her real wound was got from one of the mines which the Turks were now sending down with the current. They had waited to begin this new attack till the narrow waterway was full of ships. As the smoke cleared, the *Bouvet* was seen to be heeling over. She sank in three minutes in thirty-six fathoms of water, carrying with her most of her crew.

The attack on the forts continued as long as the light lasted. The minesweepers had been brought up the Straits in order to clear the passage in front, and to look out for drift-mines. An hour and a half after the *Bouvet* sank, the *Irresistible* turned out of the fighting line with a heavy list. She also had been struck by a mine, but she floated for more than an hour, and the destroyers took off nearly all her crew—a dangerous task, for they were the target all the time of Turkish fire. She sank at ten minutes to six, and a quarter of an hour later another drift-mine struck the *Ocean*. The latter sank almost as quickly as the *Bouvet*, but the destroyers were on the alert, and saved most of her crew. Several of the other ships had suffered damage and loss of life from the Turkish guns. The *Gaulois* had been repeatedly hit; her upper works were seriously injured, and a huge rent had been torn in her bows. The *Inflexible* had been struck by a heavy shell, which killed and wounded the majority of the men and officers in her fire-control station, and set her on fire forward.

As the sun set most of the forts were still in action, and during the short twilight the Allied fleet slipped out of the Dardanelles. The great attack on

the Narrows had failed—failed, with the loss of three battleships and the better part of a thousand men.

At first it was the intention of Admiral de Robeck to continue the attack, and the British Admiralty assented. But on 19th March Sir Ian Hamilton, who had seen part of the action, telegraphed to Kitchener that he had been reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the Dardanelles could not be forced by battleships alone, and by the 22nd De Robeck had come round to the same opinion. Lord Fisher felt himself bound to accept the view of the admiral on the spot, and though Mr. Churchill, supported by some of the younger naval officers, pressed for a renewal of the attack, he was compelled to bow to the opinion of his professional advisers. On the information at the disposal of the British Government it is hard to see what other course was open to them except to withdraw the fleet. Even if the enemy was running short of ammunition, the forts were sufficiently intact to protect the mine-field, and the mine-field barred the road for the great ships. Of the Allied fleet of sixteen battleships three had been sunk and four disabled long before they had come to the hardest part of their task. It is idle to discuss whether, had the action been persisted in even at the cost of more ships, the Turkish defence would have crumbled. Such discussions belong to the realm of pure hypothesis, and statesmen without a gift of prophecy must be content to decide on the gross and patent facts before them. Undoubtedly the Turks were gravely alarmed, and certain sections of the defence were ready to despair. But it is not less indubitable that, had the fleets attacked again, there would have been a stubborn resistance and such losses as would have left too weak a naval force for the joint operation now under contemplation. It was a gamble which no responsible Government could have justified to its people.<sup>[8]</sup>

A month later the attempt on the Dardanelles was renewed, but the part played by the navy was henceforth subsidiary to that of the army, and the rest of this story—unsurpassed, for its heroism and tragedy, in the history of Britain—cannot be recorded here.

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- [1] *Inflexible*—17,250 tons, eight 12-inch guns, sixteen 4-inch guns; *Agamemnon*—16,750 tons, four 12-inch guns, ten 9.2-inch guns; *Cornwallis*—14,000 tons, four 12-inch guns, twelve 6-inch guns; *Vengeance*—12,050 tons, four 12-inch guns, twelve 6-inch guns; *Triumph*—11,980 tons, four 10-inch guns, fourteen 7.5-inch guns; *Bouvet*—12,200 tons, two 12-inch guns, two 10.8-inch guns, eight 5.5-inch guns, eight 4-inch guns; *Suffren*, 12,730 tons, four 12-inch guns, ten 6.4-inch guns; *Gaulois*—11,260 tons, four 12-inch guns, ten 5.5 inch guns.
- [2] 15,000 tons, four 12-inch and twelve 6-inch guns.
- [3] 12,950 tons, four 12-inch guns, twelve 6-inch.
- [4] The oldest battleship type in the navy; 14,900 tons, four 12-inch guns, twelve 6-inch.
- [5] A sister ship of the *Agamemnon*—16,500 tons, four 12-inch guns, ten 9.2-inch.
- [6] A sister ship of the *Majestic*.
- [7] A sister ship of the *Triumph*—11,980 tons, four 10-inch, fourteen 7.6-inch guns.
- [8] For Enver's reported view see Dardanelles Commission (Cd. 8490), p. 40. Cf. also Morgenthau's *Secrets of the Bosphorus*, chaps. xvii.-xviii.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SUBMARINE MENACE: 1915

Tirpitz's Plan—The Allied and German Losses at Sea—The German Submarine Campaign—The *Baralong* Incident.

The Battle of the Dogger Bank was fought on January 24, 1915. Had any one on that day prophesied that a year would elapse without another naval action he would have found few anywhere to accept his forecast, and none in the British navy. Our sailors looked confidently for many German raids which should culminate in the appearance of the High Seas Fleet. But the year was one of watching and waiting. Battleships were, indeed, employed in the luckless Gallipoli venture, and suffered many losses; but that was not the engagement of ships with ships, but of ships against forts and land entrenchments. Our armed auxiliaries scoured the seas and controlled neutral traffic; our mine-sweepers were busy at their thankless task from the Pentland Firth to the Channel, from the Shetlands to the Scillies; our gunboats and patrol boats hunted submarines in many waters, from the North Sea to the Dardanelles; our cruiser squadrons kept tireless watch, sweeping the sea by night and day; but our battle-cruisers and capital ships still waited for the chance that did not come. We were paying the penalty of the success we had won in the first six months of war. The enemy was driven to fight with small arms, and not with his great guns, and the warfare he chose was waged in secret and in the dark. We were condemned to the offensive-defensive, as troops who have carried a vital position are compelled to consolidate their ground and thrust back the counter-attack. Hence for that year the history of the war at sea was a history of losses. We were repelling the enemy's assault, and for the most part waging war in our own country rather than carrying it into his.

The German submarine campaign was not ill-conceived. It failed, but it was not futile. As planned by the Great General Staff, it showed a shrewd perception of the economic vulnerability of Britain. In the long run, they argued, it was only the merchant shipping of the world, whether owned by Allies or neutrals, which could checkmate Germany's scheme of conquest. It alone could enable her enemies to perfect their equipment, and create a fighting machine equal to her own. Germany had lost her mercantile marine, but then it was less vital to her purpose. If the Allied shipping could be

seriously crippled, there might arise this quandary: either Britain must curtail her military operations, which demanded many ships, or she would find her revenues shrinking seriously from lack of trade, and her population gravely distressed from shortage of food and the vast increase of prices. The Allies were using some 3,000 merchant vessels for the purposes of war; and if Germany could make heavy inroads on the remainder she might effect a true naval success without the sacrifice of one battleship.

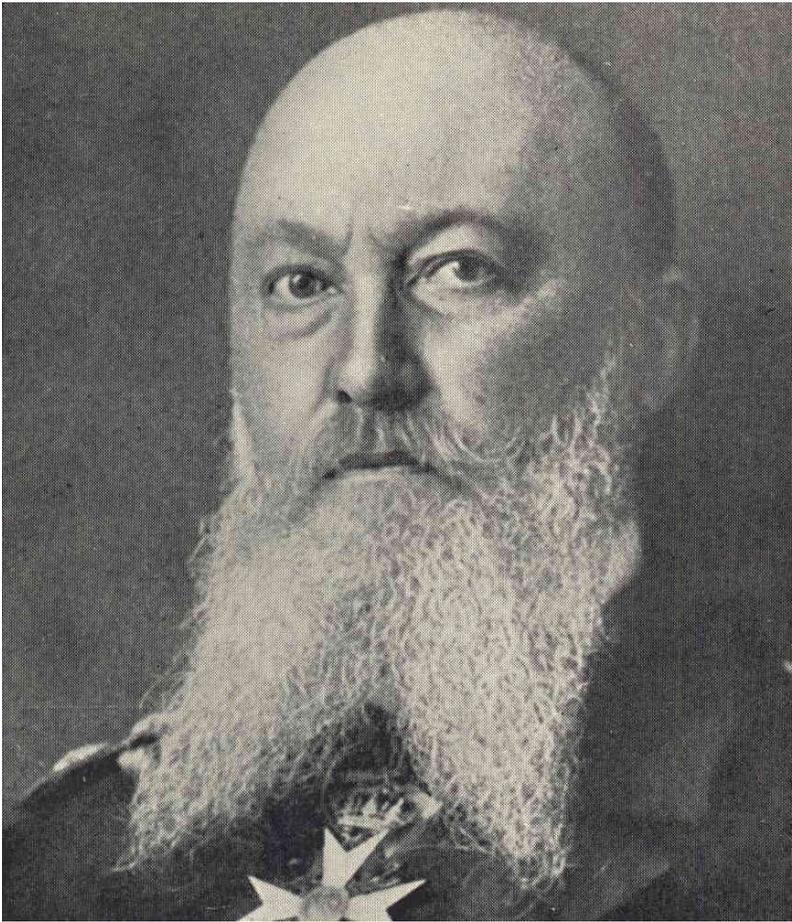
In framing this policy she counted upon two possibilities, which failed. She was using as weapons the mine and the submarine, to which there had up to date been no effective antidote devised. She hoped, therefore, to create a panic among Allied seamen, so that merchantmen would limit their activities at the mere threat of danger. She believed, too, that the British Admiralty would be slow to discover any means of defence and reprisal. In both forecasts she was wrong. There was no panic, and our navy speedily organized a counter-campaign. But the merit of her scheme was that when the thoughts of the Allies dwelt chiefly on armies and navies, she foresaw the economic necessities at the back of armed strength, and struck at them. If she did not succeed, she certainly incommoded her foes. Up to the end of 1915, largely owing to her submarine campaign, nearly 1,000 Allied and neutral ships had been put out of use, and these losses could not be replaced with any readiness. It was different in the Napoleonic wars, when every little English port had its local shipbuilder; but in these days of iron and steel vessels of large tonnage there was none of this decentralized construction, and we could not easily make good the decline in our carrying capacity. The consequence was that freights rose very high. If we compare 1914 and 1915, we find the freights of Burmese rice increased from 21s. to 150s. per ton; Calcutta jute from 18s. to 152s.; Argentine wheat from 18s. to 150s. Even deducting the excess profits tax, the net profits of the shipping industry increased by 543 per cent. One calculation, covering the first nineteen months of war, put the increased cost to the nation at £400,000,000.

Nor was Germany's offensive confined to blows at civilian trade. By means of mine-laying on a large scale she hoped slowly to reduce the strength of our fleet, with no corresponding loss to her own. Moreover, her submarines took an active part in the only naval campaign after January 1915—that in the eastern Mediterranean, where their achievements furnished a brilliant page in the still scanty chronicles of submarine war. The eastern Mediterranean was no doubt an ideal ground for such operations, for our task of supplying and reinforcing by sea a large army provided endless easy targets. But the journey thither, and the provision of bases in out-of-the-way islands and odd corners of the African coast were enterprises which did

credit to the new service. It was hastily assumed by many that the narrow entrance to the Mediterranean would enable us to detect and check the approach of submarines. But the nine miles of the Strait of Gibraltar are nearly a thousand feet deep, and its strong currents made netting impossible.

The main naval preoccupation of the Allies in 1915 was therefore the perfecting of means of defence against mine and submarine, and the endeavour to make the enemy's attack as little costly as possible to themselves, and as difficult and burdensome as possible to him. The record of the year was one of losses on both sides—losses the majority of which fell on the Allies. But, taking into account the nature of Germany's plan and the end which she had set herself, it may fairly be said that the balance of success was not with the attack.

In an earlier chapter we have seen our battleship disasters in the Dardanelles, where France lost the *Bouvet*, and Britain the *Irresistible*, the *Queen*, the *Goliath*, the *Triumph*, and the *Majestic*. The year passed without any further wastage of capital ships, but on January 9, 1916, the pre-Dreadnought battleship, *King Edward VII.*, struck a mine in the North Sea and sank, happily without loss of life. The list was heavier in armoured cruisers. The *Argyll*, a ship of an old class, with a speed of 22 knots, and four 7.5-inch guns, stranded on the Scottish coast on October 28, 1915. On 30th December the *Natal*, one of the best gunnery ships in the navy, was mysteriously blown up in harbour, and lost out of her ship's company over 300 officers and men. On February 11, 1916, the light cruiser *Arethusa*, which had played a great part in the Battle of the Bight of Heligoland as the parent ship of the destroyer flotillas, and had been in action during the Cuxhaven raid and the battle of January 24, 1915, struck a mine off the East Coast, and was lost. She was the first oil-driven cruiser in the fleet, and bore one of the most historic names in our naval history. France lost a cruiser, the *Léon Gambetta*, in the Ionian Sea in April 1915; and in February 1916 a very old cruiser, the *Amiral Charner*, was torpedoed off the Syrian coast. The losses among destroyers were few, since their speed made them comparatively safe from submarines. The *Maori* was mined off the Belgian coast, the *Lynx* in the North Sea, and the *Louis* stranded in the eastern Mediterranean. Of submarines we could trace the loss of eight—four in the Dardanelles or Sea of Marmora, two in the North Sea, one in the Baltic, and one in January 1916, wrecked on the Dutch coast. The French lost the *Saphir*, *Joule*, *Mariette*, and *Turquoise* in the Dardanelles, and the *Fresnel* and the *Curie* in the Adriatic.



*Central Press Photos*

### ADMIRAL VON TIRPITZ

The largest roll was that of armed merchantmen and fleet auxiliaries, whose size and constant keeping of the sea made them specially vulnerable to mine and submarine. In January 1915 the *Viknor* sank off the coast of Ireland. In February it was followed by the *Clan Macnaughton*, and in March by the *Bayano*. In May the *Princess Irene* was blown up at Sheerness; in August the *Ramsey* was sunk by gun-fire in the North Sea; in September the *India* was torpedoed in the North Sea. In October the *Hythe*, a minesweeper, was sunk in collision at the Dardanelles, and next month the *Tara*, an armed boarding steamer, was torpedoed. On February 10, 1916, four mine-sweepers near the Dogger Bank were attacked by German destroyers, and one of them, the *Arabis*, was sunk—an episode which was represented in the German press as a victory over enemy cruisers. The

French during the year lost the *Casa Blanco*, and the *Indien* in the Ægean. Transports, too, made an easy mark. In September 1915 the *Royal Edward* was torpedoed in the Ægean Sea, with the loss of over a thousand men, mostly drafts for the 29th Division at Gallipoli. In the same month, and in the same waters, the *Ramazan* was sunk by gun-fire, and three hundred perished. In October the *Marquette*, carrying Indian troops, was torpedoed, with the loss of a hundred lives; and in November the *Mercian*, carrying yeomanry, was shelled for several hours by a submarine, but was able to escape with over a hundred killed and injured. In November France lost the transport *Calvados* off Algeria, and early in 1916 *La Provence* was sunk in the Mediterranean, as she was carrying troops to Salonika. To this list may be added the British hospital ship *Anglia*, which on 17th November struck a mine in the Channel, and sank with considerable loss of life.

The losses among merchant shipping need not be detailed. Up to October 31, 1915, from the outbreak of war, 264 British merchant ships, aggregating half a million tons, and 158 fishing vessels had been destroyed by enemy action. From the ordinary accidents of the sea we had lost during the same period 167 steamships, 229 sailing ships, and 144 fishing vessels. The most conspicuous losses were the *Lusitania* on 7th May, the *Armenian* on 28th June, the *Iberian* on 30th July, the *Arabic* on 19th August, the *Hesperian* on 4th September, the Italian liner *Ancona* on 8th November, the French liner *Ville de Ciotat* on 24th December, and the *Persia* on 30th December. Two Japanese vessels were also sunk in the eastern Mediterranean, with the result that Japan sent warships to those waters. The sinking of the *Ancona* was attended with peculiar brutality. She was bound from Naples to New York, carrying Greek and Italian emigrants with their families. While passing to the south of Sardinia a submarine appeared and began to shell her; even after she had stopped the shelling continued. A panic was the result; many were killed on the decks by shrapnel; women and children flung themselves pell-mell into the boats, and while there were subjected to the fire of the submarine. Finally a torpedo was discharged, and the ship sank. Over two hundred persons perished in this outrage. The submarine flew the Austrian flag, and the Government of Vienna acknowledged it as their own; but there is good reason to believe that it was in reality a German boat, and that the Austrian flag was used to avoid further complications with America, and to prevent a declaration of war by Italy on Germany. The tale was one of the most horrid in the campaign, and no explanations could relieve its barbarism. Insult was added to injury by an extraordinary request made by Vienna on 7th December that special preparations should be made to protect from submarine risks certain Austro-

Hungarian subjects being conveyed from India by the British steamer *Golconda*, on the ground that the majority of them were “better-class people.” The request gave the world an insight into the perverted mind of the Teutonic Powers. Sir Edward Grey replied with vigour and point:—

“I am at a loss to know why ‘better-class’ people should be thought more entitled to protection from submarine attack than any other noncombatants. But however that may be, the only danger of the character indicated which threatens any of the passengers in the *Golconda* is one for which the Austro-Hungarian and the German Governments are alone responsible. It is they, and they only, who have instituted and carry on a novel and inhuman form of warfare, which disregards all the hitherto accepted principles of international law and necessarily endangers the lives of noncombatants. By asking for special precautions to protect one of their own subjects on board a British merchant vessel, the Austro-Hungarian Government recognizes what are the inevitable consequences of its submarine policy, and admits that the outrages, by which the *Lusitania*, the *Persia*, and numbers of other ships have been sunk without warning, were not the result of the casual brutalities of the officers of enemy submarines, but part of the settled and premeditated policy of the Governments whom they serve.”

The German losses were naturally smaller; for, except in the Baltic, the German warships did not keep the seas, and there was no German commerce left to destroy. One battleship—the *Pommern*—a vessel ten years old, with a displacement of about 13,000 tons, four 11-inch guns, and fourteen 6.7-inch guns, was torpedoed in the Baltic by Commander Max Horton on 2nd July; more than one transport in the same waters fell to British and Russian submarines; and in the battle of the Gulf of Riga on 20th August Germany suffered substantial losses in destroyers and cruisers. A tribute should be paid to the efficiency at this period of the Russian Baltic Fleet, and to its skilful handling by Admiral Kanin. It held the eastern Baltic against German warships, and operated repeatedly with success as a flank guard of the Russian armies. The new spirit introduced by Admiral Essen—whose death was one of the greatest losses suffered by the Allies during the campaign—showed itself in a defiance of weather conditions which might have deterred the boldest sailors, in a complete intimacy with difficult waters, and in a readiness at all times to take the big hazard. With the assistance of British

submarines, under commanders like Max Horton and Noel Laurence, Russia throughout the year dominated the eastern Baltic.

In cruisers and battle-cruisers Germany had already lost heavily—the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Yorck*, *Magdeburg*, *Köln*, *Mainz*, *Hela*, *Nürnberg*, *Leipzig*, *Ariadne*, *Emden*, *Karlsruhe*. In the early months of 1915 the list was increased by the *Blücher*, *Dresden*, and *Königsberg*. In October the *Prinz Adalbert*, in November the *Undine*, and in December the *Bremen* were sunk in the Baltic. At least nine destroyers and seven torpedo boats were lost during 1915. In the class of armed merchantmen and auxiliaries, the *Macedonia* was captured in March at Las Palmas, and the *Kronprinz Wilhelm* and the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* were interned in an American port. The mine-layer *Albatross* went ashore at Gothland in July, and in August the *Meteor* was blown up in the North Sea. Against Turkey the Allied offensive was conspicuously successful. If the guns of the Dardanelles forts and the German submarines took heavy toll of our large vessels, our submarines in the Straits and in the Marmora played havoc with Turkish shipping. Down to October in those waters we had sunk two battleships, five gunboats, one torpedo boat, and 197 supply ships.

Of the campaign against the enemy submarines few details were published at the time, and no list of achievements—a policy based upon a sound appreciation of the enemy temperament. A sinister silence, without a word of news, was more trying to the nerves of the German under-sea service than any advertisement of success. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*. Famous submarine commanders went out and never returned. No man setting forth from the Elbe bases knew what he had to face, for some device which meant certain death might be waiting for him in the British coastal waters. A few of our methods of defence were known to the world. The new type of monitors—vast, torpedo-proof rafts carrying 14-inch guns—were able to operate in shallow seas with almost complete immunity from the under-water menace. Elaborate nets were constructed in the main sea-passages, in which more than one submarine was fatally entangled. But of our direct offensive few details were made known. Sometimes an airplane was the weapon; the new “Q” boats—tramps with a concealed armament for the decoy of unwary submarines—had their first success in July 1915; by hundreds of patrol boats, manned largely by fishermen, the submarine was tracked and followed as the old whalers pursued the ringer. Science was called to our aid, and by means of improved microphones we became adepts at detecting the presence of the enemy under water. The doings of these patrols and their quarries make up a record of perhaps the strangest

romances of peril and courage in all human history; but here we can only set down the general result.

In spite of many losses our commerce had not been seriously crippled; there was no hint of panic among our sea-going folk; and we had organized a counter-campaign which had left Germany aghast. It was not so much that we had depleted her submarine fleet, for her new constructions filled the gaps, but that we had put an end to many of the best and most unreplaceable of her submarine commanders, and diffused over the whole business of attack that atmosphere of terror and uncertainty which should, on Germany's calculation, have been the lot of the defence. The German navy, which had looked for immediate success, was driven to counsel patience with a wry mouth. "Only a child," wrote Captain Persius in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, "would accuse the British of being bad seamen. They know how to defend themselves, and have devised every kind of protection. It becomes more and more difficult for U-boats to get near enough to hostile ships to launch a torpedo. An almost miraculous skill is required to avoid all snares, escape from destroyers, and yet make a successful attack."

The consequence was that the German Government was in two minds about the whole business. In September 1915 there was a change in the post of Chief of the Naval Staff, and Bachmann was succeeded by von Holtzendorff, who was no friend of Tirpitz. The difficulties with America depressed the politicians, and the Imperial Chancellor was not in sympathy with the naval and military view of under-sea warfare. In January 1916 Holtzendorff pressed for a revival of the extreme rigour of the campaign, "unhampered by restrictions of a nonmilitary nature," and promised that within six months Britain would be forced to sue for peace. In that month Pohl retired from the command of the High Seas Fleet, and died a few weeks later; and his successor, von Scheer, the ablest of German sailors, pressed for a clearing up of the submarine position. But in spite of the support of Falkenhayn the opposition of Bethmann-Hollweg proved too strong; unrestricted submarine warfare was not officially sanctioned. In March—to anticipate—Tirpitz ceased to be Naval Secretary of State, and when, in that month, the French passenger steamer *Sussex*, carrying American citizens, was torpedoed without warning, the German Government formally apologized to Mr. Wilson and undertook that it should not happen again. But the German military and naval chiefs were unconvinced, and only bided their time.

One incident in the submarine campaign deserves special notice, because of its use by Germany to found a charge of barbarism against British

seamen. The facts in the *Baralong* case were these. Early in the afternoon of August 19, 1915, the steamer *Nicosian*, with a cargo of army mules, was approaching the Irish coast some sixty miles from Queenstown. There she fell in with the German U-boat 27, which a few hours before had sunk the *Arabic*. A torpedo was fired, which struck the *Nicosian*, but without sinking her, upon which the submarine began to shell. Thereupon the captain and crew put off in a boat; but the American cattlemen who had come over in charge of the mules, having no experience of the ways of submarines, remained on board. The captain of the U-boat, desiring to economize his torpedoes, sent a boarding-party to finish off the *Nicosian* with bombs. At that moment the *Baralong* arrived on the scene. She had been got up as a tramp, and was probably destined by the U-boat as its next victim; but as she approached she stripped off her disguise, and revealed herself as an armed auxiliary, with the men waiting at their guns. She opened musketry fire on the submarine, and then split her in two with shots from her port and stern guns. Upon this the German captain and the rest of the crew put off in a boat to the *Nicosian*, intending, no doubt, to surrender there. The *Baralong's* captain, not knowing their purpose, fired upon them and several were killed. Meantime strange things were happening on the *Nicosian*. The American cattlemen, whose temper had not been improved by the shelling, observed that the boarding-party in the first boat were carrying bombs. They allowed the German seamen to come on deck, and then rushed on them and battered in their heads with furnace bars. Presently in the second boat came the captain and the rest of the crew. They, too, were hunted up and down the ship and disposed of. When a British officer arrived from the *Baralong* he found no Germans left. The *Nicosian's* captain and crew rejoined her, and the vessel proceeded to Avonmouth.

The German Government presently produced a sworn statement by several cattlemen and by the second officer of the *Nicosian*, who had been dismissed, alleging that the men of the *Baralong* murdered the crew of the submarine as they were struggling in the water. It was a fantastic perversion of the facts, and one signatory had not even been at sea when the events of which he claimed to be an eye-witness occurred. Germany demanded the trial of the crew of the *Baralong* for murder; Sir Edward Grey answered that he was very willing that the matter should be investigated by a tribunal composed of American naval officers, provided that Germany agreed to allow the investigation by the same court of the circumstances connected with the sinking of the *Arabic*, the attack on the stranded submarine E13 in Danish waters, and the firing on the crew of the steamer *Ruel* after they had taken to the boats. Germany replied that the three last affairs were not in

*pari materia* with the first; and announced that, since Britain refused to make amends for the *Baralong* outrage, “the German Government feels itself compelled to take into its own hands the punishment of this unexpiated crime, and to adopt retaliatory measures.” What these could be it was difficult to guess, for a man cannot proceed to stronger measures when he has consistently practised the last extremes of outrage.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BLOCKADE AND THE COMMERCE RAIDERS

#### The British Blockade—German Commerce Raiders—The Work of the British Fleet.

The blockade of Germany maintained by British warships was one of our chief weapons in the campaign. We have seen the difficulties which it raised with America on points of law; towards the end of 1915 it was no less criticized by the British people on the point of fact. Critics urged that it was ineffective. Figures were quoted showing the enormously increased imports of the neutral countries adjoining Germany, principally in the way of foodstuffs. Our ring-fence was condemned as a farce, and the Foreign Office—which was not unnaturally suspected, as the sole begetter of the unfortunate Declaration of London—was enjoined to hand over the blockade to the sailors, who meant business. When these recommendations were examined they were found to fall under two heads. The first was the proposal to regularize our proceedings according to international law, and thereby placate the legally-minded America. It was urged that there was nothing to prevent a large extension of our list of absolute and conditional contraband, since we had thrown over the Declaration of London. Further we might now declare a legal blockade. Even if it had been impossible before—which was not admitted by those who saw in the Baltic a “closed sea” on a parallel with the American Great Lakes—the success of our submarines in these waters had enabled us now to make it effective. Ever since the summer there had been a real blockade of the German Baltic ports. We had wrecked there both the commerce and the troop transport of the enemy—it was difficult to find German or Swedish underwriters to undertake the risk. German ships had for the most part to keep within territorial waters, and this greatly increased the slowness and the risks of their voyages. The Danish press—which might be taken as an independent witness—had no doubt about the effectiveness in point of fact of the British Baltic blockade.

But a formal blockade would have given us no powers which we had not already arrogated, and the proclamation, while it might have satisfied a few American jurists, would have made the situation still more delicate with regard to European neutrals. More important was the second ground of

criticism—that by way of adjacent neutrals a large amount of vital imports was still filtering through to Germany. It was possible for the Government to show that the figures of the critics were exaggerated; but the fact remained that Germany was making desperate attempts to get seaborne food and raw materials for the purposes of war, and that our activities, while they had diminished this influx, had by no means put an end to it. It was easier to prove the unpleasant fact than to suggest a policy to prevent it. Talk about handing over the whole business to the navy had little meaning, for before the navy could act it must be given directions, and these directions were exactly what it was so hard to arrive at. What seemed to be in the minds of the critics was the action of Britain in the Napoleonic wars, when she stopped all commerce to the continent of Europe. But at that time the whole of Europe was openly or implicitly hostile, and unless we now wished to bring in all neutrals against us, this heroic remedy could scarcely be adopted. With Sweden, in particular, our relations were highly delicate; and Russia had no desire to see Sweden enter the field against the Allies, and appear with an army in Finland on her right rear. In his speech in the House of Commons on January 26, 1916, Sir Edward Grey put the point clearly:—

“If you establish lines of blockade, you must do it consistently with the rights of neutrals. You cannot establish these lines of blockade and say that no ships will go through them at all, or you will stop all traffic of any kind to the neutral ports inside. You would stop all traffic to Christiania, Stockholm, Rotterdam, Copenhagen—all traffic whatever. Well, of course, that is not consistent with the rights of neutrals. You cannot shut off all supplies to neutral countries. You must not try to make the grass grow in the streets of neutral ports. You must let through these lines vessels *bona fide* destined for the neutral ports, with *bona fide* cargoes. Nor can you put every cargo in your Prize Courts and say it has not to go to a neutral port until the Prize Court has examined it. The congestion in this country would be such that you could not deal with it if you did that, and you have no right to say that the British Prize Court is the neck of the bottle through which all trade has to pass. If we had gone, or attempted to go, as far as that, I think the war possibly might be over by now; but it would have been over because the whole world would have risen against us, and we, and our Allies too, would have collapsed under the general resentment of the whole world.”

It remained, then, to discriminate between neutral imports intended for neutral use and those which might be passed on to the enemy. Such discrimination was obviously a task of immense intricacy, and involved the certainty of many mistakes. The principle of "rationing" a neutral was accepted, but the method had many grave drawbacks. If the imports prior to the war were taken as the basis, then this involved not only imports required for home consumption, but those re-exported to Germany to meet the balance of trade. It permitted, for example, the German acquisition of foodstuffs, and so was in defiance of the preamble of the Order in Council of March 11, 1915, which announced that "His Majesty had decided to adopt further measures to prevent commodities of any kind from reaching or leaving Germany." If the basis were the home consumption of a particular article, then the following situation might occur. The limit from the point of view of our blockade might be reached early in any year, through a number of ships arriving in neutral ports carrying that article, part of which was secretly destined for Germany. Cargoes arriving later, honestly destined for neutral consumption, we should be compelled to turn back or confiscate. To meet these difficulties, central distributing agencies were arranged in the neutral states which had the control of all consignments. They were responsible to us for the behaviour of their own merchants, and they formed authoritative bodies with which we could negotiate, and arrange from week to week the details of lawful commerce. It was by no means a perfect scheme; but in the circumstances, when we could only seek a balance of difficulties, it was probably the best possible. In the words of Lord Robert Cecil, who in February 1916 entered the Cabinet as Minister of Blockade, we could stop up the holes in the dam as they appeared; but it was inevitable that a good deal of water should run through while the repairs were being made.

The criticism of our blockade policy was soon extended to other naval matters. On one point it was amply justified. The merchant shipping question had been allowed to drift, so that freights had risen to a crazy height, and shipowners made altogether excessive profits. It was urged that shipping companies should be made "controlled establishments," so that the whole of their surplus earnings might be taken for the nation; but this plan, while it might have augmented our revenue, would not have met the real difficulty. It would have been well if the shipping trade had been taken over by the Government, who would have paid it a fixed rate of interest on its capital and drawn up a reasonable schedule of freights. Neutral freights had naturally followed the British lead, and risen to the same extravagant height, and it was idle to hope to lower them by any of the devices proposed—such

as, for example, making their coaling facilities in the ports of the Empire depend upon their adherence to a tariff—unless our British scale was lowered and systematized. The reason why some such step was not taken seems to have been the departmentalism which is rampant in any time of stress. Every great question is inter-departmental, and no one can be settled speedily or wisely unless there is a strong central authority to colligate and harmonize the claims of the departments. Finally, in the early days of March, the critics fastened upon naval policy itself—not, indeed, the work of the fleets and the fighting admirals, but the alleged supineness of the Board of Admiralty in new construction. Mr. Churchill returned from his battalion in the trenches to make a speech full of dark innuendoes, concluding with a demand for the reinstatement of Lord Fisher at Whitehall. He had a slender parliamentary and journalistic following, but those who most admired his courage and mental alertness could not but regard the performance as ill advised.

In the first months of 1916 speculation was rife, both among sailors and civilians, as to German naval plans. It was known that Germany had been busy at new construction, but it was not clear what form it would take. There were rumours of capital ships armed with 17-inch guns, of new mammoth submarines capable of voyaging a thousand miles from their bases without seeking supplies, and so beaked and armoured that they could sheer through any nets. It was believed that Germany contemplated in the near future an attack by sea and air as a complement to some great offensive by land. The most reasonable forecast seemed to be that she would lay a mine-field from some point on the British coast eastwards, and under its cover attempt a raid or a bombardment of our south-eastern shores. If our battleships and battle-cruisers hastened to cut off the raiders, they would be entangled in the mine-field and lose heavily. In this way she might hope to reduce our capital ships and prepare for future operations by her High Seas Fleet on more equal terms.

Colour was given to some such forecast by the very remarkable German mine-laying activity at the end of 1915 and during the first months of 1916. A new type of U-boat had been specially devised for the laying of mines under water. It carried the mines in a special air-tight chamber which could be shut off from the hull of the submarine, and opened from above the sea. As the mines descended they were automatically released from their sinker, which went to the bottom and acted as anchor. The mines, being lighter than water, floated at the end of the connecting chain, which kept them at the

requisite distance below the surface. A mine-field laid in this way was impossible to trace, except by its consequences, and it necessitated sweeping operations on a far greater scale than hitherto. Hence there tended to be a shortage of smaller auxiliaries, mine-sweepers and the like, attached to the Grand Fleet. The campaign in the eastern Mediterranean, where our lines of communication lay on the sea, required a very large number of small vessels, and the dearth of skilled labour at home made it difficult to construct new ones in the time. Germany had correctly appreciated the situation, and laid her plans accordingly.

A second evidence of German naval activity was the dispatch of commerce raiders from her North Sea ports. In December 1915 a vessel of some 4,500 tons, which had been launched as a fruit-ship and christened the *Ponga*, but had been transformed into an auxiliary cruiser carrying 6-inch guns, slipped out of Kiel harbour. She was rebaptized the *Moewe*, after a gunboat sunk at Dar-es-Salaam. Her commander was Count von und zu Dohna-Schlodien, who had been the navigating officer on the battleship *Posen*. Disguised with false sides to look like a tramp, and flying the Swedish flag, she slipped through our watching cruisers in the fog, and, fetching a wide circuit round the north of Scotland, arrived in the Atlantic. There she began a remarkable predatory career. She took the *Corbridge* off Cape Finisterre on January 11, 1916, and presently added the *Author*, *Trader*, *Ariadne*, *Dromonby*, *Farringford*, and *Clan Mactavish*. The last vessel, which carried a 3-inch gun, put up a gallant fight, and lost eleven men killed. On 15th January the *Appam*, a vessel of nearly 8,000 tons, with the Governor of Sierra Leone on board, was taken in the seas off Madeira. Count Dohna, who behaved with humanity, put the crews and passengers of his different captures into the *Appam*, and sent her off under Lieutenant Berg to Norfolk, Virginia, where she duly arrived on 1st February, and raised a new legal conundrum for the American Government. Meantime the *Moewe* proceeded on her course, hunting the junction of the South American and West Indian trade routes, and added to her bag the *Westburn*, *Horace*, *Flamenco*, *Edinburgh*, and *Saxon Prince*, as well as the French *Maroni* and the Belgian *Luxembourg*. She sent the crews of these vessels in the *Westburn* to Santa Cruz, in Teneriffe, and after landing them blew the ship up. The *Moewe*, having done enough *pour chauffer la gloire*, turned towards home by the same route as she had come, and safely arrived at Kiel on 4th March. Her commander deserved all credit for a bold and skilful performance. He had captured fifteen vessels, and cost Britain at least £2,000,000. He brought home with him four British officers, twenty-nine marines and sailors, 166 men from the different crews, and some £50,000 in gold bars. He had

proved that the right kind of disguise might give a ship the invisibility of the submarine, and his countrymen were entitled to acclaim his achievement.

Encouraged by his success, and before he had returned, Germany sent out another raider. This was the *Greif*, a big armed merchantman, carrying 7-inch and 4-inch guns, and fitted with torpedo tubes. Disguised as a tramp, and with the Norwegian colours painted on her sides, she made her way through the North Sea, and was steering a course for the Atlantic between the Shetlands and the Faroës, when, on the forenoon of 29th February, she was sighted by the *Alcantara*, a Royal Mail ship of over 15,000 tons, now used as an auxiliary cruiser. The *Alcantara* overhauled her, inquired her name and destination, and lowered a boat. Suddenly the false bulwarks were dropped, and the stranger opened fire at a range of about 1,000 yards. She discharged a torpedo, but without success; and then one of her shells wrecked the *Alcantara's* steering gear, and a second torpedo found its mark. Meanwhile another British auxiliary, the *Andes*, appeared, and by her gunfire put the *Greif* out of action. The destroyer *Comus* also joined in from long range, and made accurate shooting. The enemy, now blazing from stem to stern, presently blew up, probably when the fire reached her cargo of mines. From the sinking *Alcantara* the two cruisers rescued all but five officers and twenty-nine men, and picked up five of the *Greif's* officers and 115 of her crew.

The work of our fleet was so quiet and so little advertised that the ordinary Briton dwelling in the southern towns felt more remote from it than from the Flanders trenches. Only on the seaboard, especially in the north and east, was there evidence for the eye of an intricate and ceaseless activity. As our army had grown so had our navy. Men of every class and occupation—yacht owners, fishermen, leisured people with a turn for the sea—had been drawn into the net, and the Royal Navy now included as motley a collection of volunteers in its auxiliary branches as could be found in the ranks of the new battalions. How arduous and anxious was the work only those employed in it could tell. That it was carried on in all weathers and under all discouragements with no surcease of keenness, was a tribute not only to our national character, but to the masterful traditions of the great Service. Any army, compelled to twenty months of comparative inaction and an unsleeping defensive, would have gone to pieces. But any army was a ragged and amateur business as compared with the British fleet. The ordeal was sustained partly because a ship's life in war is not so different from a ship's life in peace, partly because of the tradition of discipline and wise ceremonial, and partly because of the expertness of the profession. A modern sailor has duties so intricate and technical that they provide his mind

with constant occupation. Even in peace neither body nor brain can afford to rust.

The sea has formed the English character, and the essential England is to be found in those who follow it. They have not altered since the days of the Channel skippers who taught Drake his trade, and the adventurers who first drank bilge and ate penguins in far-away oceans. Our seamen have been unmoved by the political storms which raged on land. They have seen neither Puritans nor Cavaliers, Whigs nor Tories, but plain Englishmen who were concerned with greater things. From blue water they have learned mercifulness and a certain spacious tolerance for what does not affect their craft, but they have also learned in the grimmest of schools precision and resolution. The sea endures no makeshifts. If a thing is not exactly right it will be vastly wrong. Discipline, courage to the point of madness, contempt for all that is pretentious and insincere, are the teaching of the ocean and the elements, and they have been the qualities in all ages of the British sailor. On the navy, "under the good Providence of God," it is written in the Articles of War, hang the peace and prosperity of our islands and our Empire. But in this struggle there were still greater issues, for on the British navy especially depended whether law or rapine was henceforth to rule the world. To one who visited the Grand Fleet there came a sense of pride which was more than the traditional devotion of Englishmen to the senior service and the remembrance of a famous past. The great battleships far up in the northern waters, wreathed in mists and beaten upon by snowstorms, the men who for twenty months of nerve-racking strain had kept unimpaired their edge and ardour of mind, were indeed a shining proof of the might and spirit of their land. But in the task before them there was a high duty, which their forefathers, indeed, had shared, but which lay upon them with a more solemn urgency. They were the modern crusaders, the true defenders of the faith, doing battle not only for home and race and fatherland, but for the citadel and sanctities of Christendom.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

The British Grand Fleet on May 30—Jellicoe's Principles of Naval War—The German Fleet sighted—The Battle-Cruiser Action—Arrival and Deployment of Battle Fleet—The Race Southward—The Night Action—British and German Losses—The Points in Dispute—Summary of Battle—Death of Lord Kitchener.

From the opening of the war British seamen had been sustained by the hope that some day and somewhere they would meet the German High Seas Fleet in a battle in the open sea. It had been their hope since the hot August day when the great battleships disappeared from the eyes of watchers on the English shores. It had comforted them in the long months of waiting amid the winds and snows of the northern waters. Since the beginning of the year 1916 this hope had become a confident belief. There was no special ground for it, except the assumption that as the case of Germany became more difficult she would be forced to use every asset in the struggle. As the onslaught on Verdun grew more costly and fruitless, and as the armies of Russia began to stir with the approach of summer, it seemed that the hour for the gambler's throw might soon arrive.

The long vigil was trying to the nerve and temper of every sailor, and in especial to the Battle-Cruiser Fleet, which represented the first line of British sea strength. It was the business of the battle-cruisers to make periodical sweeps through the North Sea, and to be first upon the scene should the enemy appear. They were the advance guard, the *corps de choc* of the Grand Fleet; they were the hounds which must close with the quarry and hold it till the hunters of the Battle Fleet arrived. Hence the task of their commander was one of peculiar anxiety and strain. At any moment the chance might come, so he must be sleeplessly watchful. He would have to make sudden and grave decisions, for it was certain that the longed-for opportunity would have to be forced before it matured. The German hope was by attrition or some happy accident to wear down the superior British strength to an equality with their own. A rash act on the part of a British admiral might fulfil that hope; but, on the other hand, without boldness, even rashness, Britain could not get to grips with her evasive foe. So far Sir David Beatty and the battle-cruisers had not been fortunate. From the shelter

of the mine-strewn waters around Heligoland Germany's warships made occasional excursions, for they could not rot for ever in harbour; her battle-cruisers had more than once raided the English coasts; her battleships had made stately progresses in short circles in the vicinity of the Jutland and Schleswig shores. But so far Sir David Beatty had been unlucky. At the Battle of the Bight of Heligoland on August 28, 1914, his great ships had encountered nothing more serious than enemy light cruisers. At the time of the raid on Hartlepool in December of the same year he had just failed, owing to fog, to intercept the raiders. In the Battle of the Dogger Bank on January 24, 1915, the damage done to his flagship had prevented him destroying the whole German fleet of battle-cruisers. It was clear that the enemy, if caught in one of his hurried sorties, would not fight unless he had a clear advantage. Hence, if the battle was to be joined at all, it looked as if the first stage, at all events, must be fought by Britain against odds.

On Tuesday afternoon, 30th May, the bulk of the British Grand Fleet left its bases on one of its customary sweeps. On this occasion it put to sea with hope, for the Admiralty had informed it that a large German movement was contemplated. It sailed in two sections. To the north were twenty-four Dreadnoughts of the Battle Fleet under Sir John Jellicoe—the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Battle Squadrons; one Battle-Cruiser Squadron, the 3rd, under Rear-Admiral the Honourable Horace Hood; the 1st Cruiser Squadron, under Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot; the 2nd Cruiser Squadron, under Rear-Admiral Heath; the 4th Light Cruiser Squadron, under Commodore Le Mesurier; and the 4th, 11th, and 12th Destroyer Flotillas. Farther south moved the Battle-Cruiser Fleet, under Sir David Beatty—the six vessels of the 1st and 2nd Battle-Cruiser Squadrons, under Rear-Admiral Brock and Rear-Admiral Pakenham; the 5th Battle Squadron, four vessels of the *Queen Elizabeth* class, under Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas; the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons; and the 1st, 9th, 10th, and 13th Destroyer Flotillas. It will be noticed that the two sections of the Grand Fleet were not sharply defined by battleships and battle-cruisers, for Sir John Jellicoe had with him one squadron of battle-cruisers, and Sir David Beatty had one squadron of the largest battleships. On the morning of the last day of May the German High Seas Fleet also put to sea, and sailed north a hundred miles or so from the Jutland coast. First went Admiral von Hipper's battle-cruisers, five in number, with the usual complement of cruisers and destroyers. Following them came the Battle Fleet, under Admiral von Scheer—fifteen Dreadnoughts and six other vessels, accompanied by three cruiser divisions and seven torpedo flotillas. With a few exceptions, all the capital ships of the German navy were present in this expedition. We know the purpose of

Scheer from his own narrative. He hoped to engage and destroy a portion of the British fleet which might be isolated from the rest, for German public opinion demanded some proof of naval activity now that the submarine campaign had languished.

Sir John Jellicoe, as early as October 1914, had taken into review the new conditions of naval warfare, and had worked out a plan to be adopted when he met the enemy's fleet—a plan approved not only by his flag officers but by successive Admiralty Boards. The German aim, as he forecast it, would be to fight a retreating action, and lead him into an area where they could make the fullest use of mines, torpedoes, and submarines. He was aware of the weakness of his own fleet in destroyers and cruisers, and was resolved not to play the enemy's game. Hence he might be forced to give the appearance of refusing battle and not closing with a retreating foe. "I intend to pursue what is, in my considered opinion, the proper course to defeat and annihilate the enemy's battle fleet without regard to uninstructed opinion or criticism. The situation is a difficult one. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that half of our battle fleet might be disabled by underwater attack before the guns opened fire at all if a false move is made, and I feel that I must constantly bear in mind the great probability of such attack and be prepared tactically to prevent its success." The German methods had, therefore, from the start a profound moral effect in determining the bias of the Commander-in-Chief's mind. A second principle was always in his thoughts, a principle derived from his view of the general strategy of the whole campaign, for Jellicoe had a wider survey than that of the professional sailor. It was no question of a partiality for the defensive rather than the offensive. The British Grand Fleet, in his view, was the pivot of the Allied strength. So long as it existed and kept the sea, it fulfilled its purpose, it had already achieved its main task; if it were seriously crippled, the result would be the loss not of one weapon among many, but of the main Allied armoury. It was, therefore, the duty of a wise commander to bring the enemy to battle—but on his own terms; no consideration of purely naval results, no desire for personal glory, must be allowed to obscure the essential duty of his solemn trusteeship. The psychology of the Commander-in-Chief must be understood, for it played a vital part in the coming action.

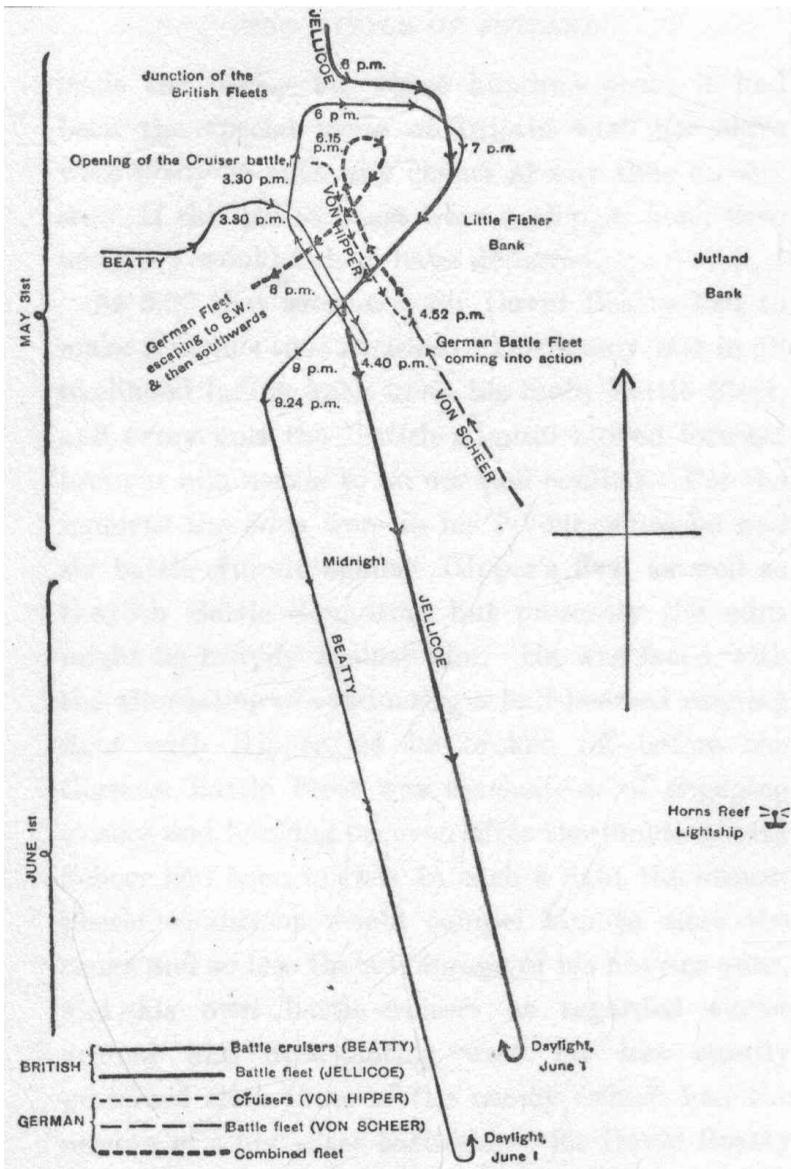
The fourth week of May had been hot and bright on shore, with low winds and clear heavens; but on the North Sea there lay a light summer haze, and on the last day of the month loose grey clouds were beginning to overspread the sky. Sir David Beatty, having completed his sweep to the south, had turned north about 2 p.m., according to instructions to rejoin Jellicoe. The sea was dead calm, like a sheet of glass. His light cruiser

squadrons formed a screen in front of him from east to west. But at 2.20 p.m. the *Galatea* (Commodore Alexander-Sinclair), the flagship of the 1st Light Cruiser Squadron, signalled enemy vessels to the east. Beatty at once altered course to south-south-east, the direction of the Horn Reef, in order to get between the enemy and his base.

Five minutes later the *Galatea* signalled again that the enemy was in force, and no mere handful of light cruisers. At 2.35 the watchers in the *Lion* saw a heavy pall of smoke to the eastward, and the course was accordingly altered to that direction, and presently to the north-east. The 1st and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons spread in a screen before the battle-cruisers. A seaplane was sent up from the *Engadine* at 3.8, and at 3.30 its first report was received. Flying at a height of 900 feet, within two miles of hostile light cruisers, it was able to identify the enemy. Sir David Beatty promptly formed line of battle, and a minute later came in sight of Hipper's five battle-cruisers. Evan-Thomas and the 5th Battle Squadron were at the time more than five miles away, and, since their speed was less than that of the battle-cruisers, would obviously be late for the fight; but Beatty did not wait, considering, not unnaturally, that his six battle-cruisers were more than a match for Hipper.

## I

Of all human contests, a naval battle makes the greatest demands upon the resolution and gallantry of the men and the skill and coolness of the commanders. In a land fight the general may be thirty miles behind the line of battle, but the admiral is in the thick of it. He takes the same risks as the ordinary sailor, and, as often as not, his flagship leads the fleet. For three hundred years it had been the special pride of Britain that her ships were ready to meet any enemy at any time on any sea. If this proud boast were no longer hers, then her glory would indeed have departed.



Battle of Jutland.—Track Chart.

At 3.30 that afternoon Sir David Beatty had to make a momentous decision. The enemy was in all likelihood falling back upon his main Battle Fleet, and every mile the British admiral moved forward brought him nearer to an unequal combat. For the moment the odds were in his favour, since he had six battle-cruisers against Hipper's five, as well as the 5th Battle Squadron, but presently the odds might be heavily against him. He was faced with the alternative of conducting a half-hearted running fight with

Hipper, to be broken off before the German Battle Fleet was reached, or of engaging closely and hanging on even after the junction with Scheer had been made. In such a fight the atmospheric conditions would compel him to close the range and so lose the advantage of his heavier guns, and his own battle-cruisers as regarded turret armour and deck-plating were far less stoutly protected than those of the enemy, which had the armour of a first-class battleship. Sir David Beatty was never for a moment in doubt. He chose the course which was not only heroic, but right on every ground of strategy. Twice already by a narrow margin he had missed bringing the German capital ships to action. He was resolved that now he would forgo no chance which the fates might send.

Hipper was steering east-south-east in the direction of his base. Beatty changed his course to conform, and the fleets were now some 23,000 yards apart. The 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron took station ahead with the destroyers of the 9th and 13th Flotillas; then came the 1st Battle-Cruiser Squadron, led by the *Lion*; then the 2nd; and then Evan-Thomas, with the 5th Battle Squadron. Beatty formed his ships on a line of bearing to clear the smoke—that is, each ship took station on a compass bearing from the flagship, of which they were diagonally astern. At 3.48 the action began, both sides opening fire at the same moment. The range was 18,500 yards, the direction was generally south-south-east, and both fleets were moving at full speed, an average perhaps of twenty-five knots. The wind was from the south-east, the visibility for the British was good, and the sun was behind them. They had ten capital ships to the German five. The omens seemed propitious for victory.

In all battles there is a large element of sheer luck and naked caprice. In the first stage, when Beatty had the odds in his favour, he was destined to suffer his chief losses. A shot struck the *Indefatigable* (Captain Sowerby) in a vital place, the magazine exploded, and in two minutes she turned over and sank. The German gunnery at the start was uncommonly good; it was only later, when things went ill with them, that their shooting fell off. Meantime the 5th Battle Squadron had come into action at a range of 20,000 yards, and engaged the rear enemy ships. From 4.15 onward for half an hour the duel between the battle-cruisers was intense, and the enemy fire gradually grew less rapid as ours increased. At 4.18 the German battle-cruiser third in the line was seen to be on fire. Presently the *Queen Mary* (Captain Prowse) was hit, and blew up. She had been at the Battle of the Bight of Heligoland; she was perhaps the best gunnery ship in the fleet; and her loss left Beatty with only four battle-cruisers. Happily she did not go down before her superb marksmanship had taken toll of the enemy. The haze

was now settling on the waters, and all that could be seen of the foe was a blurred outline.

Meantime, as the great vessels raced southwards, the lighter craft were fighting a battle of their own. Eight destroyers of the 13th Flotilla—the *Nestor*, *Nomad*, *Nicator*, *Narborough*, *Pelican*, *Petard*, *Obdurate*, and *Nerissa*—together with the *Moorsom* and *Morris* of the 10th, and the *Turbulent* and *Termagant* of the 9th, moved out at 4.15 for a torpedo attack, at the same time as the enemy destroyers advanced for the same purpose. The British flotilla at once came into action at close quarters with fifteen destroyers and a light cruiser of the enemy, and beat them back with the loss of two destroyers. This combat had made some of them drop astern, so a full torpedo attack was impossible. The *Nestor*, *Nomad*, and *Nicator*, under Commander the Honourable E. B. S. Bingham, fired two torpedoes at the German battle-cruisers, and were sorely battered themselves by the German secondary armament. They clung to their task till the turning movement came which we shall presently record, and the result of it was to bring them within close range of many enemy battleships. Both the *Nestor* and the *Nomad* were sunk, and only the *Nicator* regained the flotilla. Some of the others fired their torpedoes, and apparently the rear German ship was struck. The gallantry of these smaller craft cannot be overpraised. That subsidiary battle, fought under the canopy of the duel of the greater ships, was one of the most heroic episodes of the action.

We have seen that the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron was scouting ahead of the battle-cruisers. At 4.38 the *Southampton* (Commodore Goodenough) reported the German Battle Fleet ahead. Instantly Beatty recalled the destroyers, and at 4.42 Scheer was sighted to the south-east. Beatty put his helm to port and swung round to a northerly course. From the pursuer he had now become the pursued, and his aim was to lead the combined enemy fleets towards Sir John Jellicoe. The 5th Battle Squadron, led by Evan-Thomas in the *Barham*, now hard at it with Hipper, was ordered to follow suit. Meanwhile the *Southampton* and the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron continued forward to observe, and did not turn till within 13,000 yards of Scheer's battleships, and under their fire. At five o'clock Beatty's battle-cruisers were steering north, the *Fearless* and the 1st Destroyer Flotilla leading, the 1st and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons on his starboard bow, and the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron on his port quarter. Behind him came Evan-Thomas, attended by the *Champion* and the destroyers of the 13th Flotilla.

It is not difficult to guess at the thoughts of Scheer and Hipper. They had had the good fortune to destroy two of Beatty's battle-cruisers, and now that

their whole fleet was together they hoped to destroy more. The weather conditions that afternoon made Zeppelins useless, and accordingly they knew nothing of Jellicoe's presence in the north, though they must have surmised that he would appear sooner or later. They believed they had caught Beatty cruising on his own account, and that the gods had delivered him into their hands. From 4.45 till 6 o'clock to the mind of the German admirals the battle resolved itself into a British flight and a German pursuit.

The case presented itself otherwise to Sir David Beatty, who knew that the British Battle Fleet was some fifty miles off, and that it was his business to coax the Germans towards it. He was now facing heavy odds, eight capital ships as against at least nineteen, but he had certain real advantages. He had the pace of the enemy, and this enabled him to overlap their line and to get his battle-cruisers on their bow. In the race southwards he had driven his ships at full speed, and consequently his squadron had been in two divisions, for Evan-Thomas's battleships had not the pace of the battle-cruisers. But when he headed north he reduced his pace, and there was no longer a tactical division of forces. The eight British ships were now one fighting unit. It was Beatty's intention to nurse his pursuers into the arms of Jellicoe, and for this his superior speed gave him a vital weapon. Once the northerly course had been entered upon the enemy could not change direction, except in a very gradual curve, without exposing himself to enfilading fire from the British battle-cruisers at the head of the line. Though in a sense he was the pursuer, and so had the initiative, yet as a matter of fact his movements were mainly controlled by Sir David Beatty's will. That the British admiral should have seen and reckoned with this fact in the confusion of a battle against odds is not the least of the proofs of his sagacity and fortitude.

Unfortunately the weather changed for the worse. The British ships were silhouetted against a clear western sky, but the enemy was shrouded in mist, and only at rare intervals showed dim shapes through the gloom. The range was about 14,000 yards. The two leading ships of Evan-Thomas's squadron were assisting the battle-cruisers, while his two rear ships were engaged with the first vessels of the German 3rd Battle Squadron, which developed an unexpected speed. As before, the lesser craft played a gallant part. At 5.5 the *Onslow* and the *Moresby*, which had been helping the *Engadine* with the seaplane, took station on the engaged bow of the *Lion*, and the latter struck with a torpedo the sixth ship in the German line and set it on fire. She then passed south to clear the range of smoke, and took station on the 5th Battle Squadron. At 5.33 Sir David Beatty's course was north-north-east, and he was gradually hauling round to the north-eastward. He knew that the Battle

Fleet could not be far off, and he was heading the Germans on an easterly course, so that Jellicoe should be able to strike to the best advantage.

At 5.50 on his port bow he sighted British cruisers, and six minutes later had a glimpse of the leading ships of the Battle Fleet five miles to the north. He at once changed course to east and increased speed, bringing the range down to 12,000 yards. He was forcing the enemy to a course on which Jellicoe might overwhelm him.

## II

The first stage was now over, the isolated fight of the battle-cruisers, and we must turn to the doings of the Battle Fleet itself. When Sir John Jellicoe at the same time as Beatty took in the *Galatea's* signals, he was distant from the battle-cruisers between fifty and sixty miles. He at once proceeded at full speed on a course south-east by south to join his colleague. The engine rooms made heroic efforts, and the whole fleet maintained a speed in excess of the trial speeds of some of the older vessels. It was no easy task to effect a junction at the proper moment, since there was an inevitable difference in estimating the rendezvous by "reckoning," and some of Beatty's messages, dispatched in the stress of action, were obscure. Moreover, the thick weather made it hard to recognize which ships were enemy and which were British when the moment of meeting came. What a spectacle must that strange rendezvous have presented had there been any eye to see it as a whole! Two great navies on opposite courses at high speeds driving toward each other: the German unaware of what was approaching; the British Battle Fleet, mile upon mile of steel giants whose van was far out of sight of its rear, twelve miles wrong in its reckoning, and so making contact almost by accident in a drift of smoke and sea-haze!

The 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron, under Rear-Admiral Hood, led the Battle Fleet. At 5.30 Hood observed flashes of gun-fire and heard the sound of guns to the south-westward. He sent the *Chester* (Captain Lawson) to investigate, and at 5.45 this ship engaged three or four enemy light cruisers, rejoining the 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron at 6.5. Hood was too far to the south and east, so he turned north-west, and five minutes later sighted Beatty. At 6.11 he received orders to take station ahead, and at 6.22 he led the line, "bringing his squadron into action ahead in a most inspiring manner, worthy of his great naval ancestors." He was now only 8,000 yards from the enemy, and under a desperate fire. At 6.34 his flagship, the *Invincible*, was sunk, and with her perished an admiral who in faithfulness and courage must rank with the nobler figures of British naval history. This

was at the head of the British line. Meantime the 1st and 2nd Cruiser Squadrons accompanying the Battle Fleet had also come into action. The *Defence* and the *Warrior* had crippled an enemy light cruiser, the *Wiesbaden*, about six o'clock. The *Canterbury*, which was in company with the 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron, had engaged enemy light cruisers and destroyers which were attacking the destroyers *Shark*, *Acasta*, and *Christopher*—an engagement in which the *Shark* was sunk. At 6.16 the 1st Cruiser Squadron, driving in the enemy light cruisers, had got into a position between the German and British Battle Fleets, since Sir Robert Arbuthnot was not aware of the enemy's approach, owing to the mist, until he was in close proximity to them.



*Topical Press*

ADMIRAL SIR TREVELYAN D. W. NAPIER

The *Defence* perished, and with it *Arbuthnot*. The *Warrior* passed to the rear disabled, and the *Black Prince* received damage which led later to her destruction.

Meantime Beatty's lighter craft had also been hotly engaged. At 6.5 the *Onslow* sighted an enemy light cruiser 6,000 yards off, which was trying to attack the *Lion* with torpedoes, and at once closed and engaged at a range from 4,000 to 2,000 yards. She then closed the German battle-cruisers, but after firing one torpedo she was struck amidships by a heavy shell. Undefeated, she fired her remaining three torpedoes at the enemy Battle Fleet. She was taken in tow by the *Defender*, who was herself damaged, and in spite of constant shelling the two gallant destroyers managed to retire in safety. Again, the 3rd Light Cruiser Squadron, under Rear-Admiral Napier, which was well ahead of the enemy on Beatty's starboard bow, attacked with torpedoes at 6.25, the *Falmouth* and the *Yarmouth* especially distinguishing themselves. One German battle-cruiser was observed to be hit and fall out of the line.



*Sport & General*

REAR-ADMIRAL THE HON. HORACE HOOD

The period between 6 o'clock and 6.40 saw the first crisis of the battle. The six divisions of the Grand Fleet had approached in six parallel columns, and it was Jellicoe's business to deploy as soon as he could locate the enemy. A few minutes after six he realized that the Germans were on his starboard side, and in close proximity; he resolved to form line of battle on the port wing column on a course south-east by east, and the order went out at 6.16. His reasons were—to avoid danger in the mist from the German destroyers ahead of their Battle Fleet; to prevent the *Marlborough's* division on the starboard wing from receiving the concentrated fire of the German Battle Fleet before the remaining divisions came into line; and to obviate the necessity of turning again to port to avoid the "overlap" which formation on the starboard wing would give the enemy van. This decision has been

vehemently criticized, but without justification. It may well be doubted whether to have formed line towards instead of away from the enemy would have substantially lessened the time of closing the enemy, and it would beyond doubt have exposed the British starboard division to a dangerous concentration of fire. As it was, the *Hercules* in the starboard division was in action within four minutes. The movement took twenty minutes to perform, and during that time the situation was highly delicate. But on the whole it was brilliantly carried out, and by 6.38 Scheer had given up his attempt to escape to the eastward, and was bending due south.

At 5.40 Hipper, under pressure from Evan-Thomas and the destroyers, had turned six points to starboard; at 5.55, being now overlapped by Beatty, who had closed the range, he turned sharp east; at six he bent south; at 6.12 he went about on a north-north-east course; and about 6.15 he came in contact with Hood's battle-cruisers, and realized that Jellicoe had arrived. For a quarter of an hour there was heavy fighting, during which his flagship, the *Lützow*, was badly damaged and the *Derfflinger* silenced. By 6.33 he was steering due south, followed by Scheer. The turn on interior lines gave him the lead of Beatty, who bent southward on a parallel course. The 1st and 2nd Battle-Cruiser Squadrons led; then the 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron; there followed the six divisions of the Battle Fleet—first the 2nd Battle Squadron, under Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Jerram; then the 4th, under Vice-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, containing Sir John Jellicoe's flagship, the *Iron Duke*; and finally the 1st, under Vice-Admiral Sir Cecil Burney. Evan-Thomas's 5th Battle Squadron, which had up to now been with Beatty, intended to form ahead of the Battle Fleet, but the nature of the deployment compelled it to form astern. The *Warspite* had her steering-gear damaged, and drifted towards the enemy's line under a furious cannonade. For a little she involuntarily interposed herself between the *Warrior* and the enemy's fire. She was presently extricated; but it is a curious proof of the caprices of fortune in battle that while a single shot at the beginning of the action sank the *Indefatigable*, this intense bombardment did the *Warspite* little harm. Only one gun turret was hit, and her engines were uninjured.

At 6.40 then, the two British fleets were united, the German line was headed off on the east, and Beatty and Jellicoe were working their way between the enemy and his home ports. Scheer and Hipper were now greatly outnumbered, and it seemed as if the British admirals had won a complete strategic success. But the fog was deepening, and the night was falling, and such conditions favoured the German tactics of retreat.

The third stage of the battle—roughly, two hours long—was an intermittent duel between the main fleets. Scheer had no wish to linger, and he moved southwards at his best speed, with the British line shepherding him on the east. He was definitely declining battle. Beatty had succeeded in crumpling up the head of the German line, and its battleships were now targets for the majority of his battle-cruisers. The visibility was becoming greatly reduced. The mist no longer merely veiled the targets, but often shut them out altogether. This not only made gunnery extraordinarily difficult, but prevented the British from keeping proper contact with the enemy. At the same time, such light as there was was more favourable to Beatty and Jellicoe than to Scheer. The German ships showed up at intervals against the sunset, as did Cradock's cruisers off Coronel, and gave the British gunners their chance.

Hipper and his battle-cruisers were in serious difficulties. At 6.15 he was compelled to leave the *Lützow*, and since by this time neither the *Derfflinger* nor the *Seydlitz* was fit for flag duties, he remained in a destroyer till a lull in the firing enabled him to board the *Moltke*. From seven o'clock onward Beatty was steering south, and gradually bearing round to south-west and west, in order to get into touch with the enemy. At 7.14 (Scheer having ordered Hipper to close the British again) he sighted them at a range of 15,000 yards—three battle-cruisers and two battleships of the *König* class. The sun had now fallen behind the western clouds, and at 7.18 Beatty increased speed to twenty-two knots, and re-engaged. The enemy showed signs of great distress, one ship being on fire and one dropping astern. The destroyers at the head of the line emitted volumes of smoke, which covered the ships behind with a pall, and enabled them at 7.37 to turn away and pass out of Beatty's sight. At that moment he signalled Jellicoe, asking that the van of the battleships should follow the battle-cruisers. At 7.58 the 1st and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons were ordered to sweep westwards and locate the head of the enemy's line, and at 8.20 Beatty altered course to west to support. He located three battleships, and engaged them at 10,000 yards range. The *Lion* repeatedly hit the leading ship, which turned away in flames with a heavy list to port, while the *Princess Royal* set fire to one battleship, and the third ship, under the attack of the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable*, hauled out of the line heeling over and on fire. Once more the mist descended and enveloped the enemy, who passed out of sight to the west.

To turn to the Battle Fleet, which had become engaged during deployment with the leading German battleships. It first took course south-east by east; but as it endeavoured to close it bore round to starboard. The aim of Scheer now was escape and nothing but escape, and every device was

used to screen his ships from British sight. Owing partly to the smoke palls and the clouds emitted by the destroyers, but mainly to the mist, it was never possible to see more than four or five enemy ships at a time. The ranges were, roughly, from 9,000 to 12,000 yards, and the action began with the British Battle Fleet in divisions on the enemy's bow. Under the British attack the enemy constantly turned away, and this had the effect of bringing Jellicoe to a position of less advantage on the enemy's quarter. At the same time it put the British fleet between Scheer and his base. In the short periods, however, during which the Germans were visible, they received a heavy fire and were constantly hit. Some were observed to haul out of line, and at least one was seen to sink. The German return fire at this stage was poor, and the damage caused to our battleships was trifling. Scheer relied for defence chiefly on torpedo attacks, which were favoured by the weather and the British position. A following fleet can make small use of torpedoes, as the enemy is moving away from it; while the enemy, on the other hand, has the advantage in this weapon, since his targets are moving towards him. Many German torpedoes were fired, but the only battleship hit was the *Marlborough*, which was, happily, able to remain in line and continue the action.

The 1st Battle Squadron, under Sir Cecil Burney, came into action at 6.17 with the 3rd German Battle Squadron at a range of 11,000 yards, but as the fight continued the range decreased to 9,000 yards. This squadron received most of the enemy's return fire, but it administered severe punishment. Take the case of the *Marlborough* (Captain George P. Ross). At 6.17 she began by firing seven salvos at a ship of the *Kaiser* class; she then engaged a cruiser and a battleship; at 6.54 she was hit by a torpedo; at 7.3 she reopened the action; and at 7.12 fired fourteen salvos at a ship of the *König* class, hitting her repeatedly till she turned out of line. The *Colossus*, of the same squadron, was hit, but only slightly damaged, and several other ships were frequently straddled by the enemy's fire. The 4th Battle Squadron, in the centre, was engaged with ships of the *König* and the *Kaiser* classes, as well as with battle-cruisers and light cruisers. Sir John Jellicoe's flagship the *Iron Duke*, engaged one of the *König* class at 6.30 at a range of 12,000 yards, quickly straddled it, and hit it repeatedly from the second salvo onwards till it turned away. The 2nd Battle Squadron in the van, under Sir Thomas Jerram, was in action with German battleships from 6.30 to 7.20, and engaged also a damaged battle-cruiser.

At 7.15, when the range had been closed and line ahead finally formed, came the main torpedo attack by German destroyers. In order to frustrate what he regarded as the most serious danger, Jellicoe ordered a turn of two

points to port, and presently a further two points, opening the range by about 1,750 yards. This caused a certain loss of time, and Scheer seized the occasion to turn well to starboard, with the result that contact between the battle fleets was presently lost. Jellicoe received Beatty's appeal at 7.54, and ordered the 2nd Battle Squadron to follow the battle-cruisers. But mist and smoke-screens and failing light were fatal hindrances to the pursuit, and even Beatty had soon to give up hope of sinking Hipper's damaged remnant.

By nine o'clock the enemy had completely disappeared, and darkness was falling fast. He had been veering round to a westerly course, and the whole British fleet lay between him and his home ports. It was a strategic situation which, but for the fog and the coming of night, would have meant his complete destruction. Sir John Jellicoe had now to make a difficult decision. It was impossible for the British fleet to close in the darkness in a sea swarming with torpedo craft and possibly with submarines, and accordingly he was compelled to make dispositions for the night which would ensure the safety of his ships and provide for a renewal of the action at dawn. For a night action the Germans were the better equipped as to their fire system, their recognition signals, and their searchlights, and he did not feel justified in presenting the enemy with a needless advantage. On this point Beatty, to the south and westward, was in full agreement. In his own words: "I manœuvred to remain between the enemy and his base, placing our flotillas in a position in which they would afford protection to the fleet from destroyer attack, and at the same time be favourably situated for attacking the enemy's heavier ships." He informed Jellicoe of his position and the bearing of the enemy, and turned to the course of the Battle Fleet.

#### IV

Jellicoe moved the Battle Fleet on a southerly course, with its four squadrons in four parallel columns a mile apart, so as to keep in touch. The destroyer flotillas were disposed from west to east five miles astern. The battle-cruisers and the cruisers lay to the west of the Battle Fleet; the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron north of it; and the 4th Light Cruiser Squadron to the south. The main action was over, and Jellicoe was now wholly out of touch with the enemy. His light craft were ordered to attend the Battle Fleet and not to attempt to find touch; hence he was in the position of a warder in the centre of a very broad gate, and an alert enemy had many opportunities of slipping past his flanks.

The night battle was waged on the British side entirely by the lighter craft. It began by an attack on our destroyers by German light cruisers; then

at 10.20 an enemy cruiser and four light cruisers came into action with our 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron, losing the *Frauenlob* and severely handling the *Southampton* and the *Dublin*. The 4th Destroyer Flotilla about 11.30 lost the *Sparrowhawk*, and later the *Tipperary*, but at midnight sunk the old battleship *Pommern*. The 12th Flotilla was in action between one and two in the morning, and torpedoed two enemy battleships. The 9th Flotilla lost the *Turbulent*, and after 2 a.m. the 13th Flotilla engaged four *Deutschlands*. The German ships made good their escape, but they lost in the process out of all proportion to the British light craft. No ships in the whole battle won greater glory than these. "They surpassed," wrote Sir John Jellicoe, "the very highest expectations that I had formed of them." An officer on one of the flotillas has described that uneasy darkness: "We couldn't tell what was happening. Every now and then out of the silence would come *bang, bang, boom*, as hard as it could go for ten minutes on end. The flash of the guns lit up the whole sky for miles and miles, and the noise was far more penetrating than by day. Then you would see a great burst of flame from some poor devil, as the searchlight switched on and off, and then perfect silence once more." The searchlights at times made the sea as white as marble, on which the destroyers moved "black," wrote an eye-witness, "as cockroaches on a floor."

At earliest dawn on 1st June the British fleet, which was lying south and west of the Horn Reef, turned northwards to collect its light craft, and to search for the enemy. It was ready and eager to renew the battle, for it had still twenty-two battleships untouched, and ample cruisers and light craft, while Scheer's command was scarcely any longer a fleet in being. But there was to be no second "Glorious First of June," for the enemy was not to be found. He had slipped in single ships astern of our fleet during the night, and was then engaged in moving homewards like a flight of wild duck that had been scattered by shot. He was greatly helped by the weather, which at dawn on 1st June was thicker than the night before, the visibility being less than four miles. About 3.30 a.m. a Zeppelin passed over the British fleet, and reported to Scheer the position of the British squadrons. All morning till eleven o'clock Sir John Jellicoe waited on the battleground, watching the lines of approach to German ports, and attending the advent of the enemy. But no enemy came. "I was reluctantly compelled to the conclusion," wrote Sir John, "that the High Seas Fleet had returned into port." Till 1.15 p.m. the British fleet swept the seas, picking up survivors from some of our lost destroyers. After that hour waiting was useless, so the fleet sailed for its bases, which were reached next day, Friday, 2nd June. There it fuelled and

replenished with ammunition, and at 9.30 that evening was ready for further action.

## V

The German fleet, being close to its bases, was able to publish at once its own version of the battle. A resounding success was a political necessity for Germany, for she needed a fillip for her new loan, and it is likely that she would have claimed a victory if any remnant of her fleets had reached harbour. As it was, she was overjoyed at having escaped annihilation, and the magnitude of her jubilation may be taken as the measure of her fears. It is of the nature of a naval action that it gives ample scope for fiction. There are no spectators. Victory and defeat are not followed, as in a land battle, by a gain or loss of ground. A well-disciplined country with a strict censorship can frame any tale it pleases, and hold to it for months without fear of detection at home. Germany claimed at once a decisive success. According to her press the death-blow had been given to Britain's command of the sea. The Emperor soared into poetry. "The gigantic fleet of Albion, ruler of the seas, which, since Trafalgar, for a hundred years has imposed on the whole world a bond of sea tyranny, and has surrounded itself with a nimbus of invincibility, came into the field. That gigantic Armada approached, and our fleet engaged it. The British fleet was beaten. The first great hammer blow was struck, and the nimbus of British world supremacy disappeared." Germany admitted certain losses—one old battleship, the *Pommern*; three small cruisers, the *Wiesbaden*, *Elbing*, and *Frauenlob*; and five destroyers. A little later she confessed to the loss of a battle-cruiser, *Lützow*, and the light cruiser *Rostock*, which at first she had kept secret "for political reasons."

It was a striking tribute to the prestige of the British navy that the German claim was received with incredulity in all Allied and in most neutral countries. But false news, once it has started, may be dangerous; and in some quarters, even among friends of the Allies, there was at first a disposition to accept the German version. The ordinary man is apt to judge of a battle, whether on land or sea, by the crude test of losses. The British Admiralty announced its losses at once with a candour which may have been undiplomatic, but which revealed a proud confidence in the invulnerability of the navy and the steadfastness of the British people. These losses were: one first-class battle-cruiser, the *Queen Mary*; two lesser battle-cruisers, the *Indefatigable* and *Invincible*; three armoured cruisers, the *Defence*, *Black Prince*, and *Warrior*; and eight destroyers, the *Tipperary*, *Ardent*, *Fortune*, *Shark*, *Sparrowhawk*, *Nestor*, *Nomad*, and *Turbulent*.<sup>[1]</sup> More vital than the

ships was the loss of thousands of gallant men, including some of the most distinguished of the younger admirals and captains.

Sir John Jellicoe at the time estimated the German losses as two battleships of the largest class, one of the *Deutschland* class, one battle-cruiser, five light cruisers, six destroyers, and one submarine. He overstated the immediate, and understated the ultimate damage. The German account was formally accurate, but her real loss was infinitely greater. The *Seydlitz* and the *Derfflinger* limped home almost total wrecks; the battleship *Ostfriesland* struck a mine; the *Moltke* and the *Von der Tann* took weeks to repair; almost every vessel had been hit, some of them grievously. Scheer has declared that, apart from the two battle-cruisers, the fleet was ready to take to sea by the middle of August; but the truth is that it was never again a fighting fleet. Jutland, which had at first the colour of victory, was an irremediable disaster. After the war was over, Captain Persius wrote in the *Berliner Tageblatt*: "The losses sustained by us were immense, in spite of the fact that luck was on our side, and on June 1, 1916, it was clear to every one of intelligence that the fight would be, and must be, the only one to take place." The fact was recognized by reasonable minds everywhere, and it was only the ignorant who imagined that the loss of a few ships could weaken British naval prestige. There was much to praise in the German conduct of the action. The German battle-cruiser gunnery was admirable; Scheer's retreat when heavily outnumbered was skilfully conducted, and his escape in the night, even when we admit his special advantages, was a brilliant performance. But the one test of success is the fulfilment of a strategic intention, and Germany's most signally failed. From the moment of Scheer's return to port the British fleet held the sea. The blockade which Germany thought to break was drawn tighter than ever. Her secondary aim had been so to weaken the British fleet that it should be more nearly on an equality with her own. Again she failed, and the margin of British superiority was in no way impaired. Lastly, she hoped to isolate and destroy a British division. That, too, failed. The British Battle-Cruiser Fleet remained a living and effective force, while the German Battle-Cruiser Fleet was only a shadow. The result of the battle of 31st May was that Britain was more than ever confirmed in her mastery of the waters.

Nevertheless the fact that the only occasion on which the main fleets met did not result in the annihilation of the enemy was a disappointment and a surprise to the British people, and criticism has been busy ever since with the British leadership. It has been asked why the Admiralty at 5.12 p.m. on 31st May ordered the Harwich force to sea, and then cancelled the order for ten hours—and this when Jellicoe had long before asked that all available

ships and torpedo craft should be ordered to the scene of the Fleet's action as soon as it was known to be imminent. Beatty's dash and resolution have been universally commended, but he has been criticized for allowing Evan-Thomas's squadron to lag so far behind that it scarcely joined in the first stages of the battle-cruiser action, and for the lack of precision in his messages to Jellicoe before their junction. But it is the conduct of the Commander-in-Chief which has principally been called in question. He has been accused of a lack of ardour in engaging the enemy, as shown in his deploying to port instead of to starboard; in his turning away between 7.15 and 7.30 p.m. on 31st May to avoid torpedo attacks; and in his refusal of a night battle. On the first and third of these points it would appear that the bulk of expert naval opinion is on his side; on the second the arguments are more evenly balanced, and the matter will long continue in dispute. Even had no turn away been ordered, it is doubtful whether the range could have been kept closed, owing to the bad light and Scheer's persistent turning to starboard. But from the controversy there emerges a larger issue, on which naval historians must eternally take sides. Was Jutland fought in the true Trafalgar tradition? Had the British Commander-in-Chief the single-hearted resolve to destroy the enemy at all costs, content to lose half or more than half his fleet provided no enemy ship survived? It is idle to deny that the destruction of the High Seas Fleet would have been of incalculable value to the Allies, for it would have taken the heart out of the German people; would have crippled, even if it did not prevent, the submarine campaign which in the next twelve months was to sink 25 out of every 100 merchantmen that left our shores; and would have opened up sea communication with Russia and thereby prevented the calamity of the following year. Was such a final victory possible at Jutland had Jellicoe handled the Battle Fleet as Beatty handled his battle-cruisers?

The answer must remain a speculation. It is probable, indeed, that no risks accepted by the Commander-in-Chief would have altered a result due primarily to weather conditions and the late hour when the battle was joined. But the fact remains that Jellicoe's policy was that of the limited offensive. He was convinced that his duty was not to press the enemy beyond a point which might involve the destruction of his own weapon. The situation, as he saw it, had changed since the days of Trafalgar. Then only a relatively small part of the British fleet was engaged; now the Grand Fleet included the great majority of the vessels upon which Britain and her Allies had to rely for safety. There was ever present to his mind, in his own words, "the necessity for not leaving anything to chance in a Fleet action, because our Fleet was the one and only factor that was vital to the existence of the Empire, as

indeed of the Allied cause. We had no reserve outside the Battle Fleet which could in any way take its place should disaster befall it, or even should its margin of superiority over the enemy be eliminated." Moreover, the British navy had already achieved its main purpose; was any further gain worth the risk of losing that victory? It was a war of peoples, and even the most decisive triumph at sea would not end the contest, while a defeat would strike from the Allied hands the weapon on which all others depended. Such considerations are of supreme importance; if it be argued that they belong to statesmanship rather than to naval tactics, it may be replied that the commander of the British Grand Fleet should be statesman as well as seaman. A good sailor, of proved courage and resolution, chose to decide in conformity with what he regarded as the essential interests of his land and against the tradition of the service and the natural bias of his spirit, and his countrymen may well accept and respect that decision.

## VI

Following close upon the greatest naval fight of all history came the news of a sea tragedy which cost Britain the life of her foremost soldier. It had been arranged that Lord Kitchener should undertake a mission to Russia to consult with the Russian commanders as to the coming Allied offensive, and to arrange certain details of policy concerning the supply of munitions. On the evening of Monday, 5th June, he and his party embarked in the cruiser *Hampshire*, which had returned three days before from the Battle of Jutland. About 8 p.m. that evening the ship sank in wild weather off the western coast of the Orkneys, having struck a mine in an unswept channel. Four boats left the vessel, but all were overturned. One or two survivors were washed ashore on the inhospitable coast, but of Kitchener and his colleagues no word was ever heard again.

The news of his death filled the whole Empire with profound sorrow, and the shock was felt no less by our Allies, who saw in him one of the chief protagonists of their cause. The British army went into mourning, and all classes of the community were affected with a grief which had not been paralleled since the death of Queen Victoria. Labour leader, trade-union delegate, and the patron of the conscientious objector were as heartfelt in their regret as his professional colleagues or the army which he had created. He died on the eve of a great Allied offensive, and did not live to see the consummation of his labours. But in a sense his work was finished, for more than any other man he had the credit of building up that vast British force which was destined to be the determining factor in the war.

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[1] The class and displacement of the lost ships were as follows:—

		Tons.
1. <i>Queen Mary</i>	Battle-cruiser	27,000
2. <i>Indefatigable</i>	„ „	18,750
3. <i>Invincible</i>	„ „	17,250
4. <i>Defence</i>	Armoured cruiser	14,600
5. <i>Black Prince</i>	„ „	13,550
6. <i>Warrior</i>	„ „	13,550
7. <i>Tipperary</i>	Destroyer	1,430
8. <i>Ardent</i>	„	935
9. <i>Fortune</i>	„	935
10. <i>Shark</i>	„	935
11. <i>Sparrowhawk</i>	„	935
12. <i>Nestor</i>	„	1,000
13. <i>Nomad</i>	„	1,000
14. <i>Turbulent</i>	„	1,430
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	Total	113,300

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SUBMARINE MENACE: 1916

The German High Seas Fleet—The Dover Patrol—Germany's Submarine Successes—The "Submarine Cruiser"—British Methods of Defence—Jellicoe becomes First Sea Lord.

The second half of the year 1916 brought no great sea battle to break the monotony of the vigil of the British navy. The events which led to the Battle of Jutland were not repeated. Movements there were both in the North Sea and the Baltic, but none was followed by an engagement of capital ships. The autumn was indeed a period of high significance in naval warfare, but the struggle was waged below the surface. The face of the northern waters saw no encounter which deserved the name of a serious battle.

For a moment in August there was hope of better things. On Saturday the 19th, the German High Seas Fleet came out, preceded by a large number of scouting craft and accompanied by Zeppelins. They found the British forces in strength, and deemed it wiser to alter course and return to port. In searching for the enemy we lost two light cruisers by submarine attack—the *Nottingham*<sup>[1]</sup> (Captain C. B. Miller) and the *Falmouth*<sup>[2]</sup> (Captain John D. Edwards)—but happily the loss of life was small. One German submarine was destroyed, and another rammed and damaged. That same day the British submarine E23 attacked a German battleship of the *Nassau* class, and hit her with two torpedoes. The enemy vessel was last seen, in a precarious condition, being escorted back to harbour by destroyers.

There was no further incident till the close of October, when destroyers of the German flotilla, which had its base at Zeebrugge, placed a bold exploit to their credit. The safety of the mighty Channel ferry, which had carried millions of our troops safely backward and forward between France and England, had become almost an article of faith with the British people. In spite of drifting mines and submarine activity our lines of communication had remained untouched, and Sir Reginald Bacon, the admiral commanding the Dover patrols, was able to report in his dispatch of 27th July 1916 that not a single life had been lost in the vast transport operations of two years. The night of Thursday 26th October, was moonless and stormy, and, under cover of the weather, ten German destroyers slipped out of Zeebrugge and made their way down Channel. Air reconnaissance had given them the exact

location of our mine-fields and our main cross-Channel route. Creeping along inshore in the dark, they managed to elude the vigilance of the British patrols. They fell in with an empty transport, *The Queen*, which they promptly torpedoed. The vessel kept afloat for six hours, and all her crew were saved. Six of our drifters were also sunk, and then British destroyers came on the scene. One of them, the *Flirt*,<sup>[3]</sup> was surprised at close quarters by the enemy and sunk, while another, the *Nubian*,<sup>[4]</sup> was torpedoed while attacking the invaders, and went aground, her tow having parted in the heavy weather. The enemy made off without apparently suffering any losses from our gun or torpedo fire; but there was evidence that two of his destroyers afterwards struck mines and perished.

Such were the bare facts of an incident which, for the moment, agitated public opinion and increased the uneasiness as to our naval position which the growth of submarine activity had already engendered. In itself it was a small affair—a bold enterprise which had every chance in its favour, for the confusion and darkness made its success almost certain. The wonder was not that it happened, but that it had not happened before. Major Moraht and others had long been pointing out the importance of the Channel ferry for Britain, and it would have been little short of miraculous if nothing had ever occurred to threaten that line of communication. The German adventure was to be expected so long as the nest of pirates at Zeebrugge was not smoked out or hermetically sealed up, and such true preventive measures were both difficult and dangerous so long as the main German fleet was not out of action.

Three more incidents of what may be called open fighting fell to be recorded before the close of the year. On the night of 1st November the *Oldambt*, a Dutch steamer, was captured by German destroyers near the North Hinder Lightship, a prize crew was put on board, and the vessel was making for Zeebrugge. Early next morning she was overtaken by British destroyers, and the prize crew made prisoners. Five German destroyers which came up as escort were engaged and put to flight. On 7th November a British submarine, under Commander Noel Laurence, fell in with a German squadron off the coast of Jutland, and hit two battleships of the *Kaiser* class. Three days later German torpedo craft of the latest and largest type, under cover of fog, attempted a raid on the entrance to the Gulf of Finland. They were engaged by Russian destroyers, and driven off in confusion, losing from six to nine vessels.

The main German successes during these months were won against liners and hospital ships. With regard to the latter Germany followed her

familiar method. She attacked vessels which bore conspicuously the mark of their non-belligerent mission, attacked them often in broad daylight, and then, to justify herself, invented the legend that they were laden with ammunition and war material.<sup>[5]</sup> On 21st November there was a flagrant instance in the torpedoing of the *Britannic*, in the Zea Channel off the south-east point of Attica. The *Britannic*, which in gross tonnage was the largest British ship afloat, was carrying over 1,000 wounded soldiers from Salonika, most of whom were saved, the total death-roll being only about fifty. The outrage took place in the clear morning light, when the character of the great vessel was apparent to the most purblind submarine commander. On 6th November the P. and O. liner *Arabia*, a sister ship to the *India* and the *Persia*, which had been previously destroyed, was torpedoed without warning in the Mediterranean, all the passengers and the majority of the crew being saved.

Since the war began the most striking fact in naval warfare had been the development of the range of action of the submarine. At first it was believed in Britain that an enemy submarine could do little more than reach the British coast, and the torpedoing of the *Pathfinder* on 5th September and of the three *Cressys* off the Hook of Holland on September 22, 1914, came as an unpleasant surprise to popular opinion. In December of that year Tirpitz himself announced that the larger under-water boats could remain out for as much as fourteen days at a time. Two months later the U-boats were in the Irish Channel, and in May 1915 they were in the Mediterranean. There, to be sure, they were assisted by depots *en route*, and the full extent of a submarine's range was not understood till, in July 1916, the *Deutschland* reached the American coast. This exploit so heartened Germany that she announced a long-range blockade of Britain, and promised in October to begin operations. The Allied Governments protested to neutral states against the extension to submarines of the ordinary rule of international law which permits a warship to enjoy for twenty-four hours the hospitality of foreign territorial waters. They urged that any belligerent submarine entering a neutral port should be detained there, on the ground that such vessels, being submersible, could not be properly identified at sea, and must escape the normal control and observation of other types of warships.

On Saturday, 7th October, the German U53 (Captain Rose)<sup>[6]</sup> arrived at Newport, Rhode Island. She did not take in supplies, but she received certain information, and presently departed. During the next two days she sank by torpedo or gun-fire eight vessels in the vicinity of the Nantucket Lightship, including one Dutch and one Norwegian steamer. There was no life lost, owing to the prompt appearance of American destroyers. The

performance created something like a panic in American shipping circles, and for a day or two outgoing ships were detained. But it was soon obvious that talk of a blockade of the American coast would awaken a very ugly temper in the United States, and could not be defended by the wildest stretch of the rules of international law. Submarines which took at least a month coming and going from German waters could not institute any effective blockade without illegal assistance on the American side, and the Government of Washington was determined that the temptation should not arise. Accordingly the performance of U53 remained unique. The *Deutschland* arrived on its second voyage on 1st November, and the occasional transit of other submarines continued; but the Nantucket doings were not repeated, and the talk of long-range blockade was suddenly dropped.<sup>[7]</sup>

But in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and in all the waters adjacent to the British and German coasts, the autumn saw a determined revival of Germany's submarine campaign. The comparative immunity which had endured throughout the summer was violently broken, and the tale of Allied and neutral losses quickly mounted to a dangerous figure. Germany was operating now with the large boats laid down in the spring of 1915—boats with a radius of 12,000 miles, carrying deck-guns with a range of 6,000 yards, with strong upper works capable of resisting hits by six-pounders, and with a surface speed of twenty-five knots, and a submerged speed of twelve. In the last six months of 1916 she completed not less than eighty new craft. Her promise to President Wilson of May 1916 was utterly disregarded. Vessels were torpedoed without warning, and without provision being made for the safety of the passengers. The *Marina*, for example, which was destroyed off the Irish coast at the end of October with considerable loss of life, had many Americans on board; but Berlin gambled on the preoccupation of the American people with the Presidential election. Swedish, Danish, and Dutch vessels suffered heavily, and the Norwegian merchant navy was a special target owing to Norway's refusal to permit German submarines inside her territorial waters. The U-boats became insolent in their daring, and in the beginning of December one of them shelled the town of Funchal, Madeira, in broad daylight, and sank several ships in her harbour.

The barbarity of the enemy grew with his successes. The *Westminster* was torpedoed without warning on 14th December, and sunk in five minutes. As the crew tried to escape, the submarine shelled them at 3,000 yards range, sinking one of the boats, and killing the master and chief engineer. By the end of the year Germany claimed that the Allied tonnage

was disappearing from the sea at the rate of 10,000 tons a day; and though the figure was considerably overstated, yet beyond doubt a maritime situation had arisen, the gravest which had yet faced the Allies since the beginning of the war.

The reason of Germany's success was not far to seek. So long as the U-boats confined themselves to the Narrow Seas we could by nets and other devices take heavy toll of them, and nullify their efforts. But all our normal defensive measures were idle when they extended their range and operated in the open waters of the Atlantic. A new problem had arisen, to be met by new methods. Germany was attempting to meet the British blockade by a counter-blockade—to cripple the seaborne trade which brought food to the people of Britain and munitions of war to all the Allies. Our available merchant tonnage was shrinking daily, and, with labour already taxed to its utmost, it looked as if it might be difficult to replace the wastage. An extravagant rise in prices, a genuine scarcity of food, even the crippling of some vital section of the Allied munitioning, were possibilities that now loomed not too remotely on the horizon.

To cope with the German campaign there seemed at the moment to be three possible plans—two practicable, but inadequate; one summary and final, but hard to achieve. Of a fourth—to make the sea no place for submarines—the possibility was not yet envisaged. The first was to arm all merchantmen. This would not prevent torpedoing, but it would make destruction by bombs or deck-guns more difficult, and since no submarine could carry a large stock of torpedoes, the power of mischief of the underwater boat would be thereby limited. Such arming of merchantmen had the drawback that it would absorb a large number of guns for which there was other and urgent use, or in the alternative would compel munition factories to switch off from their normal work to ensure their production. It would also induce the Germans to revive wholesale their practice of sinking without warning. The second plan was to revive an old fashion, and make all merchantmen sail in convoy. This method was unpopular among shipowners because of its inconvenience and delay, and it had the further objection that it would give the enemy submarines an easy target, assuming that they eluded the vigilance of the escorting warships. Moreover, the type of fast lighter craft required for escort could only be provided by a large amount of new construction, or by withdrawing that type from its duties with the main battle squadrons. Both of the plans were confessed to be palliatives rather than cures, and both made further demands upon the already severely taxed reserve of British labour.

The one final policy against submarines was to carry our mine-fields up to the edge of the German harbours, and to pen the enemy within his own bases. But clearly this aggressive campaign was most hazardous so long as the main German fleet remained in being. It would be impossible, while the enemy's High Seas Fleet was still intact, to utilize a large part of our fleet in mining operations in his home waters without running the risk of a division of strength and a sudden disaster. The true remedy for the submarine menace was a naval victory which would destroy the better part of the capital ships. This did not mean that Sir John Jellicoe was forthwith to run his head against the defences of Wilhelmshaven, and risk everything in an attempt to bring the enemy to action; but it did mean that the last word, as always, lay with the main fleets, and that to rest on our laurels because the German High Seas Fleet was more or less immobilized was to repose upon a false security. The truth was that our command of the sea was far from absolute. We had not neutralized the enemy's fleet so long as it remained above water, and the development of submarine warfare had impaired the safety of our ocean-borne trade. We possessed a conditional superiority, but we could not make it actual and reap the fruits of it till we had won a decisive sea battle.

This truth was obscured during the autumn of 1916 by some unfortunate publications of Mr. Winston Churchill, who, having returned from the front, and being without official responsibility, was free to comment on the situation. "The primary and dominant fact," he wrote, "is that from its base in Scottish waters the British fleet delivers a continuous attack upon the vital necessities of the enemy, whereas the enemy, from his home bases produces no corresponding effect upon us." He urged the country to rest satisfied with this "silent attack," and criticized the Battle of Jutland as an "audacious but unnecessary effort" to bring the enemy to action. No necessity of war, he argued obliged us to accept the risk of fighting at a distance from our bases and in enemy waters. Apart from the fact that Mr. Churchill's view was in conflict with principles that had always governed our sea policy, his conclusion was wholly unwarranted by the facts. The German fleet, by the mere fact that it existed intact, did "exercise a continuous attack upon our vital necessities." It crippled our efforts to overcome the very real submarine menace. A successful general action, so far from being a luxury and a trimming, was the chief demand of the moment, for only by the shattering of Scheer could the U-boats be corralled, blinded, and effectively checkmated.

The anxiety of the nation was presently reflected in certain important changes made in the high naval commands. For some time it had been urged that the post of First Sea Lord was the most vital in the navy, and that the man who held it should be one who had large experience of actual service

under modern conditions. For twenty-eight months Sir John Jellicoe had been continuously at sea. He had been aforesaid a successful Admiralty official, and understood headquarters procedure; but, above all, he had learned at first hand the problems of the hour. It is desirable during any campaign that the man with first-hand knowledge of realities should be given the directing power at home. The main duty was to cope with the enemy submarine, and to solve that conundrum needed the fullest experience of the enemy's methods. The policy had been followed when Sir William Robertson was brought back from France as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and the same course was now taken with the Commander-in-Chief at sea. On 4th December Sir John Jellicoe was gazetted First Sea Lord in place of Sir Henry Jackson, while Sir David Beatty assumed command of the Grand Fleet.

The new appointments were welcomed by the nation, and did something to appease the critics. The crying needs of the moment were that our naval policy should be considered not as a thing by itself, but as a part of the whole strategic plan of the Allies, and that the administration at headquarters should be in the closest touch with the requirements of the fighting line. Sir John Jellicoe was not only a great sea-captain, but a trained administrator and a man of statesmanlike width and foresight, and he brought to his new office an unequalled experience of active service. Moreover, the mere change of duties was in itself desirable, for an unrelieved vigil of twenty-eight months must tell upon the strongest constitution and the stoutest nerve. In all human enterprises some readjustment of *personnel* is periodically necessary, if only to ensure that variation of tasks which is the best rest and refreshment to men of action. The new Commander-in-Chief was the man to whom fate had granted the widest experience of actual fighting. In two and a half years Sir John Jellicoe had been no more than two and a half hours within range of the enemy. Sir David Beatty had had better fortune, for he had been at the Battle of the Bight of Heligoland, at the battle of January 24, 1915, and had been in action through the whole of the Battle of Jutland. At the age of forty-six he succeeded to the highest fighting command in the British navy, and those who believed that there was no final settlement of our sea difficulties except in a decisive victory over the main enemy fleet rejoiced that in Sir David Beatty the spirit of the offensive was incarnate.

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- [1] The *Nottingham* had a displacement of 5,400 tons and 25 knots. She had been in the Battles of the Dogger Bank and Jutland.
- [2] The *Falmouth*, which was also at the Battle of Jutland, had 5,250 tons and 25 knots.
- [3] The *Flirt* belonged to “C” class, and had 380 tons and 30 knots.
- [4] The *Nubian* was of the “F” group, and had 985 tons and 33 knots. Both had been engaged in the operations off the Belgian coast under Rear-Admiral Hood in the autumn of 1914.
- [5] The military purpose was, of course, to compel Britain to draw upon her scanty supply of destroyers to act as escorts to such vessels.
- [6] This was perhaps the most advertised of all German submarines, and though eagerly pursued was never destroyed by the Allies. It was, however, crippled for good by an American sub-chaser about two months before the end of the war.
- [7] The ocean-cruiser type of submarine had a crew of 70 and a displacement approaching 3,000 tons. But they were slow to submerge and difficult to handle, and on the whole played a very small part in the war.

## CHAPTER XVI

### GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES

#### The Effect on America of Germany's New Submarine Policy— America declares War.

The ripening of American opinion against the aims and methods of the Teutonic League was a slow process, for the great republic had a long road to travel from her historic isolation to the point of junction with the Allies. But the wiser statesmen in Europe saw that, behind the academic decorum of America, the forces of enlightenment were at work, and they possessed their souls in patience. For with a strong people a slow change is a sure change.

The initial atrocities in Belgium and France had induced in the greater part of the educated class in America the conviction that Germany was a menace to civilization. But such a conviction was still far removed from the feeling that America was called on to play an active part in the war. Her pride was first wounded by Germany's insistence that as a neutral the United States had no right to trade in munitions with the Allied Powers. The American view was well stated in the official presentation of America's case issued after she entered the struggle by the Committee of Public Information. "If, with all other neutrals, we refused to sell munitions to belligerents, we could never in time of a war of our own obtain munitions from neutrals, and the nation which had accumulated the largest reserves of war supplies in times of peace would be assured of victory. The militarist state that invested its money in arsenals would be at a fatal advantage over a free people that invested its money in schools. To write into international law that neutrals should not trade in munitions would be to hand over the world to the rule of the nation with the largest armament factories."

Then came the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and the preposterous demand that America should surrender her right of free travel by sea. Concurrent with the prevarications and belated apologies of Berlin ran a campaign of German machination and outrages in the New World. To quote again from the same document: "In this country official agents of the Central Powers—protected from a criminal prosecution by diplomatic immunity—conspired against our internal peace, placed spies and *agents provocateurs* throughout the length and breadth of our land, and even in high positions of trust in

departments of our Government. While expressing a cordial friendship for the people of the United States, the Government of Germany had its agents at work both in Latin America and in Japan. They bought and subsidized papers and supported speakers there to arouse feelings of bitterness and distrust against us in those friendly nations, in order to embroil us in war. They were inciting to insurrection in Cuba, in Haiti, and in Santo Domingo; their hostile hand was stretched out to take the Danish Islands; and everywhere in South America they were abroad sowing the seeds of dissension, trying to stir up one nation against another, and all against the United States. In their sum these various operations amounted to direct assault of the Monroe doctrine.”

The complicated negotiations between Washington and Berlin have already been described in these pages. When on May 4, 1916, Germany grudgingly promised that ships should not be sunk without warning, it seemed as if the controversy was settled. But meantime two currents of opinion in America had been growing in volume. One was the desire to make this war the last fought under the old bad conditions of national isolation, to devise a League to Enforce Peace, which would police the world on behalf of international justice. Of such ideals Mr. Wilson was a declared champion. The second was the conviction that this war was in very truth America’s war; that the Allies were fighting for America’s interests, the greatest of which was the maintenance of public right. To this creed Mr. Root and Mr. Roosevelt had borne eloquent testimony. In the light of it the various diplomatic wrangles with Britain over her naval policy became things of small moment. “As long as militarism continues to be a serious danger, peaceful neutral nations, by insisting on the emancipation of commerce from interference by sea-power, would be adopting a suicidal policy. . . . The control of commerce in war is now exercised by Great Britain because she possesses a preponderant navy. Rather than that control should be emasculated, Great Britain must be allowed to continue its exercise. . . . We are more than ever sure that this nation does right in accepting the British blockade and defying the submarine. It does right, because the war against Britain, France, and Belgium is a war against the civilization of which we are a part. To be *fair* in such a war would be a betrayal.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The Presidential election in the autumn of 1916 caused public discussion on the question to languish, but it did not stop the steady growth of opinion. Then came the revival of German submarine activity in the early winter, and the hectoring German peace proposals, which boasted so loudly of German conquests, and asked the world to accept them as the basis of all

negotiations. Mr. Wilson, secure in power by his second election, and pledged to the ideal of a League of Nations, dispatched his own request to the belligerents to define their aims, for he saw very clearly that the hour of America's decision was drawing nigh. The interchange of notes which followed cleared the air, and established the fact that American and Allied opinion were moving in the same channels. On 22nd January the President, in an eloquent address to the Senate, outlined the kind of peace which America could guarantee. The area of agreement had been defined, and the essential difference was soon to leap into blinding clarity. For on 31st January, as we have seen, Germany tore up all her former promises, and informed Washington that she was about to enter upon an unrestricted submarine campaign.

The Rubicon had been reached, and there could be no turning back. The German Ambassador was handed his passports on 3rd February, and Mr. Gerard summoned from Berlin. On the same day the President announced to both Houses of Congress the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany. He showed by his speeches that he took the step unwillingly. He drew a distinction between the German people and the German Government—the old distinction to which idealists in democratic countries were apt to cling till facts forced them to relinquish it. He declared that he could not believe that the German Government meant “to do in fact, what they have warned us they feel at liberty to do,” and that only “actual overt acts” would convince him of their hostile purpose. But he ended with the solemn announcement that if American ships were sunk and American lives were lost he would come again to Congress and ask for power to take the necessary steps for the protection of his people.

The immediate result of the German decree was that American passenger ships were deterred from sailing for Europe. This brought the situation home very vividly to the dwellers on the Eastern states, but had only a remote interest for the inhabitants of the West and the middle West. At first there was no very flagrant offence against American shipping, though the *Housatonic* was sunk on 3rd February and the *Lyman M. Law* on 13th February. But the situation was none the less intolerable, and on the 26th Mr. Wilson again addressed Congress, pointing out that Germany had placed a practical embargo on America's shipping, and asking for authority to arm her vessels effectually for defence. What he contemplated was an armed neutrality which should stop short of war. On 1st March the House of Representatives gave this authority by 403 votes to 13, but in the Senate a similar vote was held up by a handful of pacifists, and could not be passed before the session came automatically to an end on 4th March. Nevertheless

an overwhelming majority of the Senate signed a manifesto in favour of the Bill.

Meantime various events had roused the temper of the country. On 26th February the *Laconia* was sunk and eight Americans were drowned. On 1st March there was published an order which had been issued on 19th January by Herr Zimmermann, of the German Foreign Office, to the German Minister in Mexico. The latter was instructed to form an alliance with Mexico in the event of war breaking out between Germany and the United States, and to offer as a bribe the provinces of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. In the same document it was suggested that efforts might be made to seduce Japan from the Allies and bring her into partnership with Germany. Such proposals inspired the deepest resentment in the West and the middle West, where the submarine atrocities were least realized. There was another consideration which was beginning to impress thoughtful Americans. Even if she avoided war, America would be forced one day or another to negotiate a settlement with Germany. Peace would not come to her automatically on the conclusion of hostilities, and her position in peace negotiations would depend on how the war ended. Mr. Wilson realized that his present policy could not endure. In his inaugural address of 5th March he said: "We have been obliged to arm ourselves to make good our claim to a certain minimum of right and of freedom of action. We stand firm in armed neutrality, since it seems that in no other way we can demonstrate what it is we insist upon and cannot forgo. We may be drawn on by circumstances, not by our own purpose or desire, to a more active assertion of our rights as we see them, and a more immediate association with the great struggle itself."

The order for arming merchant ships was issued by the American Government on the 12th of March. A week later came the "overt acts" of which the President had spoken. On the 16th the *Vigilancia* was sunk and five American lives lost. On the 17th the *City of Memphis* and the *Illinois* followed suit. On the 21st the *Healdton* was torpedoed off the Dutch coast and outside the prohibited zone, and seven Americans perished. On 1st April came the loss of the *Aztec*, when twenty-eight Americans were lost. The defiance was flagrant and unmistakable. The feeling against Germany rose to fever heat. At last the country was ripe for the final step. In the words of the official statement: "Judging the German Government now in the light of our own experience through the long and patient years of our honest attempt to keep the peace, we could see the Great Autocracy and read her record through the war. And we found that record damnable. . . . With a fanatical faith in the destiny of German *kultur* as the system that must rule the world, the Imperial Government's actions have through years of boasting, double-

dealing, and deceit, tended towards aggression upon the rights of others. . . . Its record . . . has given not only to the Allies but to liberal peoples throughout the world the conviction that this menace to human liberties everywhere must be utterly shorn of its power for harm. For the evil it has effected has ranged far out of Europe—out upon the open seas, where its submarines, in defiance of law and the concepts of humanity, have blown up neutral vessels and covered the waves with the dead and dying, men and women and children alike. Its agents have conspired against the peace of neutral nations everywhere, sowing the seeds of dissension, ceaselessly endeavouring by tortuous methods of deceit, of bribery, false promises, and intimidation, to stir up brother nations one against the other, in order that the liberal world might not be able to unite, in order that the Autocracy might emerge triumphant from the war. All this we know from our own experience with the Imperial Government. As they have dealt with Europe, so they have dealt with us and with all mankind.”

The case against Germany was plain, and an event had occurred which made an alliance easier with Germany’s foes. On 9th March the Revolution broke out in Petrograd; by 16th March the autocracy had fallen and a popular Government ruled in Russia. The issue was now clear, not as a strife between dynasties, but as the eternal war of liberty and despotism, and no free people could be deaf to the call. The special session of Congress was advanced by a fortnight, and on 2nd April Mr. Wilson asked it for a declaration of war.

The President’s message on that day will rank among the greatest of America’s many famous state documents. Couched in terms of studious moderation and dignity, it stated not only the case of America against Germany, but of civilization against barbarism and popular government against tyranny. He began with an indictment of the submarine campaign, recalling the promise given on May 4, 1916, and its complete reversal by the decree of January 31, 1917. “Vessels of every kind, whatever their flag, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom without warning and without thought of help or mercy for those on board, the vessels of friendly neutrals along with those of belligerents. Even hospital ships<sup>[2]</sup> and ships carrying relief to the sorely bereaved and stricken people of Belgium, though the latter were provided with safe-conduct through the proscribed areas by the German Government itself, and were distinguished by unmistakable marks of identity, have been sunk with the same reckless lack of compassion or of principle.” Germany had swept away the last fragments of international rights, and her new warfare was not against commerce only but against mankind.

On 6th April, by a majority of 373 votes to 50, the House of Representatives passed the resolution, which ran as follows: "Whereas the Imperial German Government have committed repeated acts of war against the Government and the people of the United States of America: Therefore be it resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled: That a state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government which has been thrust upon the United States is hereby formally declared; and that the President be, and he is hereby authorized and directed to employ the entire naval and military forces of the United States and the resources of the Government to carry on war against the Imperial German Government; and to bring the conflict to a successful termination all the resources of the country are hereby pledged by the Congress of the United States."

The entrance of America into the war on the Allied side meant an immediate increase of strength in certain vital matters. She was the greatest workshop on earth, and the high mechanical talent of her people was invaluable in what was largely a war of engineers. She had immense wealth to put into the common stock. She had a powerful fleet, though one somewhat lacking in the lighter type of vessel which was the chief need of the moment, and she had a great capacity for shipbuilding. Her army was small, but its officers were among the most highly trained in the world, and her reserves of man-power gave her the chance of almost unlimited expansion. It would be some time before she could make her potential strength actual, but in the meantime she solved the worst financial difficulties of the Allies, and her accession made ultimate victory something more than probable. Like her cousins of Britain, she was a nation slow to move, but on the path she had chosen she would walk resolutely to the end of the journey.



*Topical Press*

ADMIRAL SIR ROGER KEYES

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- [1] These quotations are taken from the American weekly paper, the *New Republic*, of August 7, 1915, and February 17, 1917.
- [2] Notably the *Britannic*, the *Gloucester Castle*, and the *Asturias* (sunk 20th March). The Belgian relief ships were the *Camilla*, the *Trevier*, the *Feistein*, and the *Storstad*.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ZEEBRUGGE AND OSTEND

The Control of the Submarine Peril—America's Naval Co-operation—Last Fight of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*—Sir Roger Keyes's Plan—The Attack on Zeebrugge—The Attack on Ostend—Paralysis of German Fleet.

The spring of 1917 had been the most critical period of the war, graver even than that stage we have just chronicled when the enemy stood at the gate of Amiens, for in April 1917 Germany seemed to have devised a weapon which the Allies could not parry and which struck straight at their heart. Their shipping was fast disappearing from the seas, and with it the sustenance of the British people and the munitionment of all the Allied armies. In that month there was food enough in Britain to last the civilian population six weeks and no more. Could Germany have realized earlier that marvellous chance, and have been in the position to keep more U-boats constantly at work on the great shipping routes, she would have sunk in a single month not 850,000 tons, but 2,000,000 tons, and would have had the victory before the close of the year.

By the spring of 1918 the submarine menace was conclusively broken—broken at sea, without regard to the fortunes of the enemy by land. Partly it was done by weapons of offence—the destroyer, the decoy ship, the airplane, the bomb, and the depth-charge. All these we have already seen at work, but by now two other foes of the U-boat had declared themselves. One was the Allied submarine; there were only some hundred of them, but they sank twenty U-boats, and had therefore the best average.<sup>[1]</sup> The other was the American sub-chaser—little wooden vessels, displacing only 60 tons and manned by young men fresh from college. These tiny craft crossed the Atlantic under their own power in the face of fierce winter gales, and in the English and Irish Channels and at the mouth of the Adriatic by means of their listening devices located and hunted many U-boats to their doom. Partly the defeat was due to Allied methods of defence—the dazzle ship, the barrage, and the convoy. In November 1917 the American navy set to work to lay a barrage of mines across the 250 miles of the passage between Scotland and Norway. By the early summer of 1918 that barrage was at work, and the terror which it inspired in German submarine crews was in all

likelihood a contributory cause of the mutinous spirit spreading in the German navy. As for the convoy system, it was the greatest single weapon which the Allies discovered. By the end of the war 607 homeward-bound convoys had been brought in, numbering 9,300 ships, and of these only 73 had been lost; there had been 527 outward-bound convoys, with 7,300 ships, and 45 losses; the total loss was therefore 118 ships, or .7 per cent. Much of this success was due to the superb courage of our merchant seamen, of whom 15,000 lost their lives. "No calculation in any shipping and supply programme included a margin for the human factor. Even when vessels unarmed and without wireless were required to proceed unescorted to waters infested with submarines, crews were always available and willing to sail."<sup>[2]</sup>

So much for the prevention of losses. There was also the positive side, the increase of mercantile tonnage, and its more economical handling, and here the civilian played a not less valuable part than the sailor. By the end of 1917 Britain, France, and Italy had at their disposal a mercantile marine of 18,000,000 tons as compared with 24,500,000 before the war, and of this reduced tonnage 5,500,000 had to be employed in direct war service. In the first quarter of 1918 the excess of losses over new construction was 280,000 tons; in the second quarter there was a gain for construction of 283,000 tons, and in the third quarter a gain of 468,000 tons. In Britain by the end of 1917 there was a fairly scientific control of supplies, the various demands having been grouped under central authorities like the War Office and the Ministry of Munitions, so that the Ministry of Shipping in allotting transport had not to deal with a host of scattered specialists.

The next step was to group the various national controls together and give them an international character. This was done by the formation of international committees (on wheat, sugar, oils, etc.), and by the creation in the beginning of 1918 of an Allied Maritime Transport Council—the most useful fruit of the Paris Conference of November 1917. The new Council entered on its duties in the dark days of March 1918, and did invaluable work in allotting tonnage on sound principles, and preventing strife between the Allies over such questions as coal and foodstuffs, munitions and raw materials. It had no tonnage under its direct order except some 500,000 tons of chartered neutral shipping, but its recommendations were accepted by the various national governments. Beginning as an advisory body, it soon became in practice a vast and powerful executive.

The result of these and other measures was that in 1918 the Allies were amply confirmed in their command of the seas. The blockade of Germany was drawn tighter, for with American assistance the agreements with

northern neutrals were made more drastic, and Germany, in spite of Russian supplies, was back in the position of 1916. The Allied naval strength had also increased. Britain had added, or was adding, to her Grand Fleet her new battle-cruisers of the *Renown* class, which were capable of a speed of over 30 knots, as well as the battleships now completed from the 1913-14 programme. The United States sent a squadron of Dreadnoughts to Scapa—the *New York*, the *Wyoming*, the *Florida*, the *Delaware*, the *Arkansas*, and the *Texas*; and three others—the *Nevada*, the *Oklahoma*, and the *Utah*—to Berehaven, in Ireland, in case a German battle-cruiser should slip out and attack her troop convoys.

The events of the winter at sea had not been many. The loss of a convoy of eleven vessels in the North Sea on October 17, 1917, had been followed by the destruction on 11th December in the same waters of a convoy of fourteen. On the evening of 3rd November there was a brilliant little action in the Kattegat, where we sank a German auxiliary cruiser and ten patrol boats. On 17th November our light cruisers were in action in the Heligoland Bight, and two enemy ships were damaged. On January 14, 1918, late in the evening, Yarmouth suffered her third bombardment from the sea. In the last week of that month the south end of the Dardanelles witnessed a curious affair. About 5.30 a.m. on Sunday, 20th January, the British destroyer *Lizard*, being at the moment off the north-east point of Imbros, discovered the German cruiser *Breslau*, with the *Goeben* a mile astern, making for the harbour where British monitors were lying all unprepared. She engaged the enemy at a range of 11,000 yards, and came under heavy fire, so that she was unable to get within torpedoing distance. Another destroyer, the *Tigress*, came to her aid, and the two attempted to shield the monitors by smoke-screens. But their efforts were in vain, and the monitors *Raglan* and *M. 28* were speedily sunk, before the former could get her 14-inch American guns into action. The enemy then turned south, followed by the *Lizard* and the *Tigress*, and at 7 a.m. the *Breslau* ran into a mine-field, struck several mines, and promptly sank. Four Turkish destroyers appeared, accompanied by an old cruiser, and these the *Lizard* and the *Tigress* engaged and drove up the Straits. The *Goeben* continued southward till she found the attentions of our aircraft unpleasant, when she put about to return. In the act she struck a mine, which made her settle down aft and gave her a list of some fifteen degrees. The Turkish destroyers returned to protect her, and she managed to creep inside the Straits, followed by the *Lizard* and the *Tigress*, and assiduously bombed by British seaplanes. Her captain ran her ashore in the Narrows to the west of Nagara Point, where she lay for some days under the menace of our aircraft, till she was eventually tinkered up and refloated.

The opening of the German offensive on 21st March 1918 had been attended by the bombardment of Dunkirk from the sea. Meantime, a plan had been maturing to get rid of the intolerable menace presented by the use of the Flanders ports as German bases. A year before Jellicoe had declared his hope that the problem of the Belgian coast was not insoluble; and a new man had appeared who had the Elizabethan tradition of inspired audacity. Sir Roger Keyes had been the most trusted of Sir Rosslyn Wemyss's lieutenants in the Dardanelles campaign, and, like his leader, he interpreted generously the limits of what was possible for the British sailor. His appointment, first to the Plans department of the Admiralty, and then, in succession to Admiral Bacon, to the command of the Dover Patrol, augured well for a new phase of initiative and daring.

The strategical importance of closing up Zeebrugge and Ostend was patent. There nested the German destroyer flotillas which raided the Narrow Seas and occupied most of the time of the Dover Patrol. Our chief weapon against the U-boat was the destroyer, and the presence of German craft in these ports withdrew a large number of British destroyers from the anti-submarine campaign. Could Zeebrugge and Ostend be put out of action, the German naval base would be pushed back three hundred miles to Emden, and the British east coast ports would become the natural bases from which to deal with the attacks by enemy surface craft on the Channel. It would not cut off the main bases of the U-boats, but it would release the forces of the Dover Patrol to hunt them down, and it would facilitate the construction of a new Channel mine barrage.

A plan had been under consideration since November 1917, and the advent of Sir Roger Keyes brought it rapidly to completion. Its purpose was to block the end of the Bruges Canal at Zeebrugge and the entrance of Ostend harbour—an operation such as in the Spanish-American War Lieutenant Hobson had attempted at Santiago. To understand the details it is necessary to examine the topography of the two places.

Zeebrugge is not a port so much as the sea end of the Bruges Canal, and in the canal the enemy submarines found perfect harbourage. Its mouth was flanked by two short piers or sea-walls with a lighthouse at the end of each, and half a mile up the canal were the lock gates. A large mole had been built in a curve to the west of the channel—a mole about eighty yards wide and a mile long. At the land end, to allow for the flow of the tide, there were five hundred yards of viaduct on piles. The Mole, as the vital defence of the harbour, had a normal garrison of a thousand men, and bristled with artillery

and machine guns, while all the coast was studded with long-range heavy pieces. On the Mole were the railway station and many newly built sheds for military and naval stores. The Ostend harbour was less elaborate. It was also the mouth of a canal to Bruges, but there was no mole as a flank guard. The problem for Sir Roger Keyes in both cases was to sink ships inside the canal, so that, aided by the silt of the tides, they should block the entrance. It is no light task to clear an obstruction from a Channel port; about Christmas 1916 a rice-laden tramp sank in Boulogne harbour, and shut the place for a month. Could the operation be achieved the results were certain; but, in view of the strong defence, it seemed a desperate adventure, especially among the intricacies of Zeebrugge.

As it turned out, Ostend was the more difficult problem, for the very complexity of its safeguards made Zeebrugge vulnerable. The plan at Ostend was simply to get ships into the harbour and sink them far enough in to do the maximum of damage. It was a feat depending on secrecy and dash. At Zeebrugge the scheme was more elaborate. Three cruisers packed with concrete were to get as near the lock gates as possible before being sunk. To create a diversion, other vessels were to attack the Mole from its sea side, land men to engage the enemy garrison and prevent the guns there being used against the block-ships. At the same time, by means of a submarine laden with explosives, it was proposed to blow up the viaduct, which would isolate the German garrison on the Mole. The Zeebrugge attack was therefore planned in three stages—the attack on the Mole, the simultaneous attack on the viaduct, and the later entry of the block-ships into the canal mouth.<sup>[3]</sup>

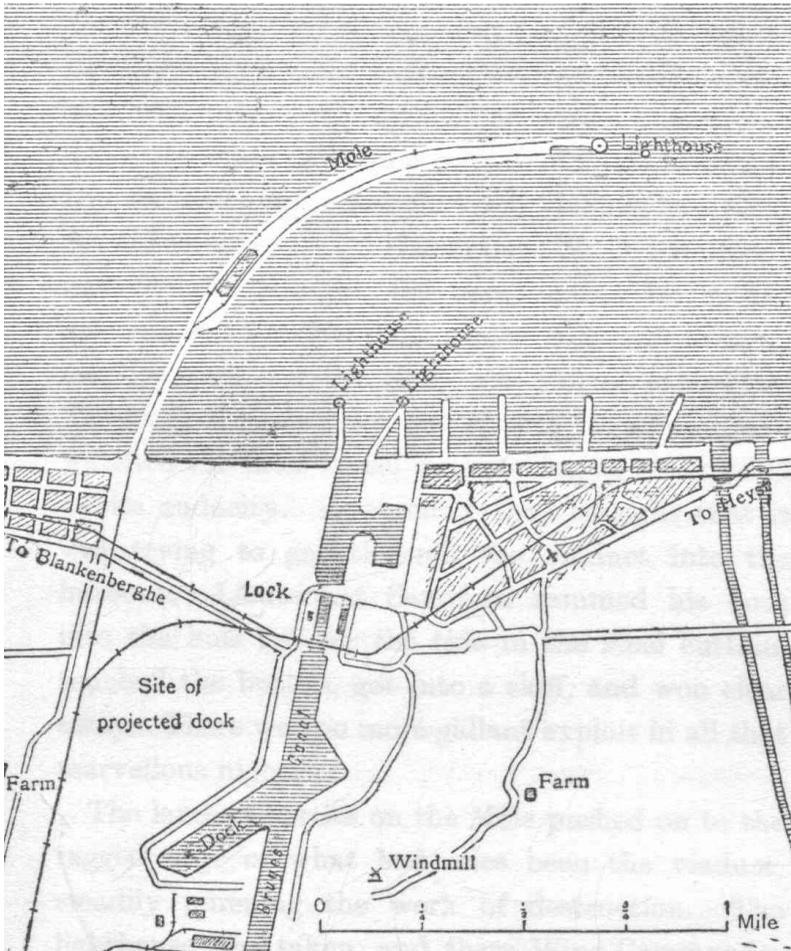
Twice Sir Roger Keyes's flotilla started, and twice it put back to port. It needed special weather conditions for success—an overcast sky, a drift of haze, a light wind, and a short sea. On Monday, 22nd April, the eve of St. George's Day, the omens were favourable, and in the later afternoon, three hours before sunset, the expedition started, timed to reach Zeebrugge by midnight. It was a singular Armada. There were five old cruisers to act as block-ships—the *Intrepid*, *Iphigenia*, and *Thetis* for Zeebrugge, and the *Brilliant* and the *Sirius* for Ostend. A small cruiser, the *Vindictive* (5,600 tons, with a broadside of six 6-inch guns), was designed for the attack on the Mole, assisted by two Liverpool ferry-boats, the *Daffodil* and the *Iris*. There was also a flotilla of monitors, motor launches, and fast coastal motor boats for special purposes. Admiral Tyrwhitt's destroyers from Harwich covered the operations from the north, and there were present light covering forces from the Dover Patrol. The operations were commanded by Sir Roger Keyes in the destroyer *Warwick*, and he had also with him the destroyers *North Star*

and *Phæbe*. The men for the block-ships and the landing-parties were bluejackets and marines, picked from a great number who had volunteered for the work. They were armed as for a land battle, with grenades and flamethrowers as well as rifles and bayonets; the *Vindictive* carried machine guns, Stokes mortars, and howitzers; and elaborate preparations had been made for the creation of an artificial fog to cover the attack.

It was a prodigious hazard to approach a hostile coast where navigation was difficult at the best of times, without lights, without knowledge of what new mine-fields the enemy might have laid, and at the mercy of a change in the weather which would expose the little fleet to every gun on the Flanders shore. There was only an hour and a half for the whole operation, for the shore batteries—120 heavy guns, some of them 15-inch—had a range of sixteen miles, and the return voyage must start at 1.30, to be out of danger before dawn. All went well on the outward voyage. Presently the *Sirius* and the *Brilliant* changed course for Ostend, and the smoke-screen, provided by the smaller craft, rolled landwards with the north-east wind ahead of the cruisers. Meantime the monitors and seaplanes had gone to work, bombarding the coast defences, as they had done often before. This device apparently deceived the enemy. He did not man the Mole, and his gunners retired to their bomb-proof shelters on shore, knowing well that in face of the smoke-screen they could not reply effectively to our fire. It was a case where an artillery “preparation” lulled instead of awakening the enemy’s suspicions.

But fifteen minutes before the *Vindictive* reached the Mole the wind changed to the south-west, and rolled back the smoke-screen so that the whole harbour was clear to our eyes and we to the enemy’s. Instantly the darkness was made bright with starshells and searchlights, and from the Mole and the shore an intense fire greeted our vessels. The action had begun, and Sir Roger Keyes signalled “St. George for England,” to which the *Vindictive* replied, “May we give the dragon’s tail a damned good twist!” There was no time to be lost, and the *Vindictive*, under Captain A. F. B. Carpenter, laid her nose against the concrete sea-wall of the Mole. Her port side had been fitted with “brows”—light hinged drawbridges which could drop their ends on the wall. A sudden sea had risen, which made the operation difficult; so after the *Vindictive* had let go an anchor she signalled the *Daffodil* to lie against her stern and keep it in position, while the *Iris* went forward to make fast to the Mole ahead of her. All the time a tornado of fire was beating on the three vessels, and to land men under such conditions might well have seemed impossible. But the marines and bluejackets, under their gallant leaders, swarmed over the splintering

gangways, and dropped on to the shell-swept wall. The *Daffodil*, which should have landed her own men after berthing the *Vindictive*, was compelled to remain on the latter's starboard, pressing her into position, while her men crossed the *Vindictive* to join the storming-party; and the *Iris*, which should have made fast ahead of the *Vindictive*, found her grapnels too small, and had to fall in astern.



Zeebrugge.

The storming-parties moved along the Mole, finding no Germans, but subject to the same withering fire from the shore end. Steadily, methodically, they blew up one building after another. A German destroyer lay on the harbour side of the Mole, and was promptly blown up by our bombs. And then suddenly ahead of them a column of flame leapt into the air, and they knew that the viaduct had gone. An old submarine, C3 (Lieutenant R. D.

Sandford), had steered straight for the viaduct under the enemy's searchlights and under constant fire—an anxious task, for the thing was full of explosives. The viaduct itself was crowded with the enemy, who watched the little vessel approaching as if stupefied by its audacity. Apparently they thought that it was trying to get through the viaduct into the harbour. Lieutenant Sandford rammed his boat into the hole left for the tide in the steel curtain, touched the button, got into a skiff, and won clear away. There was no more gallant exploit in all that marvellous night.

The landing-parties on the Mole pushed on to the ragged edge of what had once been the viaduct, steadily pursuing the work of destruction. The lighthouse was taken, and there Wing-Commander Brock, who had organized the smoke-screen, was last seen desperately wounded, but still fighting. Suddenly the German fire seemed to be concentrated more on the harbour, and as they looked eastward they saw the reason. The block-ships were steering straight for the canal. The *Thetis* (Commander Sneyd) went first to show the way, but she had the misfortune to foul her propeller in the defence nets. She signalled a warning to the others, and then, pounded at by the shore batteries, was sunk in the channel some hundreds of yards from the canal mouth. Meantime the *Intrepid* (Lieutenant Stuart Bonham-Carter), with every gun in action, and belching smoke like a volcano, steered into the canal, and, resting her nose on the mud of the western bank, blew up and settled down neatly athwart the channel. The *Iphigenia* (Lieutenant Billyard-Leake) followed, a little confused by the *Intrepid's* smoke, rammed a dredger, and continued, dredger and all, on her consort's heels. She beached on the eastern side, swung across the canal, and was blown up. The crews of these vessels retired in every kind of small craft, and, for the most part, were picked up by the destroyers sheltering behind the smoke-screen.

The signal arranged for re-embarkation had been a blast from the *Vindictive's* syren. But the *Vindictive* had long ago lost her syren, so the *Daffodil* did the best she could with her hooter. What was left of the landing-parties clambered aboard; the *Daffodil* towed the *Vindictive* loose, and the flotilla turned for home. The intensity of the German fire redoubled, but the changed wind now served us well, and the smoke clouds cloaked our departure. The heavy guns between Zeebrugge and Ostend did not find their mark, and the raiders, led by the battered *Vindictive*, were presently in English waters.

The Ostend operation, under Commodore Hubert Lynes, was less successful, for there the block-ships could not be assisted by any containing action, such as that on the Zeebrugge Mole, to distract the enemy. Our motor

boats lit flares on the ends of the piers, and concealed them from the shore end by a smoke-screen. Unhappily, the veer of the wind blew aside the screen and revealed the flares, which the enemy promptly extinguished by gun-fire. The *Brilliant* and the *Sirius* failed to find the entrance to the harbour, and were compelled to sink themselves four hundred yards east of the piers and more than a mile from the true canal mouth.

By the morning of St. George's Day the main part of the great venture had been successfully accomplished. Zeebrugge and the Bruges Canal were blocked, and it did not appear how, under the constant assaults of our aircraft, they could ever be cleared. The quality of the British navy had been triumphantly vindicated, and in the darkest days of the war on land the hard-pressed Allies were given assurance that their fleet was still master of the seas, and the final barrier to a German victory. For the gallantry of all concerned—the marines on the Mole, the crews of the block-ships and of the *Vindictive* and her consorts, the men in the picket boats and motor launches—no words of praise are adequate. The affair will rank in history among the classic exploits of sea warfare. But in admiration for the human quality shown, the technical brilliance of the feat should not be forgotten. From its nature it could not be rehearsed. It demanded a number of conditions which involved for their concomitance an indefinite period of waiting, and in such a continued tension secrecy on the one hand and ardour on the other are not easy to preserve. It required an intricate plan, worked out to minute details, any one of which was at the mercy of unforeseeable accident. Sir Roger Keyes succeeded by taking every human precaution, and then trusting to the luck of the navy; and it is hard to know whether the more to admire his admirable caution or his admirable hardihood.

The saga of the Flanders coast was not finished. To be forewarned is not always to be forearmed. A surprise may be achieved so audacious that it is confidently assumed that it cannot be repeated; but the mere fact of this assumption may be the occasion of a second surprise. The Germans at Ostend had removed all guiding marks for attacking ships, had cut gaps in the piers to prevent a repetition of the landing on Zeebrugge Mole, and had a flotilla of nine destroyers watching the bit of coast. A second attack there was to the enemy unthinkable, and therefore Sir Roger Keyes attempted it.

The second affair was planned as methodically as the first. It was, as before, under the command of Commodore Hubert Lynes, and Sir Roger Keyes was also present in the *Warwick*. About midnight on Thursday, 9th May, they left the British coast with a number of monitors, destroyers, and motor boats, and, as block-ships, the old cruiser *Sappho* and the *Vindictive*,

now on her last voyage. It was a windless spring night, with a quiet sea and a sky lit with faint stars. Unfortunately the *Sappho* broke down on the way and did not reach her destination in time, thereby halving the British chances. The commodore's destroyer hurried ahead, laid a light buoy, and then fell back, while the *Vindictive* in the charge of the smaller craft approached the shore. They saw before them a beacon burning, a flare which one of our coastal motor boats had hung in the rigging of the sunken *Sirius*.

There was no preliminary bombardment till fifteen minutes before the block-ships were due at the harbour mouth. At that moment two motor boats dashed in and torpedoed the ends of the high wooden piers, and on the signal the airplanes watching in the heavens began their bombardment, and the great shells from our monitors shrieked into the town. Our smoke clouds were loosed, and blinded the searchlights and the observation of the German batteries. And on their heels came the real thing, a dense sea fog, which blanketed everything, and forced our destroyers to use their syrens to keep in touch. The solitary block-ship, the *Vindictive*, was hard put to it to find the entrance. She wandered east and west under a hail of shrapnel fire from the shore, groping for the harbour mouth, and at last found it and steamed in. The enemy batteries had discovered her, and she was terribly wounded, while the machine guns on the piers raked her decks. She laid her nose to the eastern pier, and was preparing to swing across the channel when a shell destroyed her conning-tower. It appeared that she could not swing farther round, and there was nothing for it but to sink her, lying at an angle of some twenty-five degrees to the eastern pier. There remained a passage between her and the western pier, too narrow to be used by destroyers or the larger submarines. Most of her crew were got off in motor launches, the commanders of which behaved with the utmost gallantry, and at 2.30 on the morning of Friday, the 10th, the recall rockets went up and the flotilla turned for home. The nine German destroyers had been discreet, and had not shown themselves throughout the action. The *Vindictive* was triumphant in her death as in her life, and the second of the two great West Flanders bases was now lost to the enemy.

Zeebrugge and Ostend were the last nails in the coffin of the German navy. It seemed all but incredible that along with the great German land attack in France and Flanders there should not be some attempt at action by the ships from Kiel and Wilhelmshaven. If Germany was staking everything on victory, surely she must stake her fleet. It did not come. The British reserves were ferried across the Channel without interference. Britain herself

attacked by sea two most vital bases and ruined them irrevocably, and still the great battleships gave no sign. At the moment it was a mystery, but six months later that mystery was explained. The German fleet had ceased to be more than a name. The sleepless activity of Sir David Beatty had paralysed its heart. In the first six months of 1918 over a hundred surface craft were lost in the Bight of Heligoland. Mine-layers, mine-sweepers, patrol boats—they were being driven from the seas; they mutinied, and the mutiny was suppressed; but the spirit and discipline necessary for the most arduous of human tasks had gone from their men. The use of foul weapons had ruined the *morale* of sailors who had done gallantly at Coronel and the Dogger Bank and Jutland, for the ancient law of Poseidon cannot be broken without disaster to the breaker. Already the British Admiralty knew what the German Marineamt only dimly guessed, that the first order given to prepare a fleet action would for the German navy be the signal for revolution.

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- [1] The 500 Allied destroyers sank 34 U-boats; the Allied auxiliary patrol craft, about 3,000 in number, sank 31.
- [2] Salter, *Allied Shipping Control*, p. 129.
- [3] In the expedition to Ostend in 1798, under Captain H. R. Popham, R.N., troops were landed under General Eyre Coote to blow up the sluice-gates of the Bruges Canal. They succeeded in doing this, but could not re-embark through stress of weather, and were compelled to surrender.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### GERMANY SURRENDERS

Mutiny in the German Fleet—The Armistice—The Surrender of the German Fleet.

#### I

On Tuesday, 5th November 1918, German resistance on the Western front was finally broken, and on all other fronts it had been broken already. Henceforth the German armies were not in retreat, but in flight. If a negotiated armistice did not come within a week there would be a *de facto* armistice of complete collapse and universal surrender.

During that week in Germany the mutterings of the storm of revolution were growing louder. Some issued heated appeals for a patriotic closing up of ranks in a last stand against the coming disaster; others attempted to make a scapegoat of the fallen Ludendorff; and everywhere was apparent a rising anger against the Imperial House. The Emperor had fled to the army, but the army was in no case to protect him. The Social Democrats in the Government, led by Scheidemann, were clamouring for his instant abdication, and they had the support of the great mass of the people. Everywhere there reigned a frantic fear of invasion, especially in Bavaria, where the collapse of Austria made the populace expect to see at any moment the victorious Italians in their streets; and invasion was no cheerful prospect to Germany when she remembered her own method of conducting it, and reflected that for four years she had been devastating the lands and dragooning the peoples of the Powers now marching to her borders.

Strange things, too, were happening within her own confines. In the first days of November the stage had been set for a great sea battle. Her High Seas Fleet was ordered out, but it would not move. The dry-rot, which had been growing during the four years' inaction, had crumbled all its discipline. "Der Tag" had come, but not that joyous day which her naval officers had toasted. She had broken the unwritten laws of the deep sea, and she was now to have her reward. On 4th November the red flag was hoisted on the battleship *Kaiser*. The mutiny spread to the Kiel shipyards and workshops, where there had always been a strong socialist element; a council of

soldiers, sailors, and workmen was formed; and the mutineers captured the barracks, and took possession of the town. The trouble ran like wildfire to Hamburg, Bremen, Lubeck, and adjacent ports, and it was significant that in every case the soldiers and sailors took the lead. Deputations of Social Democrats were sent down posthaste by the Government, and succeeded in temporarily restoring order, but the terms on which peace was made were the ruin of the old régime. In Cologne, in Essen, and in other industrial centres there were grave disturbances, and everywhere the chief outcry was against the Emperor and the Hohenzollerns. He who had been worshipped as a god, because he was the embodiment of a greater Germany, was now reviled by a nation disillusioned of dreams of greatness.

At five o'clock on the morning of Monday, 11th November, the armistice was signed, and Foch telegraphed to his generals: "Hostilities will cease on the whole front as from 11th November at eleven o'clock. . . ."

## II

On Tuesday, 12th November, the Allied fleets, under Admiral Calthorpe, passed through the Dardanelles, and on the morning of the 13th arrived off Constantinople. It was the fourth time in a century that a British fleet had entered the Sea of Marmora. Behind them British and Indian troops garrisoned the Gallipoli forts, where so much good blood had been spilled in the enterprise at last concluded. The Black Sea was now under Allied control.

At 2.30 in the afternoon of Friday, 15th November, the German light cruiser *Königsburg* arrived at Rosyth, bringing Admiral Hugo von Meurer to arrange for the carrying out of the armistice conditions. Von Meurer bore a good reputation as a sailor; he had been in command of the Dreadnought *König*, and had had charge of the last naval operations in the Gulf of Riga. He brought with him three delegates from the Sailors' and Soldiers' Council, and three from the People's Council. Under the terms of surrender all submarines were to be handed over, ten battleships, six battle-cruisers, eight light cruisers, and fifty destroyers. These were to be disarmed and interned in neutral ports, or, failing that, in Allied ports; but the neutral Powers would have nothing to do with the business, so it fell to the Allies to receive them. The remaining surface warships left to Germany were to be concentrated in certain German ports, paid off and disarmed, and placed under the supervision of an Allied commission. The terms meant nothing less than the disappearance for some years of German sea-power.

The conference between Admiral Beatty and Admiral von Meurer came to an end late in the evening of the 16th. The affair was conducted with all the punctilios of naval etiquette, and the German admiral departed into the fog which clouded the Firth of Forth with such formal salutes as might have attended a visit of officers of one great fleet to another. The humiliation of Germany was too dire to need expression by word or ceremony; the fact shouted itself throughout all the world.

On Wednesday, the 20th, the handing over of the submarines began. The truth about them was now known from German admissions. For the past year their numbers had been steadily shrinking, new constructions had not covered losses, the best commanders had all been killed, and the crews were weak and mutinous. At a point thirty-five miles from the Essex coast Admiral Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt with five British light cruisers received the surrender of the first twenty U-boats. It was a fine morning, with a quiet sea and the sun shining through the mist, when the British seamen saw the low grey hulls, escorted by German transports, coming from the east. Only one submarine flew the German ensign, and all had their numbers painted out. They were navigated by their own crews till close to Harwich, when British officers took charge, the white ensign was run up above the solitary German flag, and the German sailors embarked on their transports to go home. A grimmer scene could scarcely be conceived. The enemy craft were received in silence by the British cruisers, who had their men at action stations and their guns trained on the newcomers. There was no hint of fraternization, scarcely a word was spoken, and the British sailors looked stolidly at the men who had disgraced their calling. A hiss or a taunt would have been less insulting than that deadly stillness.

Next day, Thursday, the 21st, in the same ominous quiet, the German battleships and battle-cruisers were handed over to the custody of the British Grand Fleet, which was accompanied by detachments of the French and American navies. The event took place in the waters east of the mouth of the Firth of Forth. The four battle-cruisers, which, with the *Seydlitz* now under repair, were all that remained to Germany, were the *Von der Tann*, *Derfflinger*, *Hindenburg*, and *Moltke*, and these were escorted to their place of internment by our First and Second Battle Squadrons. The battleships were the *König Albert*, *Kaiser*, *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, *Kaiserin*, *Bayern*, *Markgraf*, *Prinz Regent Luitpold*, *Grosser Kurfürst*, and *Friedrich der Grosse*, escorted by the Fourth and Fifth Battle Squadrons and the American Sixth Battle Squadron. The seven light cruisers were the *Karlsruhe*, *Frankfurt*, *Emden*, *Nürnberg*, *Brummer*, *Köln*, and *Bremse*,<sup>[1]</sup> escorted by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Light Cruiser Squadrons and the 1st Cruiser Squadron.

The rear of the procession was formed by the First and Second Battle-Cruiser Squadrons and the 4th and 7th Light Cruiser Squadrons. In a few hours the main units of Germany's fleet had passed out of her hands, and she, who in 1914 had been the second sea Power in the world, had sunk to the state of a sixth or seventh-rate Power, while of what was left to her she had no longer the free use. Sir David Beatty ordered the surrendered vessels to haul down their flags at 3.37 that afternoon, and not to hoist them again without permission.

The Armistice gave the Allies free access to the Baltic, and this involved mine-sweeping in German territorial waters, and the control of the enemy forts which protected the entrance to that sea. A flotilla of British mine-sweepers at once set out to clear the Kattegat; a British squadron followed them, and by 3rd December lay off Libau, where its presence was urgently needed owing to the Bolshevik advance. But if we seek for drama we can find it at its highest in the visit of the British warships, under Vice-Admiral Sir Montague Browning, to the German naval bases. Accompanied by naval representatives of the Allies, he set out on 3rd December in the *Hercules*, attended by four destroyers. A German pilot party took them through the mine-fields, and they anchored off Wilhelmshaven after midday. There the German ships were inspected, and air stations, such as Borkum, Heligoland, Norderney and Sylt, visited. The *Hercules* then passed through the Kiel Canal, and returning British prisoners on its banks had a glimpse of the white ensign. At Kiel the final details were settled, and on 18th December the *Hercules* left the Canal on her return voyage. . . . In June 1914, a British squadron had been in Kiel Bay, and British guns had hailed the final deepening of the great waterway. The Emperor had visited our flagship, and the flag at her masthead had proclaimed the presence on board of an Admiral of the British fleet. At a subsequent banquet a German admiral had declared that his navy sought to model itself upon the great example of Nelson! Such is the mutability of mortal things. The German sea-lords—Ingenohl, Scheer, Hipper—had disappeared into the darkness, and in a Dutch manor their master was waiting impotently while the Allies decreed his fate.

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[1]

For various reasons the full complement of ships due under the terms of the Armistice could not be handed over on the 21st. It should be noted that of the light cruisers most were new constructions to take the place of ships of the same name sunk during the war.

THE END

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT  
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Some photographs have been enhanced to be more legible.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

Page numbers have been removed due to a non-page layout.

A cover was created for this ebook which is placed in the public domain.

[The end of *Naval Episodes of the Great War* by John Buchan]