

Naval History of the Great War

HOW BRITAIN'S SHORES WERE SAVED

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A war story which is distinctive has been written by the Right Hon. Winston Churchill, who was head of the Admiralty during the critical days of 1914 and after. The first volume of his work, which has just been completed, lifts the curtain on the inner naval history of the year 1914, the most fateful year for the British Empire since Britain obtained her mastery of the seas. Mr. Churchill's work is real literature, and will take its place in the forefront of the permanent records of the war.

The Colonist has secured exclusive serial publication rights for this territory, and, simultaneously with The London Times, begins publication of the narrative.

I—The Crisis in 1914

The earlier chapters of Mr. Churchill's first volume carry the story of home and foreign policies from the Naval Estimates of 1909, which first moved him to a close study of English and German sea power, through his appointment to the Admiralty by Mr. Asquith in October, 1912, to the Summer of 1914.

Like many others, I often summon up in my memory the impression of those July days in 1914. The world on the verge of its catastrophe was very brilliant. Nations and empires crowned with princes and potentates rose majestically on every side, lapped in the accumulated treasures of the long peace. All were fitted and fastened—it seemed securely—into an immense cantilever. The two mighty European systems faced each other with glittering and clanking in their panoply, but with a tranquil gaze. A polite, discreet, pacific, and on the whole sincere diplomacy spread its web of connections over both. A sentence in a dispatch, an observation by an ambassador, a cryptic phrase in a parliament seemed sufficient to adjust from day to day the balance of the prodigious structure. A nod could be made to tell. Were we after all to achieve world security and universal peace by a marvelous system of combinations in equipose and of armaments in equation, of checks and counter-checks on violent action ever more complex and more delicate? Would Europe thus marshaled, thus divided, thus related, unite into one universal and glorious organism capable of receiving and enjoying in undreamed of abundance the bounty which nature and science stood hand in hand to give? The old world in its sunset was fair to see.

In the Summer of 1913, when I was reviewing the next year's Admiralty policy in the light of the coming estimates, I had sent the following minute to the First Sea Lord:

North Sea Manoeuvres

We have now had manoeuvres in the North Sea on the largest scale for two years running, and we have obtained a great deal of valuable data which requires to be studied. It does not therefore seem necessary to supplement the ordinary tactical exercises of the year 1914-15 by grand manoeuvres. A saving of nearly £200,000 would apparently be effected in coal and oil consumption, and a certain measure of relief would be accorded to the estimates in the exceptionally heavy year.

In these circumstances I am drawn to the conclusion that it would be better to have no grand manoeuvres in 1914-15, but to substitute instead a mobilization of the third fleet. The whole of the royal fleet reserve and the whole of the reserve officers could be mobilized and trained together for a week or ten days. The third fleet ships would be given the exact complements they would have in war, and the whole mobilization system would be subjected to a real test. The balance fleet reservists could be carefully tested as to quality, and trained either afloat or ashore. I should anticipate that this would not cost more than £100,000, in which case there would still be a saving on the fuel of the manoeuvres. While the third fleet ships were mobilized, the first fleet ships would rest, and thus plenty of officers would be available for the training of the reservists on shore, and possibly, if need be, for their peace training afloat. This last would, of course, reveal what shortage exists. A very

large staff would be employed at all the mobilizing centres to report upon the whole workings of the mobilization. The schools and training establishments would be closed temporarily according to the mobilization orders, and the whole process of putting the navy on a war footing, so far as the third fleet was concerned, would be carried out. I should not propose to complete the second fleet, as we know all about that.

At another time in the year I should desire to see mobilized the whole of the royal navy volunteer reserves, and put them afloat on first fleet ships for a week as additional to complements.

Please put forward definite proposals, with estimates, for carrying out the above policy, and at the same time let me have your opinion upon it.

W. S. C.

October 22, 1913.

Test Mobilization

Prince Louis agreed. The necessary measures were taken and the project was mentioned to parliament on March 18, 1914. In pursuance of these orders and without connection of any kind with the European situation, the test mobilization began on July 15. Although there was no legal authority to compel the reservists to come up, the response was general, upwards of 20,000 men presenting themselves at the naval depots. The whole of our mobilization arrangements were thus subjected for the first time in naval history to a practical test and thorough overhaul. Officers specially detached from the admiralty watched the process of mobilization at every port in order that every defect, shortage, or hitch in the system might be reported and remedied. Prince Louis and I personally inspected the process at Chat-ham. All the reservists drew their kits and proceeded to their assigned ships. All the third fleet ships coaled and raised steam and sailed for the general concentration at Spithead. Here on July 17 and 18 was held the grand review of the navy. It constituted incomparably the greatest assemblage of naval power ever witnessed in the history of the world. His Majesty himself was present and inspected ships of every class. On the morning of the 19th the whole

fleet put to sea for exercises of various kinds. It took more than six hours for this armada, every ship decked with flags and crowded with bluejackets and marines, to pass, with the bands playing and at 15 knots, before the royal yacht, while overhead the naval seaplanes and aeroplanes circled continuously. Yet it is probable that the uppermost thought in the minds both of the sovereign and those of his ministers there present was not the imposing spectacle defiling before their eyes of British power and might, but the haggard, squalid, tragic Irish quarrel which threatened to divide the British nation into two hostile camps.

One after another the ships melted out of sight beyond the Nab. They were going on a longer voyage than any of us could know.

The Shadow Grows

The cabinet on Friday afternoon, July 24, sat long revolving the Irish problem. The Buckingham Palace conference had broken down. The disagreements and antagonisms seemed as fierce and as hopeless as ever, yet the margin in dispute upon which such fateful issues hung was inconceivably petty. The discussion, which turned principally upon the boundaries of Fermanagh and Tyrone, had reached its inconclusive end, and the cabinet was about to separate when the quiet grave tones of Sir Edward Grey's voice were heard reading a document which had just been brought to him from the foreign office. It was the Austrian note to Serbia. He had been reading or speaking for several minutes before I could disengage my mind from the tedious bewildering debate which had just closed. We were all very tired, but gradually, as the phrases and sentences followed one another, impressions of a wholly different character began to form in my mind. This note was clearly an ultimatum; but it was an ultimatum such as had never been penned in modern times. As the reading pro-

ceeded it seemed absolutely impossible that any state in the world could accept it, or that any accept the aggressor. The parishes of Fermanagh and Tyrone faded back into the mists and squalls of Ireland, and a strange light began immediately but by perceptible gradations to fall and grow upon the map of Europe.

What Happened

I always take the greatest interest in reading accounts of how the war came upon different people, and I believe that so long as they are true and unstudied they will have a definite value and an enduring interest for posterity; so I shall briefly record exactly what happened to me.

I went back to the Admiralty at about 6 o'clock. I said to my friends who have helped me so many years in my work (Mr. Marsh and Mr.—now Sir James—Masterton Smith) that there was real danger and that it might be war.

I took stock of the position and wrote out, to focus them in my mind, a series of points which would have to be attended to if matters did not mend. My friends kept these as a check during the days that followed and ticked them off one by one as they were settled.

1. First and second fleets, leave and disposition;
2. Third fleet, replenish coal and stores;
3. Mediterranean movements;
4. China dispositions;
5. shadowing cruisers abroad;
6. ammunition for self-defensive merchantmen;
7. patrol flotillas, disposition, leave, complete;
8. ex-coastals;
9. immediate reserve;
10. old battleships for Humber, flotilla for Humber;
11. ships at emergency dates, ships building for foreign powers;
12. coastal watch;
13. anti-aircraft guns at oil depots;
14. aircraft to Sheerness, airships and seaplanes;
15. K. espionage;
16. magazines and other vulnerable points;
17. Irish ships;
18. submarine dispositions.

I discussed the situation at length the next morning (Saturday) with the First Sea Lord. For the moment, however, there was nothing to do. At no time in all these last three years were we more completely ready.

The test mobilization had been completed, and with the exception of the immediate reserve, all the reservists were already paid off and journeying to their homes. But the whole of the first and second fleets were complete in every way for battle and were concentrated at Portland, where they were to remain till Monday morning at 7 o'clock, when the first fleet would disperse by squadrons for various exercises, and when the ships of the second fleet would proceed up to their home ports and discharge their balance crews. Up till Monday morning, therefore, a word instantaneously transmitted from the wireless masts of the Admiralty to the Iron Duke would suffice to keep our main force together. If the word were not spoken before that hour they would begin to separate. During the first twenty-four hours after their separation they could be reconcentrated in an equal period, but if no word were spoken for forty-eight hours (i.e., by Wednesday morning), then the ships of the second fleet would have begun dismissing their balance crews to the shore at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham, and the various gunnery and torpedo schools would have commenced their instruction. If another forty-eight hours had gone before the word was spoken—i.e., by Friday morning—a certain number of vessels would have gone into dock for refit, repairs, or laying up. Thus on this Saturday morning we had the fleet in hand for at least four days.

Met Herr Ballin

That night, at dinner, I met Herr Ballin. He had just arrived from Germany. We sat next to each other, and I asked him what he thought about the situation. With the first few words he spoke it became clear that he had not come here on any mission of pleasure. He said the

situation was grave. "I remember," he said, "old Bismarck telling me the year before he died that one day the great European war would come out of some d— foolish thing in the Balkans." These words, he said, might come true. It all depended on the Tsar. What would he do if Austria chastised Serbia. A few years before there would have been no danger, as the Tsar was too frightened for his throne, but now again he was feeling himself more secure upon his throne, and the Russian people besides would feel very hardly anything done against Serbia. Then he said: "If Russia marches against Austria, we must march; and if we march, France must march, and what would England do?" I was not in a position to say more than that it would be a great mistake to assume that England would necessarily do nothing, and I added that she would judge events as they rose. He replied, speaking with very great earnestness: "Suppose we had to go to war with Russia and France, and suppose we defeated France and yet took nothing from her in Europe, not an inch of her territory, only some colonies to indemnify us, would that make a difference to England's attitude? Suppose we gave a guarantee beforehand." I stuck to my formula that England would judge events as they rose, and that it would be a mistake to assume that we should stand out of it whatever happened.

Seeking Indemnities

I reported this conversation to Sir Edward Grey in due course, and early in the following week I repeated it to the cabinet. On Wednesday following the exact proposal mooted to me by Herr Ballin about Germany not taking any territorial conquests in France, but seeking indemnities only in the colonies, was officially telegraphed to us from Berlin and immediately rejected. I have no doubt that Herr Ballin was directly charged by the emperor with the mission to find out what England would do.

Herr Ballin has left on record his impression of his visit to England at this juncture. "Even a moderately skilled German diplomatist," he wrote, "could easily have come to an understanding with England and France, who could have made peace certain and prevented Russia from beginning war." The editor of his

memoirs adds: "The people in London were certainly seriously concerned at the Austrian note, but the extent to which the cabinet desired the maintenance of peace may be seen (as an example) from the remark which Churchill, almost with tears in his eyes, made to Ballin as they parted. 'My dear friend, don't let us go to war.'"

I had planned to spend the Sunday with my family at Cromer, and I decided not to alter my plans. I arranged to have a special operator in the telegraph office so as to ensure a continuous night and day service. That afternoon the news came in that Serbia had accepted the ultimatum. I went to bed with a feeling that things might blow over.

At 9 o'clock the next morning I called up the First Sea Lord by telephone. He told me that there was a rumor that Austria was not satisfied with the Serbian acceptance of the ultimatum, but otherwise there were no new developments.

At 12 o'clock I spoke to the First Sea Lord again. He told me various items of news that had come in from different capitals, one, however, of decisive importance, but all tending to a rise in temperature. I asked him whether all the reservists had already been dismissed. He told me they had. I decided to return to London. I told him I would be with him at 3, and that meanwhile he should do whatever was necessary.

Prince Louis awaited me at the Admiralty. The situation was evidently degenerating. Europe seemed to be going mad. The First Sea Lord told me that in accordance with our conversation he had told the fleet not to disperse. I took occasion to refer to this four months later in my letter accepting his resignation. I was very glad publicly to testify at that moment of grief and pain for him that his loyal hand had sent the first order which began our vast naval mobilization.

I then went round to Sir Edward Grey, who had rented my house at 33 Eccleston Square. No one was with him except Sir William Tyrrell, of the Foreign Office. I told him that we were keeping the fleet together. I learned from him that he viewed the situation very gravely. I asked whether it would be helpful or the reverse if we stated in public that we were keeping the fleet together. Both he and Tyrrell were most insistent that we should proclaim it at the earliest possible moment; it might have the effect of sobering the Central Powers and steadying Europe. I went back to the Admiralty, sent for the First Sea Lord, and drafted the necessary communique.

The next morning the following notice appeared in all the papers. Here is the extract from The Times:

British Naval Measures Orders to First and Second Fleets

No Manoeuvre Leave

We received the following statement from the Secretary of the Admiralty at an early hour this morning:

Orders have been given to the First Fleet, which is concentrated at Portland, not to disperse for manoeuvre leave for the present. All vessels of the Second Fleet are remaining at their home ports in proximity to their balance crews.

On Monday began the first of the Cabinets on the European situation, which thereafter continued daily or twice a day.

My own part in these events was a very simple one. It was first of all to make sure that the diplomatic situation did not get ahead of the naval situation, and that the Grand Fleet should be in its war station before Germany could know whether or not we should be in the war, and, therefore, if possible, before we had decided ourselves. Second, it was to point out that if Germany attacked

France she would do so through Belgium, that all her preparations had been made to this end, and that she neither could nor would adopt any different strategy or go round any other way. To these two tasks I steadfastly adhered.

After hearing the discussions at Monday's Cabinet and studying the telegrams, I sent that night to all our commanders-in-chief the following very secret warning:

July 27, 1914.

This is not the Warning Telegram, but European political situation makes war between Triple Entente and Triple Alliance powers by no means impossible.

Be prepared to shadow possible hostile men-of-war, and consider disposition of H.M. ships under your command from this point of view. Measure is pure precautionary. No unnecessary person is to be informed, and the utmost secrecy is to be observed.

Warning Telegram

The official "warning telegram" was dispatched from the Admiralty on Wednesday, the 29th. On this same day I obtained from the Cabinet the authority to put into force the "precautionary period" regulations. The work of Ottley and of Hankey was now put to the proof. It was found in every respect thorough and comprehensive, and all over the country emergency measures began to astonish the public. Naval harbors were cleared, bridges were guarded, steamers were boarded and examined, watchers lined the coast.

The most important step remains to be recounted. As early as Tuesday, July 28, I felt that the fleet should go to its war station. It must go there at once, and secretly; it must be steaming to the north, while every German authority, naval or military, had the greatest possible interest in avoiding a collision with us. If it went thus early it need not go by the Irish Channel and north-about. It could go through the Straits of Dover and through the North Sea, and therefore the island would not be uncovered even for a single day. Moreover, it would arrive sooner and with less expenditure of fuel.

At about 10 o'clock, therefore, on the Tuesday morning, I proposed this step to the First Sea Lord and the Chief of Staff and found them wholeheartedly in favor of it. We decided that the fleet should leave Portland at such an hour of the morning of the 29th as to pass the Straits of Dover during the hours of darkness, that it should traverse those waters at high speed and without lights, and with the utmost precaution proceed to Scapa Flow. I feared to bring the matter before the Cabinet lest it should mistakenly be considered a provocative action likely to damage the chances of peace. It would be unusual to bring movements of the British fleet in home waters from one British port to another before the Cabinet. I only, therefore, informed the Prime Minister, who at once gave his approval. Orders were accordingly sent to Sir George Callaghan, who was told incidentally to send the fleet up under his second-in-command and to travel himself by

land through London in order that we might have an opportunity of consultation with him.

Squadron by Squadron

We may now picture this great fleet, with its flotillas and cruisers, steaming slowly out of Portland harbor, squadron by squadron, scores of gigantic castles of steel wending their way across the misty, shining sea like giants bowed in anxious thought. We may picture them again as darkness fell, eighteen miles of warships running at high speed and in absolute blackness through the narrow straits, bearing with them into the broad waters of the North Sea the safeguard of considerable affairs.

Although there seemed to be no conceivable motive, chance or mischance, which could lead a rational German admiralty to lay a trap of submarines or mines, or have given them the knowledge and the time to do so, we looked at each other with much satisfaction when on Thursday morning (the 30th) at our daily staff meeting the Iron Duke reported herself and the whole fleet well out in the centre of the North Sea. We were now in a position, whatever happened, to control events, and it was not easy to see how this advantage could be taken from us. A surprise torpedo attack before or simultaneous

with the declaration of war was at any rate one nightmare gone forever. If war should come no one would know where to look for the British fleet. Somewhere in that enormous waste of waters to the north of our islands, cruising now this way, now that, shrouded in storms and mists, dwelt this mighty organization. Yet from the admiralty building we could speak to them at any moment if need arose. The King's ships were at sea.

General Mobilization of the Navy

At the cabinet on Saturday, August 1, I demanded the immediate calling out of the fleet reserves and the completion of our naval preparations. I based this claim on the fact that the German navy was mobilizing and that we must do the same. The cabinet, who were by no means ill-informed on matters of naval organization, took the view after a sharp discussion that this step was not necessary to our safety, as mobilization only affected the oldest ships in the fleet, and that our main naval power was already in full preparedness for war and the fleet in its war station. I replied that though this was true we needed the third fleet ships, particularly the older cruisers, to fulfil the roles assigned to them in our war plan. However, I did not succeed in procuring their assent.

On Saturday evening I dined alone at the Admiralty. The foreign telegrams came in at short intervals in red boxes which already bore the special label, "sub-committee," denoting the precautionary period. The flow was quite continuous and the impression produced on my mind after reading for nearly an hour was that there was still a chance of peace. I wondered whether armies and fleets could remain mobilized for a space without fighting and then demobilize.

I had hardly achieved this thought when another foreign office box came in. I opened it and read: "Germany has declared war on Russia." There was no more to be said. I walked across the Horse Guards Parade and entered 10 Downing Street by the garden gate. I found the Prime Minister upstairs in his drawing room; with him were Lord Haldane, Sir Edward Grey, and Lord Crewe; there may have been other Ministers. I said that I intended instantly to mobilize the fleet notwithstanding the cabinet decision, and that I would take full personal responsibility to the cabinet next morning. This action was ratified by the cabinet on Sunday morning, and the royal proclamation was issued some hours later.

Another decision and a painful one was required. Sir George Callaghan's command of the home fleets had been extended for a year, and was now due to end on October 1. It had been announced that he would then be succeeded by Sir John Jellicoe. Further, our arrangements prescribed that Sir John Jellicoe should act as second-in-command in the event of war. The First Sea Lord and I had a conference with Sir George Callaghan on his way through London to the north on the 30th. As the result of this conference we decided that if war came it would be necessary to appoint Sir John Jellicoe immediately to the chief command. We were doubtful as to Sir George Callaghan's health and physical strength being equal to the immense strain that would be cast upon him; and in the crash of Europe it was no time to consider individuals. Sir John Jellicoe left London for the fleet with sealed instructions, of the purpose of which he was quite unaware, directing him on the seals being broken to take over the command. On the night of August 2, when we considered war certain, we telegraphed to both admirals apprising them of the Admiralty decision. It was naturally a cruel blow to Sir George Callaghan to have to lay down his charge at such a moment, and his protests were echoed by practically all the principal admirals who had served under him, and by Sir John Jellicoe himself. It was also a grave matter to make a change in the command of the fleets at this juncture. However, we did what we thought right, and that without an hour's delay. Sir John Jellicoe assumed command on the evening of August 3, and received almost immediately an order from the Admiralty to proceed to sea at daylight on the 4th.

Events March Fast

The cabinet sat almost continuously throughout the Sunday, and up till luncheon time it looked as if the majority would resign. Meanwhile, however, events were influencing opinion hour by hour. When we met in the morning we were in the presence of the violation of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg by the German troops. In the afternoon the violation of the Belgian frontier had taken place. In the evening arrived the appeal of the King of the Belgians that the guaranteeing powers should uphold the sanctity of the treaty regarding the neutrality of Belgium. This last was decisive.

When the cabinet separated on Monday morning formal sanction had been given to the already completed mobilization of the fleet and to the immediate mobilization of the army. No decision had been taken to send an ultimatum to Germany or to declare war upon Germany, still less to send an army to France. These supreme decisions were never taken at any cabinet. They were compelled by the force of events. We repaired to the House of Commons to hear the statement of the foreign secretary.

A Fateful Drama

Meanwhile in the Mediterranean a drama of intense interest, and, as it ultimately proved, of fateful consequence, was being enacted.

The event which would dominate all others if war broke out was the main shock of battle between the French and German ramies. I knew that the French were counting on placing in the line a whole army corps of their best troops from North Africa, and that every man was needed. I knew also that they intended to transport these troops across the Mediterranean as fast as ships could be loaded under the general protection of the French fleet, but without any individual escort or system of convoys. The French general staff calculated that whatever happened, most of the troops would get across. The French fleet disposed between this stream of transports, and the Austrian fleet afforded a good guarantee. But there was one ship in the Mediterranean which far outstripped in speed every vessel in the French navy. She was the Goeben. The only heavy ships in the Mediterranean that could attempt to compete with the

Goeben in speed were the three British battle cruisers. It seemed that the Goeben, being free to choose any point on a front of three or four hundred miles, would easily be able to avoid the French battle squadron and, brushing aside or outstripping her cruisers, break in upon the transports and sink one after another of these vessels crammed with soldiers. It occurred to me at this time that perhaps that was the task she had been sent to the Mediterranean to perform.

On July 30 I had, with the concurrence of the First Sea Lord, sent a telegram to Sir Berkeley Milne, from which the following is an extract:

To aid the French in the transportation of their Africa army by covering and if possible bringing to action individual fast German ships, particularly Goeben, which may interfere with that transportation, should be your first task. You will be notified by telegraph when you may consult with the French admiral. Except in combination with the French as part of a general battle do not at this stage be brought to action against superior forces. The speed of your squadrons is sufficient to enable you to choose your moment. You must husband your force at the outset, and we shall hope later to reinforce the Mediterranean.

Sir Berkeley Milne accordingly awaited permission to consult with the French admiral. This permission could not be given him till August 2 at 7:06 p.m., when I telegraphed as follows to our commanders-in-chief all over the world:

Situation very critical. Be prepared to meet surprise attacks. You can enter into communication with the French senior officer on your station for combined action in case Great Britain should decide to become ally to France against Germany.

Early on the morning of August 4 we were delighted by the following news from the commander-in-chief, Mediterranean, to the Admiralty:

Indomitable, Indefatigable shadowing Goeben and Breslau 37.44 north 7.56 east.

We replied:

Very good. Hold her. War imminent.

(This to go now.)

Goeben is to be prevented by force from interfering with French transports.

(This to await early confirmation.)

Moral Integrity

The cabinet, however, adhered formally to the view that no act of war should be committed by us before the expiration of the ultimatum. The moral integrity of the British Empire must not be compromised at this awful juncture for the sake of sinking a single ship.

The Goeben, of course, did not attack the French transports. In fact, though this we did not know at the time, she was steaming away from the French transport routes when sighted by the Indomitable and Indefatigable. Even if, however, she had attacked transports, the decision of the British cabinet would have prevented our battle cruisers from interfering. This decision obviously carried with it the still more imperative veto against opening fire on the Goeben if she did not attack French transports during the hours which we had her in our power. I cannot impeach the decision. It is right that the world should know it. But little did we imagine how much that act of honorable restraint was to cost us and all the world.

So during this long Summer afternoon these three great ships, hunted and hunters, cleaving the clear waters of the Mediterranean in tense and oppressive calm. At any moment the Goeben could have been smitten by sixteen 12-inch guns firing nearly treble her own weight of metal. At the Admiralty we suffered the tortures of Tantalus.

At about 5 o'clock Prince Louis observed that sunset in the Mediterranean at that date was not till 9 o'clock. There was, therefore, still time to sink the Goeben before dark. In the face of the cabinet decision I was made to utter a word. Nothing less than the vital safety of Great Britain could have justified so complete an overriding of the authority of the cabinet. "We hoped to sink her the next day. Where could she go? Palo seemed her only refuge throughout the Mediterranean. According to the international law nothing but internment awaited her elsewhere. The Turks had kept her secret well. As the shadows of night fell over the Mediterranean the Goeben increased her speed to twenty-four knots, which was the utmost that our two battle cruisers could steam. We have since learned that she was capable for a very short time of an exceptional speed, rising even to twenty-six or

twenty-seven knots. Aided by this, she shook off her unwelcome companions and vanished gradually in the gathering gloom.

"It is more than doubtful whether a wireless message could at that hour have reached our ships in time.

Interlude of Calm

Now, after all the stress and convulsion of the preceding ten days, there came to us at the Admiralty a strange interlude of calm. All the decisions had been taken. The ultimatum to Germany had gone; it must certainly be rejected. War would be declared at midnight. As far as we had been able to foresee the event all our preparations were made. Mobilization was complete. Every ship was in its station; every man at his post. All over the world, every British captain and admiral was on guard. It only remained to give the signal. In the war room of the Admiralty, where I sat waiting, one could hear the clock tick. From Parliament Street came the murmurs of the crowd; but they sounded distant and the world seemed very still. One could only wait; but for what a result! Although the special duties of my office made it imperative that I, of all others, should be vigilant and forward in all that related to preparation for war, I claim, as these pages show, that in my subordinate station, I had in these years before the war done nothing wittingly or willingly to impair the chances of a peaceable solution, and had tried my best as opportunity offered to make good relations possible between England and Germany. I thank God that I could feel also in that hour that our country was guiltless of all intended purpose of war. Even if we had made some mistakes in the handling of this awful crisis, though I do not know them, from the bottom of our hearts we could say that we had not willed it. Germany, it seemed, had rushed with head down and settled resolve to her own undoing. And if this were what she had meant all along, if this was the danger which had really menaced us hour by hour during the last five years, and would have hung over us hour by hour until the crash eventually came, was it not better that it should happen now—now that she had put herself hopelessly in the wrong, now that we were ready beyond the reach of surprise, now that France and Russia and Great Britain were all in the line together?

Fleet Co-operation

The First Sea Lord and the chief of the staff came in with French admirals, who had hurried over to concert in detail arrangements for the co-operation of the two fleets in the Channel and in the Mediterranean. They were fine figures in uniform, and very grave. One felt in actual contact with these French officers how truly the crisis was life or death for France. They spoke of basing the French fleet on Malta—that same Malta for which we had fought Napoleon for so many years—which was indeed the very pretext of the renewal of the war in 1803. Little did the Napoleon of St. Helena dream that in her most desperate need France would have at her disposal the great Mediterranean base which his strategic instinct had

deemed vital. I said to the admirals: "Use Malta as if it were Toulon."

The minutes passed slowly.

It was 11 o'clock at night—12 by German time—when the ultimatum expired. The war telegram, which meant "Commence hostilities against Germany," was flashed to the ships and establishments under the white ensign all over the world.

I walked across the Horse Guards' Parade to the cabinet room and reported to the Prime Minister and the Ministers who were assembled there, that the deed was done.

When I next went to the cabinet after the declaration of war, I found myself with new companions. During the previous seven years Lord Morley had always sat on the left of the Prime Minister, and I had always sat next to Lord Morley. Many a wise and witty admonition had I received penciled in scholarly phrase from my veteran neighbor and many a charming courtesy such as he excelled in had graced the toilsome path of business. He had said to me on the Sunday of Resolve: "If it has to be, I am not the man to do it. I should only hamper those like you who have to bear the burden." Now he was gone. In his place sat Lord Kitchener. On his left also there was a fresh figure—the new Minister of Agriculture—Lord Lucas. I had known him since South African war days, when he lost his leg; and to know him was to delight in him. His open, gay, responsive nature, his witty, ironical, but never unchivalric tongue, his pleasing presence, his compulsive smile, made him much courted by his friends, of whom he had many and of whom I was one. Young for the cabinet, heir to splendid possessions, happy in all that surrounded him, he seemed to have captivated fortune with the rest.

Marked for Death

Both these two men were marked for death at the hands of the enemy; the young Minister grappling with his adversary in the high air, the old field marshal choking in the icy sea. I wonder what the twenty politicians round the table would have felt if they had been told that the prosaic British cabinet was itself to be decimated in the war they had just declared. I think they would have felt a sense of pride and of relief in sharing to some extent the perils to which they were to send their countrymen, their friends, their sons.

On the afternoon of August 5 the Prime Minister convened an extraordinary council of war at Downing Street. I do not remember any gathering like it. It consisted of the Ministers most prominently associated with the policy of our entering the war, the chiefs of the navy and army, all the high military commanders, and, in addition, Lord Kitchener and Lord Roberts. Decision was required upon the question. How should we wage that which had just begun? Those who spoke for the War Office knew their own minds and were united. The whole British army should be sent at once to France, according to what may be justly called the Haldane plan. Everything in that Minister's years' tenure of the War Office had led up to this and had been sacrificed for this. To place an army of

four or six divisions of infantry thoroughly equipped, with their necessary cavalry, on the left of the French line within twelve or fourteen days of the order to mobilize, and to guard the home Island meanwhile by the fourteen territorial divisions he had organized, was the scheme upon which, aided by Field Marshals Nicholson and French, he had concentrated all his efforts and his stunted resources. It was a simple plan, but it was a practical plan. It had been

persistently pursued and laboriously and minutely studied. It represented approximately the maximum war effort that the voluntary system would yield applied in the most effective and daring manner to the decisive spot. If this plan were adopted there would

be nothing to argue about, nothing to haggle over. The French knew exactly what help they were going to get if Great Britain decided to come in, and exactly when and where they were going to get it; and mobilization schemes, railway graphics, timetables, bases, depots, supply arrangements, etc., filling many volumes, regulated and ensured a thorough and concerted execution. A commander whose whole life led up to this point had been chosen. All that remained to be done was to make the decision and give the signal.

At this point I reported on behalf of the Admiralty that, our mobilization being in every respect complete, and all our ships in their war stations, we would waive the claim we had hitherto made in all the discussions of the Committee of Imperial Defense that two regular divisions should be retained in Great Britain as a safeguard against invasion, and that so far as the Admiralty was concerned, not four, but the whole six divisions could go at once; that we would provide for their transportation and for the security of the Island in their absence. This considerable undertaking was made good by the Royal Navy.

Discussion then turned upon the place to which they should be dispatched. Lord Roberts inquired whether it was not possible to base the British army at Antwerp so as to strike, in conjunction with the Belgian armies, at the flank and rear of the invading German hosts. We are not able from an Admiralty point of view, to guarantee the sea communications of so large a force on the enemy side of the Straits of Dover, but only inside of the Anglo-French flotilla cordon, which had already taken up its station. Moreover, no plans had been worked out by the war office for such a contingency. They had concentrated all their thought upon integral co-operation with the French left, wherever it might be. It was that or nothing.

Another discussion took place upon how far forward the British expeditionary force should be concentrated. Some high authorities were for concentrating it around Amiens for intervention after the first shock of battle had been taken. Both Lord Kitchener and Sir Douglas Haig seemed inclined to this view. But in the end Sir John French and the forward school had their way, and it was felt that we must help France in the way the French staff thought would be most effective.

At this great council of war, Lord Kitchener had not yet become Secretary of State for War, but I knew that his appointment was impending. The Prime Minister could not possibly be burdened with the continuous flow of inter-departmental work proceeding between the War Office and the Admiralty and requiring to be transacted between Ministers. He therefore invited Lord Kitchener to undertake Ministerial charge of the War Office, and the field marshal, who had certainly not sought this post in any way, had no choice but to accept.

Lord Kitchener now came forward to the cabinet, on almost the first occasion after he joined us, and in soldierly sentences proclaimed a series of inspiring and prophetic truths. Everyone expected that the war would be short; but wars took unexpected courses and we must now prepare for a long struggle. Such a conflict could not be ended on the sea or by sea power alone. It could be ended only by great battles on the continent. In these the British Empire must bear its part on a scale proportionate to its magnitude and power. We must be prepared to put armies of millions in the field and maintain them for several years. In no other way could we discharge our duty to our allies or to the world.

These words were received by the cabinet in silent assent; and it is my belief that had Lord Kitchener proceeded to demand universal national service, to be applied as it might be required, his request would have been acceded to. He, however, proposed to content himself with calling for volunteers, and in the first instance to form six new regular divisions.

III.—Admirals All

Some earlier chapters of Mr. Churchill's first volume give particulars of famous sailors who were with him at the Admiralty, and of developments in naval policy and practice in the years before the war. From these chapters we take a few important extracts before carrying the story further.

I must now introduce the reader to the two great admirals of the fleet whose outstanding qualities and life's work, afloat and at the Admiralty, added to and reacted upon by the energies and patriotism of Lord Charles Beresford, had largely made the Royal Navy what it was at this time—Sir Arthur Wilson and Lord Fisher. The names of both Fisher and Wilson must often recur in these pages, for they played decisive parts in the tale I have to tell.

I first met Lord Fisher at Biarritz in 1907. We stayed for a fortnight as the guests of a common friend.

He was then First Sea Lord and in the height of his reign. We talked all day long and far into the nights. He told me wonderful stories of the navy and of his plans—all about dreadnoughts, all about submarines, all about the new education scheme for all branches of the navy, all about big guns, and splendid admirals and foolish miserable ones, and Nelson and the Bible. I remembered it all. I reflected on it often. At any rate, when I returned to my duties at the Colonial Office I could have passed an examination on the policy of the then Board of Admiralty.

Lord Fisher's Reforms

For at least ten years all the most important steps taken to enlarge, improve, or modernize the navy had been due to Fisher. The water-tube boiler, the "all big gun ship," the introduction of the submarine (Fisher's toys, as Lord Charles Beresford called them), the common education scheme, the system of nucleus crews for ships in reserve, and latterly, to meet the German rivalry, the concentration of the fleets in home waters, the scrapping of great quantities of ships of little fighting power, the great naval programmes of 1908 and 1909, the advance to the 13.5 inch gun—all in the main were his.

In carrying through these far-reaching changes he had created violent oppositions to himself in the navy, and his own methods, in which he gloried, were of a kind to excite bitter animosities, which he returned and was eager to repay. He made

it known, indeed he proclaimed, that officers of whatever rank who opposed his policies would have their professional careers ruined. As for traitors—i.e., those who struck at him openly or secretly—"their wives should be widows, their children fatherless, their homes a dunghill." This he repeated again and again. "Ruthless, relentless and remorseless," were words always on his lips, and many grisly examples of admirals and captains eating out their hearts "on the beach" showed that he meant what he said. He did not hesitate to express his policy in the most unfavorable terms, as if to chal-

lenge and defy his enemies and critics. "Favoritism," he wrote in the log of Dartmouth College, "is the secret of efficiency." What he meant by "favoritism" was selection without regard to seniority by a discerning genius in the interests of the public; but the word "favoritism" stuck. Officers were said to be "in the fish-pond"—unlucky for them if they were

not. He poured contempt upon the opinions and arguments of those who did not agree with his schemes, and abused them roundly at all times, both by word and letter.

Hoisted Storm Signal

There is no doubt whatever that Fisher was right in nine-tenths of what he fought for. His great reforms sustained the power of the Royal Navy at the most critical period in its history. He gave the navy the kind of shock which the British army received at the time of the South African war. After a long period of serene and unchallenged complacency the mutter of distant thunder could be heard. It was Fisher who hoisted the storm-signal and beat all hands to quarters. He forced every department of the naval service to review its position and question its own existence. He shook them and beat them and cajoled them out of slumber into intense activity. But the navy was not a pleasant place while this was going on. The "Band of Brothers" tradition which Nelson had handed down was for the time, but only for the time, discarded; and behind the open hostility of chieftains flourished the venomous intrigues of their followers.

I have asked myself whether all this could have been avoided; whether we could not have had the Fisher reforms without the Fisher methods. My conviction is that Fisher was maddened by the difficulties and obstructions which he encountered and became violent in the process of fighting so hard at every step. In the Government of a great service there must always be the combination of the political and professional authorities. A strong First Sea Lord, to carry out a vigorous policy, needs the assistance of a Minister, who alone can support him and defend him. The authority of both is doubled by their union. Each can render the other services of supreme importance when they are both effective factors. Working in harmony they multiply each other. By the resultant concentration of combined power no room or chance is given to faction. For good or for ill what they decide together in the interests of the service must be loyally accepted. Unhappily, the later years of Lord Fisher's efforts were years in which the Admiralty was ruled by two Ministers, both of whom were desperately and even mortally ill. Although most able and most upright public men, both Lord Cawdor and Lord Tweedmouth, First Lords from 1904 to 1908, were afflicted with extreme ill-health. Moreover, neither was in the House of Commons and able himself, by exposition in the responsible chamber, to proclaim in unquestioned accents the policy which the Admiralty would follow and



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ADMIRALS ALL IN THE GREAT WORLD WAR

which the House of Commons should ratify. When in 1908, Mr. McKenna became First Lord, there was a change. Gifted with remarkable clearness of mind and resolute courage, enjoying in the prime of life the fullest vigor of his faculties, and having acquired a strong political position in the House of Commons, he was able to supply an immediate steady influence. But it was too late for Fisher. The furies were upon his track. The opposition and hatreds had already grown too strong. The schism in the navy continued, fierce and open.

At the beginning of 1910 Sir John Fisher quitted the Admiralty and passed, as everyone believed, finally into retirement, crowned with achievements, loaded with honors, but pursued by much obloquy, amid the triumphs of his foes.

Naval Conceptions

For a man who for so many years filled great official positions, and was charged with so much secret and deadly business, Lord Fisher appeared amazingly voluminous and reckless in correspondence. When for the purposes of this work and for the satisfaction of his biographers I collected all the letters I had received from the Admiral, they amounted to upwards of three hundred closely typewritten pages. In the main they repeat again and again the principal naval conceptions and doctrines with which his life had been associated. Although it would be easy to show many inconsistencies and apparent contradictions, the general message is unchanging. The letters are also presented in an entertaining guise, interspersed with felicitous and sometimes recondite quotations, with flashing phrases and images, with mordant jokes and corrosive personalities. All were dashed off red-hot as they

left his mind, his strong pen galloping along in the wake of the imperious thought. He would often audaciously fling out on paper thoughts which other people would hardly admit to their own minds. It is small wonder that his turbulent passages left so many foes foaming in his wake. The

wonder is that he did not shipwreck himself a score of times. The buoyancy of his genius alone supported the burden. Indeed, in the process of years the profuse and imprudent violence of his letters became, in a sense, its own protection. People came to believe that this was the breezy style appropriate to our guardians of the deep. The old Admiral swept forward on his stormy course.

To me, in this period of preparation, the arrival of his letters was always a source of lively interest and pleasure. I was regaled with eight or ten closely-written double pages, fastened together with a little pearl pin or a scrap of silken ribbon, and containing every kind of news and counsel, varying from blistering reproach to the highest forms of inspiration and encouragement. From the very beginning his letters were couched in an affectionate and paternal style. "My beloved Winston," they began, ending usually with a variation of "Yours to a cinder," "Yours till hell freezes," or "Till charcoal sprouts," followed by a P.S. and two or three more pages of pregnant and brilliant matter. I have found it impossible to re-read these letters without sentiments of strong regard for him, his fiery soul, his volcanic energy, his deep creative mind, his fierce outspoken hatreds, his love of England. Alas, there was a day when hell froze and charcoal sprouted and friendship was reduced to cinders: "My beloved Winston" had given place to "First Lord: I can no longer

be your colleague." I am glad to be able to chronicle that this was not the end of our long and intimate relationship.

Sir Arthur Wilson

Sir Arthur Wilson, the First Sea Lord, received me with his customary dignified simplicity. He could not, of course, be wholly unaware of the main causes which had brought me to the Admiralty. In conversation with the other Sea Lords when the well-kept secret of my appointment first reached the Admiralty, he said: "We are to have new masters; if they wish us to serve them, we will do so, and if not, they will find others to carry on the work." I had only met him hitherto at the conference of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and my opinions were divided between an admiration for all I heard of his character and a total disagreement with his strategic views. He considered the creation of a war staff quite unnecessary; I had come to set one up. He did not approve of the War Office plans for sending an army to France in the event of war; I considered it my duty to perfect these arrangements to the smallest detail. He was, as I believed, still an advocate of a close blockade of the German ports, which to my lay or military mind, the torpedo seemed already to have rendered impossible. These were large and vital differences. He on his side probably thought we had got into an unnecessary panic over the Agadir crisis and did not properly understand the strength and mobility of the British fleet nor the true character of British strategic power. He was due to retire for age from the service in three or four months, unless his tenure had been extended, while I, for my part, came to the Admiralty with a very clear intention to have an entirely new Board of my own choosing. In these circumstances our association was bound to be bleak.

A Selfless Man

This is, perhaps, however, the moment for me to give an impression of this striking naval personality. He was without any exception, the most selfless man I have ever met or even read of. He wanted nothing, and he feared nothing—absolutely nothing. Whether he was commanding the British fleet or repairing an old motor car he was, equally keen, equally interested, equally content.

from a great office into absolute retirement, to return from retirement to the pinnacle of naval power, were transitions which produced no change in the beat of that constant heart. Everything was duty. It was not merely that nothing else mattered.

There was nothing else. One did one's duty as well as one possibly could, be it great or small, and naturally one deserved no reward. This had been the spirit in which he had lived his long life afloat, and which by his example he had spread far and wide through the ranks of the navy. It made him seem very unsympathetic on many occasions, both to officers and men. Orders were orders, whether they terminated an officer's professional career or led him on to fame, whether they involved the most pleasant or the most disagreeable work; and he would snap his teeth and smile his Wintry smile to all complaints and to sentiment and emotion in every form. Never once did I see his composure disturbed. He never opened up, never unbent. Never once, until a very dark day for me, did I learn that my work had met with favor in his eyes.

A Skilful Commander

All the same, for all his unsympathetic methods, "Tug," as he was generally called (because he was always working, e.g., pulling, hauling, tugging), or alternatively, "Old 'Art," was greatly loved in the fleet. Men would do hard and unpleasant work even when they doubted its necessity, because he had ordered it, and it was "his way." Every one knew the story of his V.C., when the square broke at Tamai, and when he was seen, with the ammunition of his Gatling exhausted, knocking the Dervish spearmen over one another with his fists, using the broken hilt of his sword as a sort of knuckle-duster. Stories were told of his apparent insensibility to weather and climate. He would wear a thin monkey-jacket in Midwinter in the North Sea with apparent comfort while everyone else was shivering in greatcoats. He would stand bareheaded under a tropical sun without ill-effects. He had a strong inventive turn of mind. The system of counter-mining in use for forty years in the navy, and the mast-head semaphore which continued till displaced by wireless telegraphy, were both the products of his ingenuity. He was a most skilful and accomplished commander of a fleet at sea. In addition to this he expressed himself with great clearness and thoroughness on paper, many of his documents being extended arguments of great exactness in detail and widely comprehensive scope. He impressed me from the first as a man of the highest

quality, but, as I thought, dwelling too much in the past of naval science, not sufficiently receptive of new ideas when conditions were changing so

rapidly, and, of course, tenacious and unyielding in the last degree.

After we had had several preliminary talks and I found we were not likely to reach an agreement, I sent him a minute which raised an unmistakable issue. He met it by a reasoned and unqualified refusal, and I then determined to form a new Board of Admiralty without delay. I put my proposals before the Prime Minister, and obtained his assent.

IV.—Exits and Entrances

Sir Arthur Wilson and I parted on friendly, civil, but at the same time cool terms. He showed not the least resentment at the brief curtailment of his tenure. He was as good-tempered and as distant as ever. Only once did he show the slightest sign of vehemence. That was when I told him that the Prime Minister had authorized me to submit his name to the King for a peerage. He disengaged himself from this with much vigor. What would he do with such a thing? It would be ridiculous. However, His Majesty resolved to confer upon him the Order of Merit, and this he was finally willing to accept. On his last night in office he gave a dinner to the new Sea Lords in the true "band of brothers" style, and then retired to Norfolk. I could not help thinking uncomfortably of the famous Tenniel cartoon, "Dropping the Pilot," where the inexperienced and impulsive German Emperor is depicted carelessly watching the venerable figure of Bismark descending the ladder. Nevertheless, I had acted on high public grounds and on those alone, and I fortified myself with them.

As will be seen in its proper place, Sir Arthur Wilson came back to the Admiralty three years later and worked with Lord Fisher and me during the six months of our association. When Lord Fisher resigned in May, 1915, I invited Sir Arthur to take up the duties of First Sea Lord and he consented to do so. On learning, however, a few days later that I was to leave the Admiralty, he wrote to Mr. Asquith refusing to undertake the task under any other First Lord but me. Here is his letter:

May 13, 1915.

Dear Mr. Asquith,—In view of the reports in the papers this morning as to the probable reconstruction of the Government, I think I ought to tell you that although I agreed to undertake the office of First Sea Lord under Mr. Churchill because it appeared to me to be the best means of maintaining continuity of policy under the unfortunate circumstances that have arisen, I am not prepared to undertake the duties under any new First Lord, as the strain under such circumstances would be far beyond my strength.

Believe me, your truly,

A. K. WILSON.

Blame for Dardanelles

At that time I hardly seemed to have a friend in the official or parliamentary world. All the press were throwing the blame of the Dardanelles entanglement and of many other things upon me, and I was everywhere represented as a rash, presumptuous person with whom no Board of Admiralty could work. Sir Arthur had never previously given me any sign of approval, though, of course, we had labored together day after day. I was, therefore, astounded to learn what he had done. It came as an absolute surprise to me; and I do not mind saying that I felt as proud as a young officer mentioned for the first time in dispatches. I thought it my duty, however, to try to overcome his objections, as I knew the Prime Minister wanted him to take the post. But it was all in vain. He stuck to his opinion that he could do it with me and with nobody else. I felt deeply touched. There was nothing to be touched about, he observed. "You know all the moves on the board. I should only have to put the brake on from time to time. I could not possibly manage with anyone else." And that was the end of it. He continued working in a subordinate position at the Admiralty till the end of the war. I hardly ever saw him afterwards; but I have preserved a memory which is very precious to me.

A few weeks after my arrival at the Admiralty I was told that among several officers of flag rank who wished to see me was Rear Admiral Beatty. I had never met him before, but I had the following impressions about him. First, that he was the youngest flag officer in the fleet. Secondly, that he had commanded the white gunboat which had come up the Nile as close as possible to support the 21st Lancers when we made the charge at Omdurman. Thirdly, that he had seen a lot of fighting on land with the army, and that consequently he had military as well as naval experience. Fourthly, that he came of a hard-riding stock; his father had been in my own regiment, the 4th Hussars, and I had often heard him talked of when I first joined. The Admiral, I knew, was a very fine horseman, with what is called "an eye for country." Fifthly, that there was much talk in

naval circles of his having been pushed on too fast. Such were the impressions aroused in my mind by the name of this officer, and I record them with minuteness because the decisions which I had the honor of taking in regard to him were most serviceable to the Royal Navy and to the British arms.

Admiral Beatty

I was, however, advised about him at the Admiralty in a decidedly adverse sense. He had got on too fast, he had many interests ashore. His heart was not wholly in the service. He had been offered an appointment suited to his rank as Rear Admiral in the Atlantic fleet, and he had declined this appointment—a very serious step for a naval officer to take when appointments were few in proportion to candidates—and he should in consequence not be offered any further employment. It would be contrary to precedent to make a further one. He had already been unemployed for eighteen months, and would probably be retired in the ordinary course at the expiration of the full three years' unemployment.

But my first meeting with the Admiral induced me immediately to disregard this unfortunate advice. He became at once my naval secretary (or private secretary, as the appointment was then styled). Working thus side by side in rooms which communicated, we perpetually discussed during the next fifteen months the problems of a naval war with Germany. It became increasingly clear to me that he viewed questions of naval strategy and tactics in a different light from the average naval officer; he approached them as it seemed to me much more as a soldier would. His war experience on land had illuminated the facts he had acquired in his naval training. He was no mere instrumentalist. He did not think of material as an end in itself but only as a means. He thought of war problems in their unity by land, sea and air. His mind had been rendered quick and supple by the situations of polo and the hunting-field, and enriched by varied experiences against the enemy afloat, on Nile gunboats, and ashore. It was with equal pleasure and profit that I discussed with him our naval problem, now from this angle, now from that; and I was increasing struck with the shrewd and profound sagacity of his comments expressed in language singularly free from technical jargon.

"Nelson Has Come Again"

I had no doubts whatever when the command of the battle cruiser squadron fell vacant in the Spring of 1913 in appointing him over the heads of all to this incomparable command, the nucleus, as it proved to be, of the famous battle cruiser fleet—the strategic cavalry of the Royal Navy, that supreme combination of speed and power to which the thoughts of the Admiralty were continuously directed. And when two years later (February 3, 1915) I visited him on board the *Lion*, with the scars of victorious battle fresh upon her from the action of the Dogger Bank, I heard from his captains and his admirals the expression of their respectful but intense enthusiasm for their leader. Well do I remember how, as I was leaving the ship, the usually imperturbable Admiral Pakenham caught me by the sleeve, "First Lord, I wish to speak to speak to you in private," and the restrained passion in his voice as he said, "Nelson has come again." Those words often recurred to my mind.

So much of my work in endeavoring to prepare the fleet for war was dependent upon the guidance and help I received from Prince Louis of Battenberg, who, taking it as a whole, was my principal counselor, as Second Sea Lord from January, 1912, to March, 1913, when Sir Francis Bridgeman's health temporarily failed, and as First Sea Lord thenceforward to the end of October, 1914, that it is necessary to give some description of this remarkable Prince and British sailor. All the more is this necessary, since the accident of his parentage struck him down in the opening months of the Great War and terminated his long professional career.

Prince Louis

Prince Louis was a child of the Royal Navy. From his earliest years he had been bred to the sea. The deck of a British warship was his home. All his interest was centered in the British fleet. So far from his exalted rank having helped him, it had hindered his career; up to a certain point no doubt it had been of assistance, but after that it had been a positive drawback. In consequence he had spent an exceptionally large proportion of his forty years' service afloat, usually in the less agreeable commands. One had heard at Malta how he used to bring his cruiser squadron into the small, crowded harbor at speed, and then in the nick of time, with scarcely a hundred yards to spare, by dropping his anchors, checking on his cables and going full speed astern, bring it safely into station. He had a far wider knowledge of war by land and sea and of the continent of Europe than most of the other admirals I have known. His brother, as King of Bulgaria, had shown military aptitudes of a very high order, at the battle of Shvinitza, and he himself was deeply versed in every detail, practical and theoretic, of the British naval service. It was not without good reason that he had been appointed under Lord Fisher to be head of the British naval intelligence

department, that vital ganglion of our organization. He was a thoroughly trained and accomplished staff officer, with a gift of clear and lucid statement and all that thoroughness and patient industry which we have never underestimated in the British navy.

It was recounted of him that on one occasion, when he visited Kiel with King Edward, a German admiral in high command had reproached him with serving in the British fleet, whereat Prince Louis, stiffening, had replied, "Sir, when I joined the Royal Navy in the year 1864, the German Empire did not exist."

The part which he played in the events with which I am dealing will be recorded as the story unfolds.

V.—The North Sea Front

The traditional war policy of the Admiralty grew up during the prolonged wars and antagonisms with France. It consisted in establishing, immediately upon the outbreak of war, a close blockade of the enemy's ports and naval bases by means of flotillas of strong small craft supported by cruisers, with superior battle fleets in reserve. The experience of two hundred years had led all naval strategists to agree on this fundamental principle, "Our first line of defence is the enemy's ports."

When, early in the present century, our potential enemy for the first time became not France, but Germany, our naval strategic front shifted from the south to the east coast and from the Channel to the North Sea. But although the enemy, the front, and the theatre had changed, the sound principle of British naval strategy still held good. Our first line of defence was considered to be the enemy's ports. The Admiralty policy was still a close blockade of those ports by means of stronger flotillas properly supported by cruisers and ultimately by the battle fleets.

It was not to be expected that our arrangements on this new front could rapidly reach the same degree of perfection as the conflicts of so many generations had achieved in the channel; and so far as our naval bases were concerned, we were still in the process of transition when the Great War began. More serious, however, was the effect of the change on the utility of our destroyers. In-

stead of operating at distances of from twenty to sixty miles across the Channel, with their supporting ships close at hand in safe harbors, they were now called upon to operate in the Heligoland Bight, across 240 miles of sea, and with no suitable bases for their supporting battle fleet nearer than the Thames or the Forth.

Traditional Policy

Therefore, from shortly before 1905, when the French agreement was signed, down to the Agadir crisis in 1911, the Admiralty made plans to capture one or other of the German islands. On this it was intended to establish an overseas base at which from the beginning of the war our blockade flotillas could be replenished and could rest, and which, as war progressed, would have developed into a great advanced citadel of our sea power. In this way, therefore, the Admiralty would still have carried out their traditional war policy of beating the enemy's flotillas and light craft into his ports and maintaining a constant close blockade.

These considerations were not lost upon the Germans. They greatly increased the fortifications of Heligoland, and they proceeded to fortify, one after another, such of the Frisian Islands as were in any way suitable for our purposes. At the same time a new and potent factor appeared upon the scene—the submarine. The submarine not only rendered the capture and maintenance of an overseas base or bases far more difficult and,

as some authorities have steadfastly held, impossible, but it threatened with destruction our cruisers and

battleships, without whose constant support our flotillas would easily have been destroyed by the enemy's cruisers.

This was the situation in October, 1911, when, immediately after the Agadir crisis the new Board of Admiralty over which I presided was completely changed. Seeing that we had not for the time being the numerical force of destroyers able to master the destroyers of the potential enemy in his home waters, nor the power to support our flotillas with heavy ships, and having regard also to the difficulty and hazard in all the circumstances of storming and capturing one of his now fortified islands, we proceeded forthwith to revise altogether the war plans and substitute, with the full concurrence of our principal commanders afloat, the policy of distant blockade set up in the Admiralty war orders of 1912.

Distant Blockade

The policy of distant blockade was not adopted from choice, but from necessity. It implied no repudiation on the part of the Admiralty of their fundamental principle of aggressive naval strategy, but only a temporary abandonment of it in the face of unsolved practical difficulties; and it was intended that every effort should be made, both before and after the declaration of war, to overcome those difficulties. It was rightly foreseen that by closing the exits from the North Sea into the Atlantic Ocean German commerce would be almost completely cut off from the world.

It was expected that the economic and financial pressure resulting from such a blockade would fatally injure the German power to carry on a war. It was hoped that this pressure would compel the German fleet to come out and fight, not in his own defended waters but at a great numerical disadvantage in the open sea. It was believed that we could continue meanwhile to enjoy the full command of the seas without danger to our sea communications or to the movement of our armies, and that the British Isles could be kept safe from invasion. There was at that time no reason to suppose that these conditions would not continue indefinitely with undiminished advantage to ourselves and increasing pressure upon the enemy. So far as all surface vessels are concerned, most of these expectations were confirmed by experience.

Under these orders the fleet was disposed strategically so as to block the exits from the North Sea by placing the grand fleet at Scapa Flow and drawing a cordon of destroyers across the Straits of Dover supported by the older battleships and protected by certain minefields. These conclusions stood the test of the war. They were never departed from in any important respect by any of the Boards of Admiralty which held office. By this means the British Navy seized and kept the effective control of all the oceans of the world.

They did not, however, secure the absolute control of the North Sea. We could no longer hope to prevent the enemy from sallying out of his harbors whenever he chose. What use would he make of this liberty at

the outset or during the progress of a war? By what means could we restrict him most effectually?

We sought to probe these questions in the naval manoeuvres of 1912 and 1913.

A Menacing Danger

But before we could put into operation against Germany the war policy on which the Admiralty had decided, there was a preliminary period to be traversed of the most momentous and critical character. This period raised another set of problems before which the inconveniences of raids, or even serious invasion, paled in gravity. Of all the dangers that menaced the British Empire, none was comparable to a surprise of the fleet.

To what lengths, therefore, would the Germans go to compass the destruction of the British fleet? Taking the demonic view of their character which it was necessary to assume for the purposes of considering a war problem, what forms of attack ought we to reckon with? Of course, if Germany had no will to war all these speculations were mere nightmares. But if she had the will and intention of making war, it was evident that there would be no difficulty in finding a pretext arising out of a dispute with France or Russia, to create a situation in which war was inevitable and create it as the most opportune moment for herself.

Obviously, therefore, the danger of a "bolt from the blue" was by no means fantastic. Still, might one not reasonably expect certain warnings? There would probably be some kind

of dispute in progress between the great powers enjoining particular vigilance upon the Admiralty. We might hope to get information of military and naval movements. It was almost certain that there would be financial perturbations in the exchanges of the world indicating a rise of temperature. Could we, therefore, rely upon a week's notice, or three days' notice, or at least twenty-four hours' notice, before any blow actually fell?

Weapon of Surprise

In Europe, where great nations faced each other with enormous armies, there was an automatic safeguard against surprise. Decisive events could not occur till the armies were mobilized, and that took at least a fortnight. The supreme defence of France, for instance, could not therefore be overcome without a great battle in which the main strength of the French nation could be brought to bear. But no such assurance was enjoyed by the British fleet. No naval mobilization was necessary on either side to enable all the modern ships to attack one another. They had only to raise steam and bring ammunition to the guns. But beyond this grim fact grew the torpedo menace. So far as gunfire alone was concerned our principal danger was

to allow our fleet to be caught divided and to have one vital part destroyed without inflicting proportionate damage on the enemy. This danger was greatly reduced by wireless, which enabled the divided portions to be instantly directed to a common rendezvous and to avoid action till concentration was effected. Besides, gunfire was a game that two could play at. One could not contemplate that the main strength of the fleets would ever be allowed to come within range of each other without taking proper precautions. But the torpedo was essentially a weapon of surprise, or even treachery; and all that was true of the torpedo in a surface vessel applied with tenfold force to the torpedo of a submarine.

Obviously there were limits beyond which it was impossible to safeguard oneself. It was not simply a case of a few weeks of special precautions. The British Navy had to live its ordinary life in time of peace. It had to have its cruises and its exercises, its periods of leave and refit. Our harbors were open to the commerce of the world. Absolute security against the worst conceivable treachery was physically impossible. Further, I do not believe that such treachery was ever contemplated by the German Admiralty, Government, or Emperor. While trying as far as possible to guard against even the worst possibilities, my own conviction was that there would be a cause of quarrel accompanied by a crisis and a fall in markets, and followed very rapidly by a declaration of war, or by acts of war intended to be simultaneous with the declaration, but possibly occurring slightly before. What actually did happen was not unlike what I thought would happen.

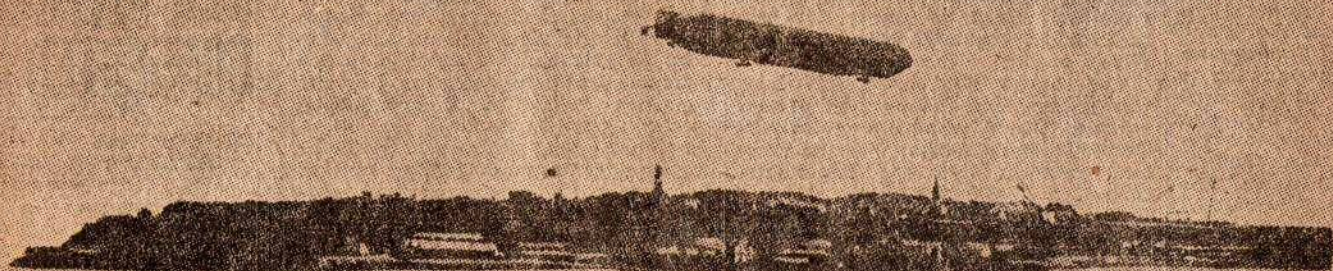
NOTES BY THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY
(March 29, 1913)

It is much harder for the British Navy to stop raids or an invasion from Germany today than it was fifteen years ago from France. The tension between England and France had in the course of successive generations led to the development of a sea front opposite to France of great military strength. The line Berehaven, Queenstown, Pembroke, Falmouth, Plymouth, Portland, Ports-

mouth, Newhaven, Dover, Sheerness, and Chatham covers with suitable defences every point of strategic significance, comprises three great naval bases and dockyards, and two torpedo-proof military harbors (Port-

land and Dover). In close proximity to this line are our three principal military establishments, Aldershot, Salisbury and the Curragh.

From the British military harbors and bases on this line close observation of all French channel ports where transports could be assembled can be maintained by a superior British naval force. Cherbourg and



Heligoland, Described by Mr. Winston Churchill as an "Almost Impregnable Fortress."

Havre can be controlled from Portland, and Calais and Boulogne from Dover. Flotillas and light craft employed on this service of observation would have their own home base close at hand, and a high proportion could be constantly maintained on duty. The proximity of the battle fleets in the numerous well-protected harbors, where every necessity is supplied, ensures the effective support of the flotillas against any serious attempt to drive them off.

Very different is the situation on the sea front against Germany. With the exception of Chatham, no naval base or military harbor exists. Chatham itself has no graving docks for the later dreadnoughts, and the depth of the Medway imposes serious limitations of tides and seasons upon great vessels using the dockyard. Harwich affords anchorage only to torpedo craft, and is lightly defended. The Humber and the Tyne are unsuitable for large battle fleets, and are but lightly defended. Rosyth will not be ready even as a war-repairing base till 1916 at the earliest. Defences are being erected at Cromarty, and a temporary floating base is in process of creation at that point. Only improvised emergency arrangements are contemplated for Scapa Flow, and the Shetlands are quite unprotected. The only war bases available for the fleet along the whole of the front are Rosyth, Cromarty, and Scapa—the more remote being preferred, although the least defended. The landing places along the coast are numerous, extensive, and evenly distributed; the strategic objectives open to an enemy are numerous and important. The Shetlands are a strategic position of the highest consequence, totally undefended and ungarrisoned. The same is true of the Orkneys, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, Newcastle, Hull, and Harwich are all points of primary importance. No large military garrisons comparable to those on the southern front exist.

Impregnable Fortress

But the comparison of the new conditions with the old becomes most unfavorable when we extend our view from the British to the German coast. It is difficult to find any sea front of greater natural defensive strength than the German North Sea coast. Intricate navigation, shifting and extensive sand banks and currents, strong tides, frequent mists and storms, make the Heligoland Bight a very difficult theatre for oversea operations. The deep re-entrant widening into a broad debouch, flanked at each side by lines of islands and sustained in the centre of Heligoland, confers the greatest possible natural advantages upon the defence. To these have been added, and are being added, everything that military art can devise. Heligoland is an almost impregnable fortress and an advanced torpedo and airship station. Borkum and Sylt are both heavily defended by batteries, minefields, and strong garrisons, and both can be commanded by fire from the mainland. Into this great defended area, with its wide debouch facing towards us, access is given from the Ems, the Elbe, the Weser, from the Jade Canal, communicating with the Baltic, and open for dreadnoughts at the present year, within this area are all the naval establishments of Germany. A fleet of transports assembled at either end of the Kiel Canal have the widely separated alternatives of emerging either from the Heligoland Bight or from the Baltic for offensive purposes. There would be no difficulty on the declaration of war in assembling unperceived at Hamburg, Kiel, Wilhelmshaven, and other ports, the shipping necessary to transport at least 20,000 men; enough to transport 10,000 men is always in those ports. Large garrisons exist in the neighborhood, amply sufficient to supply whatever military force was required. The Germans possess today large ships of the liner class suitable for transport in a way which the French never did. The rigor with which agents suspected of sending information have been pursued during the

last five or six years has made it difficult to arrange for the transmission of intelligence. Consular officers are marked men; and it is to be expected that their communications by the usual postal and telegraphic channels will be delayed if hostilities are imminent. Although the sources from which information may be obtained have been increased in numbers during recent years, and are still being increased as opportunity offers, yet the Admiralty are not prepared to make any confident assertion that a force of upwards of 20,000 men could not be collected in time of peace and embarked without their knowledge. As a matter of fact, very considerable embarkations of a test character have been carried out without our having any knowledge until some days after the event.

Mine and Torpedo

The continuous development of the mine and the torpedo makes it impossible to establish a close watch with heavy ships on the exits from the Heligoland Bight. To do so for a long period of time would mean a steady and serious wastage of valuable units from the above causes, and if prolonged would effectually alter the balance of naval power. The development of submarines of ocean-going capacity may be expected to modify this situation in our favor.

Therefore, the most we could do in the days before the war was to attempt to measure and forecast what would happen to England on the outbreak and in the first few weeks of a war with Germany. To look farther was beyond the power of man. To try to do so was to complicate the task beyond mental endurance. The paths of thought bifurcated too rapidly. Would there be a great sea battle or not? Who would win the great sea battle? No one could tell. Obviously the first thing to do was to be ready; not to be taken unawares; to be concentrated; not to be caught divided; to have the strongest fleet possible in the best station under the best conditions in good time, and then if the battle came one could await its result with a good heart.

Everything, therefore, to guard against surprise; everything, therefore, to guard against division; everything, therefore, to increase the strength of the forces available for the supreme sea battle.

But suppose the enemy did not fight a battle at sea. And suppose the battle on land was indeterminate in its results. And suppose the war went on not for weeks or months, but for years. Well, then, it would be far easier to judge those matters

at the time, and far easier then, when everyone was alarmed and awake and active, to secure the taking of the necessary steps; and there would be time to take them. No step would be so difficult or so dangerous as the first step. The problems of the second year of war must be dealt with by the experience of the first year of war. The problems of the third year of war must be met by results observed or understood in the second, and so on.

Hypothetical Questions

I repulse, therefore, on behalf of the Boards of Admiralty over which I presided down to the end of May, 1915, all reproaches directed to what occurred in 1917 and 1918, and I decline to be stultified by any lessons arising out of them. It is vain to tell me that if the Germans had built in the three years before the war the submarines they built in the three years after it had begun, Britain would have been undone; or that if England had had in August, 1914, the army which we possessed a year later there would have been no war. Every set of circumstances involved every other set of circumstances. Would Germany in profound peace have been allowed by Great Britain to build an enormous fleet of submarines which could have no other object than the starvation and ruin of this Island through the sinking of unarmed merchant ships? Would Germany have waited to attack France while England raised a powerful conscript army to go to her aid?

Every event must be judged in fair relation to the circumstances of the time, and only in such relation.

These papers are sufficient to show that we did not ignore the dangers that lay before us or neglect the attempt to penetrate their mysteries. It is easy to underrate the difficulty of such work in days of peace.

VI.—In the Narrow Seas

After describing the escape of the Goeben; the effect of military events upon our naval policy; the British naval victory in the Heligoland Bight (Aug. 28), and other matters of great interest, Mr. Churchill comes to the work of the Royal Naval Air Force.

An unbroken chain of events drew the Admiralty again to the Belgian coast; and to explain this a digression is necessary.

As the Germans overran Belgium and all the Channel ports were exposed, the danger of air attacks upon Great Britain became most serious and real. Zeppelins had already cruised over Antwerp, and it was known that London was in range of the Zeppelin sheds at Dusseldorf and Cologne. To meet this danger there was nothing except the naval aeroplanes the Admiralty had been able to scrape and smuggle together. On September 3, Lord Kitchener asked me in cabinet whether I would accept, on behalf of the Admiralty, the responsibility for the aerial defence of Great Britain, as the War Office had no means of discharging it. I thereupon undertook to do what was possible with the wholly inadequate resources which were available. There were neither anti-aircraft guns nor searchlights, and though a few improvisations had been made, nearly a year must elapse before the efficient supplies necessary could be forthcoming. Meanwhile, at any moment half a dozen Zeppelins might arrive to bomb London, or, what was more serious, Chatham, Woolwich, or Portsmouth.

I rated the Zeppelin much lower as a weapon of war than almost anyone else. I believed that this enormous bladder of combustible and explosive gas would prove to be easily destructible. I was sure the fighting aeroplane, rising lightly laden from its own base, armed with incendiary bullets, would harry, rout, and burn these gaseous monsters. I had proclaimed this opinion to the House of Commons in 1913, using the often-quoted simile of the hornets.

British Zeppelins

I, therefore, did everything in my power in the years before the war to restrict expenditure upon airships and to concentrate our narrow and stinted resources upon aeroplanes. I confined the naval construction of airships to purely experimental limits, and in April, 1915, when the slow progress and inferior quality of our only rigid experimental airship were manifest, I gave orders that it should be scrapped, the plant broken up, and the labor and material devoted to increasing the output of aeroplanes. Had I had my way, no airships would have been built by Great Britain during the war (except the little "Blimps" for teasing submarines). After I left the Admiralty this policy was reversed, and forty millions of money were squandered by successive Boards in building British Zeppelins, not one of which on any occasion even rendered any effective fighting service. Meanwhile the alternative policy of equipping the fleet with aerial observation by flying aeroplanes off warships or off properly constructed

carriers lagged pitifully, with the result that at the Battle of Jutland we had no British airships and only one aeroplane in the air.

The hornet theory, at one time so fiercely derided, was, of course, ultimately vindicated by the war. Zeppelins were clawed down in flames from the sky over both land and sea by aeroplanes until they did not dare to come any more. The aeroplane was the means by which the Zeppelin menace was destroyed, and it was virtually the only means, apart from weather and their own weakness, by which Zeppelins were ever destroyed.

Bombing Aeroplanes

It was easy to order the necessary guns, searchlights, etc., and set on foot the organization which should produce and employ them. But it was no use sitting down and waiting for a year while these preparations were completing. Only offensive action could help us. I decided immediately to strike, by bombing from aeroplanes, at the Zeppelin sheds wherever these gigantic structures could be found in Germany, and secondly, to prevent the erection of any new Zeppelin sheds in the conquered parts of Belgium or France. Here again the policy was right. Our resources were, however, feeble and slender. Compared with the terrific developments at the end of the war, they were pitiful. Still, they were all we had, and all that our knowledge of aviation at the time could bestow. Deficiencies in material had to be made good by daring. All honor to the naval airmen, the pioneers of the aerial offensive, who planned and executed in these early months the desperate flights over hostile territory in an element then scarcely known, which resulted in the raids on Dusseldorf and Cologne on the Rhine, Friedrichshaven on Lake Constance, and Cuxhaven in the Heligoland Bight. Altogether in the first twelve months of the war six Zeppelins were destroyed in the air or in their sheds by the offensive action of a handful of British naval airmen; and few were

destroyed by any other agency except accident.

In order to strike at the Zeppelin sheds in Germany and to prevent the erection of new ones in Belgium, it was necessary to start from as near the enemy's lines as possible. Extracts from my own minutes, principally to Captain Sueter, the enterprising and energetic director of the air division, gave as good an account as any other.

September 1, 1914.

The largest possible force of naval aeroplanes should be stationed in Calais or Dunkirk. Reports have been received, and it is also extremely probable, that the Germans will attempt to attack London and other places by Zeppelin airships, of which it is said a considerable number exist. The close proximity of the French coast to England renders such an attack thoroughly feasible. The proper defence is a thorough and continual search of the country for seventy to one hundred miles inland with a view to marking down any temporary air-

ship bases, or airships replenishing before starting to attack. Should such airships be located they should be immediately attacked. Commander Samson, with Major Gerrard as second in command will be entrusted with this duty; and the director of air division will take all steps to supply them with the necessary pilots, aeroplanes and equipment.

September 5, 1914.

(Extract.) . . . After all, the great defence against aerial menace is to attack the enemy's aircraft as near as possible to their point of departure. . . . The principle is as follows:

(a) A strong oversea force of aeroplanes to deny the French and Belgian coasts of the enemy's aircraft, and to attack all zeppelins and air bases or temporary air bases which it may be sought to establish, and which are in reach. . . .

September 5, 1914.

(Extract.) In order to discharge adequately the responsibilities which we have assumed for the aerial defence of England, it is necessary that we should maintain an aerial control over the area approximately one hundred miles radius from Dunkirk. To do this, we must support the aeroplanes which are stationed on the French coast with sufficient armed motor cars and personnel to enable advanced subsidiary aeroplane bases to be established thirty, forty, and fifty miles inland.

According to all accounts received, the Germans, in so far as they have penetrated this region, have done it simply by bluff. Small parties of Uhlans, taking advantage of the terror inspired by their atrocities in Belgium, have made their way freely about the country, and have imposed themselves upon the population. We require, in the first instance, two hundred or three hundred men, with fifty or sixty motor cars, who can support and defend our advanced aerial bases. I should propose to draw these by suitable volunteers from the marine brigade. They should be placed under the orders of Commander Samson, and should operate from Dunkirk.

Armored Cars and Tanks

The needs and activities of the naval aeroplanes in the neighborhood of Dunkirk led directly to the development of the armored car, and the armored car led directly to the birth of the tank, which was in essence only an armored car capable of crossing trenches. Almost immediately after the German inroad into Belgium, I received accounts of the remarkable work done by a Belgian motor car, hastily equipped with armor and a machine gun, in shooting down and driving back the numerous Uhlans with which the enemy were seeking to overrun the country. Commander Samson was prompt to realize and seize the advantage of armored cars for the purpose of protecting his aeroplane operations and also on their own account. In view of the reports received from him and other sources, I gave, during the latter part of August and September successive orders for the formation of armored car squadrons under the Admiralty, and as all this arose out of the aeroplane squadron stationed at Dunkirk, the formation of the ar-

mored car squadrons was entrusted to Commander Sueter. In this task this officer displayed great energy and in a very short time no less than seven or eight squadrons were called into being, based on the purchase of all the Rolls-Royce cars that were available, and rapidly improvised armor protection.

The first few cars had scarcely begun to show their advantages in Commander Samson's guerrilla from Dunkirk, when the difficulty which ultimately led to the creation of the tank manifested itself. The German cavalry sought to protect themselves against the attack of the armored cars by digging trenches across the road. To meet this, I gave the following directions:

September 23, 1914.

It is most important that the motor transport and armed motor cars should be provided to a certain extent with cars carrying the means of bridging small cuts in the road and arrangement of planks capable of bridging a ten or twelve feet span quickly and easily should be carried with every ten or twelve machines. A proportion of tools should also be supplied.

Let me have proposals at once.

Continuous Trench Lines

Other conditions, however, swept down upon us very quickly, and by the middle of October, after the events to be narrated in the next chapter, the trench lines on both sides reached the sea and became continuous over the whole front. Thus at the moment when the new armored car force was coming into effective existence at much expense and on a considerable scale, it was confronted with an obstacle and a military situation which rendered its employment practically impossible. The conclusion was forced naturally and obviously upon me, and no doubt upon others, that if the armored car on which so much money and labor had been spent could not move round the enemy's trenches and operate against an open flank of his army, some method should be devised which would enable it to traverse and pass over the trenches themselves. This subject will, however, be dealt with in its proper place.

The air was the first cause that took us to Dunkirk. The armored car was the child of the air; and the tank its grandchild.

This chapter, which began with good luck and success, must end, however, with misfortune. The original war orders had been devised to meet the situation on the outbreak of hostilities. They placed the pieces on the board in what we believed to be the best array, and left their future disposition to be modified by experience. Under these orders the 7th Cruiser Squadron in the Third Fleet, consisting of the old cruisers of the *Bacchante* class (*Bacchante*, *Euryalus*, *Cressy*, *Aboukir*, *Hogue*), was based on the Nore "in order to ensure the presence of armored ships in the southern approaches of the North Sea and eastern entrance to the Channel, and to support the 1st and 3rd Flotillas operating in the area from Harwich." The object of these flotillas was "to keep

the area south of the 54th parallel clear of enemy torpedo craft and minelayers." The cruiser force was "to support them in the execution of these duties and also, with the flotillas, to keep a close watch over enemy war vessels and transports in order that their movement may be reported at the earliest moment."

This patrol had accordingly been maintained day after day without incident of any kind happening, and we had now been six weeks at war. In war all repetitions are perilous. You can do many things with impunity if you do not keep on doing them over and over again.

Live-Bait Squadron

It was not part of my duty to deal with the routine movements of the fleet and its squadrons, but only to exercise a general supervision. I kept my eyes and ears open for every indication that would be useful, and I had many and various sources of information. On September 17, during my visit to the Grand Fleet, I heard an expression used by an officer which instantly arrested my attention. He spoke of "the live-bait squadron." I demanded what was meant, and was told that the expression referred to these old cruisers patrolling the narrow waters in apparently unbroken peace. I thereupon reviewed the whole position in this area. I discussed it with Commodore Tyrwhitt and with Commodore Keyes. The next morning I addressed the following minute to the First Sea Lord:

18, 9, 14.

The force available for operations in the narrow seas should be capable of minor action without the need of bringing down the Grand Fleet. To this end it should have effective support either by two or three battle cruisers or battleships of the Second Fleet working from Sheerness. This is the most efficiently air and destroyer patrolled anchorage we possess. They can lie behind the boom, and can always be at sea when we intend a raid. Battle cruisers are much to be preferred.

The *Bacchantes* ought not to continue on this beat. The risk to such ships is not justified by any service they can render. The narrow seas, being the nearest point to the enemy, should be kept by a small number of good modern ships.

The *Bacchantes* should go to the western entrance of the Channel and set Bethell's battleships—and later Wemyss's cruisers—free for convoy and other duties.

The first four *Arethusas* should join the flotillas of the narrow seas.

I see no sufficient reason to exchange these flotillas now that they know their work with the northern ones.

As the "M" boats are delivered they should be formed into a separate half-flotilla and go north to work with the Grand Fleet.

The *King Alfred* should pay off and be thoroughly repaired.

1. The first design of the tank made at my request by Admiral Bacon in September, 1914, carried a bridge on its back which it could place in position by a pair of projecting arms. After passing over the bridge the car picked it up again exactly as a child would use a skipping rope.

Prince Louis immediately agreed and gave directions to the chief of the staff to make the necessary redistribution of forces. With this I was content, and I dismissed the matter from my mind, being sure that the orders given would be complied with at the earliest moment. Before they could take effect, disaster occurred.

Loss of Aboukir

The rough weather of the 19th and 20th made it necessary for the cruisers to forego the protection of the destroyers; but they nevertheless were allowed to continue. On the morning of the 21st the three cruisers steamed slowly northward without zigzagging and at under ten knots, as no doubt they had often done before. Meanwhile a single German submarine, becoming more venturesome every day, was prowling southward down the Dutch coast. At 6:30 a.m., shortly after daylight, the Aboukir was struck by a torpedo. In twenty-five minutes this old vessel capsized. Some of her

boats were smashed by the explosion, and hundreds of men were swimming in the water or clinging to wreckage. Both her consorts had hurried with chivalrous simplicity to the aid of the sinking ship. Both came to a dead

standstill within a few hundred yards of her and lowered all their boats to rescue the survivors. In this posture they in their turn were both sunk, first the Hogue and then the Cressy, by the same submarine. Out of over

2,000 men on board these three ships only 800 were saved, and more than 1,400 perished. The ships themselves were of no great value; they were among the oldest cruisers of the Third Fleet, and contributed in no appreciable way to our vital margins. But, like all Third Fleet ships, they were almost entirely manned with reservists, most of whom were married men, and they carried also young cadets from Osborne posted for safety to ships which it was thought would not be engaged in the great battles. This cruel loss of life, although small compared to what the army was enduring, constituted the first serious forfeit exacted from the navy in the war. It greatly stimulated and encouraged the enterprise of the German submarines. The commander of the fatal boat (Lieutenant Weddigen) was exulting proclaimed as a national hero. Certainly the destruction with his own fingers of fourteen hundred persons was an episode of a peculiar character in human history. But, as will be seen, he did not live long to enjoy his sombre fame. A storm of criticism was directed at the Admiralty, and naturally it was focussed on me. "Here was an instance of the disaster which followed from the interference of a civilian minister in naval operations and the over-riding of the judgment of skilful and experienced admirals." The writer* of a small but venomous brochure which was industriously circulated in influential circles in London, did not hesitate to make this charge in the most direct form, and it was repeated in countless innuendoes throughout the British press. I did not, however, think it possible to make any explanation or reply.

*Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles.

VII.—Antwerp.

From the moment when the German hopes of destroying the French armies by a general battle and thus of ending the war at a single stroke had definitely failed, all the secondary and incidental objectives which hitherto they had rightly discarded became of immense consequence. As passion declined, material things resumed their values. The struggle of armies and nations having failed to reach a decision, places recovered their significance, and geography rather than psychology began to rule the lines of war. Paris now unattainable, the channel ports—Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne—still naked, and lastly Antwerp, all reappeared in the field of values like submerged rocks when the tidal waves recedes.

The second phase of the war now opened. The French, having heaved the Germans back from the Marne to the Aisne, and finding themselves unable to drive them farther by frontal attacks, continually reached out their left hand in the hopes of outflanking their opponents. The race for the sea began.

Where would the grappling armies strike blue water? At what point on the coast? Which would turn the other's flank? Would it be north or south of Dunkirk? Or of Grave-lines or Calais or Boulogne? Nay, southward still, was Abbeville even safe? All was committed to the shock of an ever-moving battle. But as the highest goal, the one safe inexpugnable flank for the Allies, the most advanced, the most daring, the most precious—worth all the rest, guarding all the rest—gleamed Antwerp—could Antwerp but hold out.

In order to save Antwerp, two things were necessary; first, effective defence of the fortress line, and second, free uninterrupted communications with the sea. The first was tolerably well provided for by the Belgian army, which could easily be reinforced by British territorial troops. But the second essential, the free communication with the sea, was a larger matter, and in it were involved our relations with the Dutch.

Lord Kitchener's Views

The Foreign Secretary did not, however, feel able to put a serious issue to the Dutch Government. Neither did Lord Kitchener wish to use the British territorial divisions in the manner proposed, and while adhering to my own opinion, I certainly do not blame him. He would not send any territorials to Antwerp, nor was anything effective done by the Allies for the city during the whole of September. It is not yet known on what date the German main headquarters decided that Antwerp must be taken. But from the moment that they had extricated and reformed their armies after the failure at the Marne, i.e., about the middle of September, the capture of the city became most urgently necessary to them. The Belgian and German troops remained in contact along the fortress line without any serious siege or assaulting operations developing until the 28th of that month.

On that date the Germans suddenly opened fire upon the forts of the Antwerp exterior lines with 17-inch howitzers hurling projectiles of over a ton.

Almost immediately the Belgian Government gave signs of justified alarm. British intelligence reports indicated that the Germans were seriously undertaking the siege of Antwerp; that their operations were not intended as a demonstration to keep the Belgian troops occupied or to protect the lines of communication. Information had come from Brussels that the emperor had ordered the capture of the town; that this might cost thousands of lives, but that the order must be obeyed. Large bodies of German reserve troops were also reported assembling near Liege. In view of all these reports, it was evident that the role of our small British force of marines, armored cars, aeroplanes, etc., operating from Dunkirk was exhausted. They had no longer to deal with Uhlan patrols or raiding parties of the enemy. Large hostile forces were approaching the coastal area, and the impotence whereby we had remained in occupation of Lille and Tournai could be sustained no longer.

Lord Kitchener was disquieted by the opening of the bombardment upon the Antwerp forts. He immediately sent (on September 29) a staff officer, Colonel Dallas, into the city to report direct to him on the situation.

The Belgian field army was about 80,000 strong, in addition to which there were some 70,000 fortress troops. Four divisions of the Belgian army were defending the southern portion of the outer perimeter of the Antwerp defences, with the 5th division in reserve, and one weak division was at Termonde. A cavalry division of about 3,600 sabres was southwest of Termonde guarding communications between Antwerp and the coast. Ghent was held by some volunteers.

On the night of October 1, Sir F. Villiers reported that:

On southern section of the outer line of forts German attacks continued today, and in the afternoon the enemy's troops disabled forts Wavre, St. Catherine and adjoining works, and occupied Belgian trenches at this point.

The Belgian troops were, however, still holding out on the Belgian side of the River Netho.

Relief Measures

Lord Kitchener now showed himself strongly disposed to sustain the defence or effect the relief of Antwerp, and to use the regular forces he still had in England for this purpose, provided the French would co-operate effectively. Early in the afternoon of October 2 he moved Sir Edward Grey to send the following telegram to the British ambassador at Bordeaux:

(Extract). The French Government should be informed that military advisers here consider that in view of the superior forces Germany has in the field there the dispatch of a French territorial division with the additions proposed in ten days' time, together with the force we are pre-

pared to send, would not be able effectively to force the Germans to raise the siege of Antwerp.

Unless something more can be done they do not advise the dispatch of the force. We are sending some heavy artillery with personnel to assist Belgians.

We can send some first-line troops, but not sufficient by themselves to raise the siege of Antwerp, and we cannot send them to co-operate with any but French regulars.

If General Joffre can bring about a decisively favorable action in France in two or three days the relief of Antwerp may be made the outcome of that, but if not, unless he now sends some regular troops the loss of Antwerp must be contemplated.

Up to this point I had not been brought into the affair in any way. I read, of course, all the telegrams almost as soon as they were received or dispatched by Lord Kitchener, and followed the situation constantly. I warmly approved the efforts which Lord Kitchener was making to provide or obtain succor for Antwerp, and I shared to the full his anxieties. I saw him every day. But I had no personal responsibility, nor was I

directly concerned. My impression at this time was that the situation at Antwerp was serious, but not immediately critical; that the place would certainly hold out for a fortnight more, and that meanwhile Lord Kitchener's exertions or the influence of the main battle in France would bring relief. So much was the case that I proposed to be absent from the Admiralty for about eighteen hours on October 2 and 3.

A Sudden Decision

I had planned to visit General Paris on October 3 and to make sure that the marines and other details were safely withdrawn into Dunkirk. At 1 o'clock on the night of the 2nd I was some twenty miles out of London on my way to Dover when the special train in which I was traveling suddenly stopped and without explanation returned to Victoria station. I was told on arrival I was to go immediately to Lord Kitchener's home in Carlton Gardens. Here I found, shortly before midnight, besides Lord Kitchener, Sir Edward Grey, the First Sea Lord, and Sir William Tyrrell, of the Foreign Office. They showed me the following telegram from our minister, Sir Frederick Villiers, sent from Antwerp at 8:20 p.m. and received in London at 10 p.m. on October 2:

The Government have decided to leave tomorrow for Ostend, acting on advice unanimously given by superior council of war in presence of the King. The King with field army

will withdraw, commencing with advanced guard, tomorrow in the direction of Ghent to protect coast line, and eventually it is hoped to co-operate with the Allied armies. The Queen will also leave.

It is said that town will hold out for five or six days, but it seems most unlikely that when the court and Government are gone resistance will be so much prolonged.

Decision taken very suddenly this afternoon is result of increasingly critical situation. I have seen both Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, who maintain that no other course was possible, in view of danger that the King's Government and field army will be caught here.

I saw that my colleagues had received this news, which they had already been discussing for half an hour, with consternation. The rapidity with which the situation had degenerated was utterly unexpected. That the great fortress and city of Antwerp, with its triple line of forts and inundations, defended by the whole Belgian field army (a force certainly equal in numbers to all the German troops in that neighborhood) should collapse in perhaps forty-

eight hours seemed to all of us not only terrible, but incomprehensible. That this should happen while preparations were in progress both in France and England for the relief or succour of the city, while considerable forces of fresh and good troops undoubtedly stood available on both sides of the channel, and before even General Joffre had been able to reply to Lord Kitchener's telegram, was too hard to bear. We looked at each other in bewilderment and distress. What could have happened in the last few hours to make the Belgians despair? Our last telegram from Colonel Dallas, received that afternoon, had said: "Situation unchanged during night and Germans have not made further progress. Great slaughter of Germans reported and corresponding encouragement to Belgians, who are about to undertake counter-attack in neighborhood of Fort St. Catherine." And now a message at 10 p.m. announced immediate evacuation and impending fall!

"This Frightful Epoch"

Those who in years to come look back upon the first convulsions of this frightful epoch will find it easy with after knowledge and garnered experience to pass sagacious judgments on all that was done or left undone. There is always a strong case for doing nothing, especially for doing nothing yourself. But to the small group of ministers who met that midnight in Lord Kitchener's house, the duty of making sure that Antwerp was not cast away without good cause while the means of saving it might well be at hand was clear. I urged strongly that we should not give in without a struggle, and we decided unitedly upon the following telegram to Sir F. Villiers:

October 3, 1914, 12:45 a.m.

The importance of Antwerp being held justifies a further effort till the course of the main battle in France is determined. We are trying to send you help from the main army, and would add reinforcements from here if this were possible. Meanwhile a brigade of marines will reach you tomorrow to sustain the defence. We urge you to make one fur-

ther struggle to hold out. Even a few days may make the difference. We hope Government will find it possible to remain and field army to continue operation.

On the other hand, the danger of

urging the Belgian Government to hold out against their considered judgment without a full knowledge of the local situation was present in every mind, and even if the forces for the relieving army were to come into

view, there was much to be arranged and decided before precise dates and definite assurances could be given. We were confronted with the hard choice of having either to take decisions of far-reaching importance in the utmost haste and with imperfect information, or, on the other hand, tamely to let Antwerp fall.

Leaves for Antwerp

In these circumstances it was a natural decision that someone in authority who knew the whole situation should travel swiftly into the city and there ascertain what could be done on either side. As I was already due at Dunkirk the next morning, the task was confided to me. Lord Kitchener expressed a decided wish that I should go; the First Sea Lord consented to accept sole responsibility in my absence. It was then about half-past one in the morning. I went at once to Victoria Station, got into my train, which was waiting, and started again for Dover. A few minutes before I left Lord Kitchener received the answer to his telegram of the 2nd from the British ambassador in Bordeaux. Sir Francis Bertie said that before he could carry out the instructions sent him about Antwerp, he had received a letter from the French Foreign Minister, stating that with the shortest delay possible two complete Territorial Divisions, complete with artillery and cavalry, would be sent to Ostend for the relief of the fortress. The French Foreign Minister declared that the Territorials were good troops, better in some respects than some of the regulars, and that they were sending two divisions, complete with artillery and cavalry instead of one.

Meanwhile a telegram was also sent (1:15 a.m. October 3) by Sir Edward Grey to the Belgian Government, saying that I would arrive on the morning of the 3rd. On this the Belgian Council of War, sitting at dawn on the 3rd, suspended the order for the evacuation of the city.

VIII.—Antwerp.

Lord Kitchener now threw himself into the task of concentrating and organizing a relieving army. He telegraphed at 9:40 a.m. on October 3 asking the French war minister to make all preparations to send the proposed two divisions with cavalry and artillery complete as soon as possible and let him know how soon they could be despatched.

At 7:35 on the same afternoon the composition of the French contingent was received from the British ambassador.

I did not reach the city till after 3 p.m., and after consulting with Colonel Dallas I was visited by the Belgian prime minister. Monsieur de Broqueville was a man of exceptional vigor and clarity both in mind and speech. He had been called to the helm of the Belgian state at the moment of the decision not to submit to wrongful aggression. He explained to me the situation with precision. General de Guise, the commander of the fortress, added his comments. The outer forts were falling one by one. Five or six shells from the enormous German howitzers were sufficient to smash them to their foundations, to destroy their defenders even in the deepest casemates, and to wreck the platforms of the guns. Now the forts of the inner line were being similarly attacked, and there was no conceivable means of preventing their destruction one after another at the rate of about a fort a day. The army was tired and dispirited through having been left so long entirely upon its own resources without even a sign of the allies for whom they had risked so much. Material of every kind—guns, ammunition, searchlights, telephones, entrenching material—was scanty. The water supply of the city had been cut off. There were many German sympathizers in its population of 80,000. At any moment the front might be broken in under the heavy artillery attack, which was then in progress. But this was only half the danger. The life and honor of the Belgian nation did not depend on Antwerp, but on its army. To lose Antwerp was disastrous; to lose the army as well was fatal. The Scheldt was barred by a severe interpretation of neutrality. The only line of retreat was by a dangerous flank march parallel to the Dutch frontier and the sea coast. Two Belgian divisions and their cavalry division were staving off the Germans from this only remaining line of retreat. But the pressure was increasing and the line of the Dyle was no longer intact. If Ghent fell before the Belgian army made good its retreat, nothing would be saved from the ruin.

Issue of Battle

I then exposed Lord Kitchener's plan and stated the numbers of the French and British troops already available for the assistance of the Belgian army. I emphasized the importance of holding the city and delaying the Germans as long as possible without compromising the retreat of the army. I pointed out that

the issue of the battle for the seaward flank still hung in the balance, and that the main armies were drawing nearer to Belgium every day. I asked whether the relieving forces mentioned, if actually sent, would influence their decision. They replied that this was a new situation: that had this help been forthcoming earlier, events might have taken a different course. Even now, if their line of retreat were safeguarded by the arrival of allied troops in the neighborhood of Ghent, they were prepared to continue the resistance. I thereupon drew up, with their approval and agreement, the following telegram to Lord Kitchener:—

Antwerp, October 3, 1914, 6:53 p.m. (received 9:45 p.m.).

(Extract.) "Subject to confirmation on both sides, I have made following arrangements with M. de Broqueville, Prime Minister:

"Every preparation to be made by Belgian government now for a resistance of at least ten days, and every step taken with utmost energy. Within three days we are to state definitely whether we can launch big field operation for their relief or not, and when it will probably take effect. If we cannot give them satisfactory assurance of substantial assistance within three days, they are to be quite free to abandon defence if they think fit. In this case, should they wish to clear out with field army, we (although not able to launch the big operation) are to help their field army troops to Ghent or other points on line of retreat. Thus, anything they will have lost in time by going on defending Antwerp with all their strength will be made up to them as far as possible by help on their way out.

"Further, we will meanwhile help their local defence in all minor ways, such as guns, marines, naval brigades, etc.

"I have put the terms high to avoid at all costs our undertaking anything we could not perform, and also to avoid hurry in our saying what troops we can spare for big operation. You will be able, as your telegram No. 7 (to Colonel Dallas) indicates, to do much better than this, and to give decided promise within three days, but the vital thing is that Belgian government and army should forthwith hurl themselves with revived energy into the defence.

"Attack is being harshly pressed at this moment, and half measures would be useless, but Prime Minister informs me that they are confident they can hold out for three days, pretty sure they can hold out for six, and will try ten.

"Two thousand marines are arriving this evening.

"I am remaining here till tomorrow.

"I have read this telegram to Belgian Prime Minister, who says that we are in full agreement, subject to ratification by council of ministers which is now being held.

"If you clinch these propositions, pray give the following order to the Admiralty: Send at once both naval brigades, minus recruits, via Dunkirk into Antwerp, with five day's rations and 2,000,000 rounds of ammunition, but without tents or much impedimenta.

"When can they arrive?"

Continuous Bombardment

While waiting for the reply that afternoon and also the next morning, I went out and examined the front: a leafy enclosed country, absolutely flat; a crescent of peering German kite balloons; a continuous bombardment; scarcely anything in the nature of an infantry attack; wearied and disheartened defenders. It was extremely difficult to get a clear view and so understand what kind of fighting was actually going on. We were, however, at length able to reach the actual inundations beyond which the enemy was posted. Entrenching here was impossible for either side, owing to the water met with at a foot's depth. The Belgian pickets crouched behind bushes. There was at that moment no rifle fire, but many shells traversed the air overhead on their way to the Belgian lines.

Although the artillery fire of the Germans at Antwerp was at no time comparable to the great bombardment afterwards witnessed on the western front, it was certainly severe. The Belgian trenches were broad and shallow, and gave hardly any protection to their worn-out and in many cases inexperienced troops. As we walked back from the edge of these inundations along a stone-paved high road, it was a formidable sight to see on either hand the heavy shells bursting in salvos of threes and fours with dense black smoke near, or actually inside these scanty shelters in which the supporting troops were kneeling in fairly close order. Every prominent building—chateau, tower or windmill—was constantly under fire; shrapnel burst along the roadway, and half a mile to the left a wooden enclosure was speckled with white puffs. Two or three days at least would be required to make sound breastworks or properly constructed and drained trenches or rifle pits. Till then it must be mainly an affair of hedges and of houses; and the ineffective trenches were merely shell traps.

The Marines did not arrive until the morning of the 4th, and went immediately into the line. When I visited them the same evening they were already engaged with the Germans in the outskirts of Lierre. Here, for the first time, I saw German soldiers creeping forward from house to house or darting across the street. The Marines fired with a machine-gun from a balcony. The flashes of the rifles and the streams of flame pulsating from the mouth of the machine-gun lit up a warlike scene amid crashing reverberations and the whistle of bullets.

Twenty minutes in a motor car, and we were back in the warmth and light of one of the best hotels in Europe, with its perfectly appointed tables and attentive servants all proceeding as usual!

Relief Force

The reply of the British Government reached me on the morning of the 4th, and I sent it at once to Monsieur de Broqueville. Lord Kitchener to First Lord (pp.):—

Am arranging expeditionary force for relief of Antwerp as follows:—
British force.

7th Division 18,000 men, 63 guns, under General Capper. Cavalry division, 4,000 men, 12 guns, under General Byng, to arrive at Zeebrugge 6th and 7th October. Naval detachment, 8,000 men already there, under General Aston, also naval and military heavy guns and detachments already sent. Headquarters staff will be subsequently notified.

French force.

Territorial division, 15,000 men, proper complement of guns and 2 squadrons. General Roy, to arrive Ostend 6th to 9th October. Fusilier Marine Brigade, 8,000 men, under Rear-Admiral Ronarch. Grand total 53,000 men. Numbers are approximately correct.

Also one from Prince Louis, 10:30 a.m.:—

The naval brigades will embark at Dover at 4 p.m. for Dunkirk, where they should arrive between 7 or 8 o'clock. Provisions and ammunition as indicated in your telegram.

The matter had now passed into the region for pure action. Could Antwerp resist the enemy's attack long enough to enable the French and British relieving force to come to their aid? Secondly, if this suc-

ceeded, could nine or ten allied divisions at Antwerp and Ghent hold the Germans in check until the left wing of the main armies, advancing daily from the south, could join hands with them? In that case the Allied lines in the west might be drawn through Antwerp, Ghent, and Lille. All this turned on a few days, and even on a few hours.

Judging by the number of troops available on both sides, the chances of the Allies appeared good. On paper they were nearly twice as strong as the enemy. But the Belgian Army had been left without aid or comfort too long. The daily destruction of their trusted forts, the harsh and un-superior artillery, their apprehensions for their line of retreat, the cruel losses and buffetings they had suffered since the beginning of the war, had destroyed their confidence and exhausted their strength.

The prime and vital need was to maintain the defence of Antwerp against the unceasing artillery attack to which its whole southern front was exposed. The position behind the river was capable of being made a strong one. It was, potentially, stronger in many respects than the line of the Yser, along which a fortnight later this same Belgian Army, in spite of further losses and discouragement, was to make a most stubborn and glorious defence. But despondency in the face of an apparently irresistible artillery, and the sense of isolation, struck a deadly chill.

British in Action

Meanwhile, however, help was hurrying forward. The marines were already in the line. Armored trains with naval guns and British blue-jackets came into action on the morning of the 4th. The two naval brigades reached Dunkirk that night, and were due to enter Antwerp on the evening of the 5th. At the special request of the Belgian staff they were to be interspersed with Belgian divisions to impart the encouragement and assurance that succour was at hand.

The British 7th Div. and 3rd Cavalry Division, carried daringly across the water by Prince Louis in the teeth of submarines, began to disembark at Ostend and Zeebrugge from the morning of the 6th onward. The French division was embarking at Havre. Admiral Ronarch and his 8,000 Fusiliers marines were already entrained for Dunkirk. If only Antwerp could hold out.

Meanwhile, also, it must be remembered, Sir John French was secretly withdrawing the British army from the Aisne and moving round behind the French front to the neighborhood of St. Omer with the intention of striking at Lille and beating in the German right. Every day that large German forces were detained in front of Antwerp helped and covered the detrainment and deployment of his army and increased its chances of success. But every day became graver the peril to the Belgian army of being cut off if, after all, the Germans should be the victors in the main battle.

The anxieties and uncertainties of this tremendous situation had to be supported by the Belgian chiefs in addition to those of the actual German attack battering on the crumbling Antwerp front and its exhausted defenders. That they were borne with constancy and coolness, that the defence was prolonged for five momentous days, and that, although the Antwerp front was broken in before effective help could arrive, the Belgian field army was safely extricated, was a memorable achievement.

The attitude of the king and queen through these tense and tragic days was magnificent. The impression of the grave, calm soldier king presiding at councils, sustaining his troops and commanders, preserving an unconquerable majesty amid the ruin of his kingdom, will never pass from my mind.

Meanwhile Lord Kitchener and Prince Louis continued to give the necessary orders from London.

IX.—Antwerp (Continued)

I now found myself suddenly, unexpectedly and deeply involved in a tremendous and hideously critical local situation which might well continue for some time. I had also assumed a very direct responsibility for exposing the city to bombardment and for bringing into it the inexperienced, partially equipped and partially trained battalions of the royal naval division. I felt it my duty to see the matter through. On the other hand, it was not right to leave the admiralty without an occupant. I therefore telegraphed on the 4th to the prime minister offering to take formal military charge of the British forces in Antwerp and tendering my resignation of the office of first lord of the admiralty. This offer was not accepted. I have since learned that Lord Kitchener wrote proposing that it should be. But other views prevailed; and I certainly have no reason for regret that they did so. I was informed that Sir Henry Rawlinson was being sent to the city and was requested to do my best until he arrived.

October 5 was a day of continuous fighting. The situation fluctuated from hour to hour.

The general results of the fighting on that day raised our hopes. A counter-attack by one British and nine Belgian battalions drove the enemy back. All the positions that had been lost were regained, and the line of the Nethe was almost re-established. At midnight at the Belgian headquarters, General de Guise received in my presence by telephone, a favorable report from every single section. The enemy had, however, succeeded in maintaining a foothold across the river, and it seemed certain they would throw bridges in the night. General de Guise therefore resolved to make a further counter-attack under the cover of darkness in the hope of driving the enemy altogether across the river. At 1 a.m. I telegraphed as follows:

Antwerp, October 6, 1 a.m.

First Lord to Lord Kitchener and Sir E. Grey: "All well. All positions are held along the Nethe. I hope you will not decide finally on plan operations till I can give you my views. I have met ministers in council, who resolved to fight it out here whatever happens.

"No 9.2's have arrived yet, even at Ostend."

What of the Morrow?

It was 2 o'clock before I went to bed. I had been moving, thinking, and acting with very brief intervals for nearly four days in council and at the front in circumstances of undefined but very direct responsibility. Certainly the situation seemed improved. The line of the Nethe was practically intact and the front unbroken. The naval brigade, already a day behind my hopes, were arriving in the morning. By land and sea troops were hastening forward. All the various personalities and powers were now looking the same way and working for the same object. France and Britain, the admiralty and the war office, the Belgian government

and the Belgian command were all facing in the same direction. Rawlinson would arrive tomorrow, and my task would be concluded. But what would the morrow bring forth? I was now very tired, and slept soundly for some hours.

All through the night the fighting was continual, but no definite reports were available up till about 9 o'clock. At the Belgian headquarters I was told that the Belgian night attack had miscarried, that the Germans were counter-attacking strongly, that the Belgian troops were very tired, and the situation along the Nethe obscure. General Paris and the marine brigade were also heavily engaged. The naval brigades had arrived and detrained and were now marching to their assigned positions in the line. But where was the line? It was one thing to put these partially trained and ill-equipped troops into a trench line and quite another to involve them in the manoeuvres of a moving action. Solidly dug in with their rifles and plenty of ammunition, these ardent, determined men would not be easily dislodged. But they were not capable of manoeuvre. It seemed to me that they should take up an intermediate position until we knew what was happening on the front. General Paris was involved in close fighting with his brigade, and had not been able to take over command of the whole force. It was necessary therefore for me to give personal directions. I motored to the Belgian headquarters, told General de Guise that these new troops must have fixed positions to fight in, and would be wasted if flung in piecemeal. I proposed to stop them about four miles short of their original destination as a support and rallying line for the Belgian troops who were falling back. He agreed that this was wise and right, and I went myself to see that the orders were carried out.

Adverse Fighting

The moment one left the city gates the streams of wounded and of fugitives betokened heavy and adverse fighting. Shells from the enemy's field artillery were falling frequently on roads and villages which yesterday were beyond his range. We were by no means sure at what point the flow of refugees would end and the wave of pursuers begin. However, by about midday the three naval and marine brigades were drawn up with the Belgian reserves astride of the Antwerp-Lierre road on the line Contich-Vremde.

In this position we awaited the next development and expected to be almost immediately attacked. The Germans to our relief did not molest the retirement of the three Belgian divisions. They waited to gather strength and to bring up and use again the remorseless artillery upon which they were mainly relying. As no German infantry appeared and no heavy bombardment

began the naval brigades moved forward in their turn and took up positions nearer to where the enemy had halted. I remained in the line on the Lierre road. Here at about 5 o'clock Sir Henry Rawlinson joined me.

The general took, as might be expected, a robust view of the situation, and was by no means disposed to give up the quarrel either on the Antwerp front or on the line of communications, which were already being more severely pressed. At 7 o'clock a council of war was held in the palace under the presidency of the King. We affirmed the readiness and ability of the British government to execute punctually and fully the engagements into which we had entered two days earlier. But the Belgian chiefs were convinced that even if the Antwerp front along the line of the Nethe could be restored the danger to their communications had become so great that they must without delay resume the movement of their army to the left bank of the Scheldt which had been interrupted three days previously. Here they conceived themselves able to join hands with any Anglo-French relieving force while at the same time securing their own retreat on Ghent, which they had already on September 4 reinforced by a brigade. It was not for us to contest their view further, and events have shown that they were right. The arrangements set out in the following telegram which I sent to Lord Kitchener were made:

(Extract) (1) That while the town endures bombardment General Paris with naval division and Belgian support will defend inner line forts to the utmost.

(2) That the rest of the Belgian field army shall be immediately withdrawn across the Scheldt to what they call the entrenched camp of the left bank. This area is protected by the Scheldt and various forts and entrenchments, large inundations, and here they hope to find time to recover and reform. From this po-

sition they will aid to the best of their ability any relieving movement which may be possible from the west.

(3) Rawlinson will organize relieving force at Ghent and Bruges and prepare to move forward as soon as possible.

But I shall hope tomorrow to convince you that it should be strengthened for the operation. . . .

We are all agreed that, in the circumstances, there is no other course open.

I return with Rawlinson tonight to Bruges, and early tomorrow morning shall be in London.

Aviation park and heavy guns will be removed from Antwerp.

General Rawlinson and I left the city together that night, and after an anxious drive over roads luckily infested by nothing worse than rumour I boarded the *Attentive* at Ostend and returned to England.

Grip of Emergencies

So far as the personal aspect of this story is concerned, I cannot feel that I deserve the reproaches which have been so long freely and ignorantly heaped upon me. I could not foresee that the mission I undertook would keep me away from the admiralty for more than forty-eight hours, or that I should find myself involved in another set of special responsibilities outside the duties of the great office which I held. No doubt had I been ten years older I should have hesitated long before accepting so unpromising a task. But the events occurred in the order I have described; and at each stage the action which I took seemed right, natural, and even inevitable. Throughout I was held in the grip of emergencies and of realities which transcended considerations of praise or blame.

But, after all, it is by the results and as a whole that the episode will be judged; and these, as will be shown, were certainly advantageous to the allied cause.

After the departure of the Belgian field army the further defence of the remaining lines of Antwerp was left to the fortress troops, and 2nd Belgian division, and the three British naval brigades, who held on their front the equivalent of more than five complete German divisions.

At midnight on the 7th the Germans, having advanced their artillery, began to bombard the city and the forts of the inner line. The forts melted under the fire, and a great proportion of the civil population fled through the night, lighted by conflagrations, over the bridges of the Scheldt to the open country, along the roads towards Ghent or into Holland. The enemy's attack was pressed continuously, and the enceinte of the city was considered to be untenable by the evening of the 8th. The Belgian division and the British naval brigades evacuated Antwerp that night, crossed the Scheldt safely, and began their retreat by road and rail on Ghent and Ostend. Two naval airmen as a Parthian shot, blew up after long flights a zeppelin in its shed at Dusseldorf and bombed the railway station at Cologne. German patrols, after many precautions, entered Antwerp towards evening, and on the 10th the stouthearted governor, who had retired to one of the surviving forts, capitulated.

The resistance of the city had been prolonged by five days.

X.—The Channel Ports

The fall of Antwerp released the besieging army. A marine division marched into the city on the 10th. The rest of the German divisions were already streaming south and west in hot pursuit, and hoped for interception of the Belgian army. But a surprise awaited them.

On the night of the 9th the German forces who had crossed the Dender River had come in contact with French Fusiliers Marines at Melle and Meirelbeke, and during the 10th they found themselves in presence of British regular troops of unknown strength, whose patrols were feeling their way forward southeast from Ghent to meet them. The 7th Division and the 3rd Cavalry Division had come upon the scene in accordance with the fourth condition of the Anglo-Belgian agreement of October 4. The British, French, and Belgian forces from Ghent thus threatened the left flank of any serious German cutting-off movement northwards to the Dutch frontier.

Uncertain of the size of the army by which they were confronted, and mystified by the indefinite possibilities of landing from the sea, the Germans paused to collect their strength. They knew that the bulk of the British army had already left the Aisne. Where was it? Where would it reappear? What were these British regulars, who stood so confidently in their path? On the 12th, when they considered themselves strong enough to advance upon Ghent, the whole of the Belgian field army had passed the dangerous points in safety, only one single squadron being intercepted. Of this complicated operation the victorious Germans became spectators.

Only weak parties of Germans ventured beyond Lokeren during the night of the 9th-10th to molest the retreat of the Antwerp troops. The 2nd Belgian Division and two out of the three naval brigades came through intact. But the railway and other arrangements for the rear brigade were misunderstood, and about two-and-a-half battalions of very tired troops, who through the miscarriage of an order had lost some hours, were led across the Dutch frontier in circumstances on which only those who know their difficulties are entitled to form a judgment.

Belgian Field Army

It the Belgian field army had begun its withdrawal on October 3, as originally intended, it could probably have got safely without aid to Ghent and beyond. But the fortress troops, numbering many thousands, to whom it had been throughout resolved to confide the last defence of Antwerp, must in any case have been driven in to surrender to the invaders or internment in Holland once the field army had gone. The prolongation of the defence and the delay in the departure of the field army neither bettered nor worsened their fortunes. They, therefore, do not enter into any calculation of the loss and gain attendant on the attempted operation of relief. So far as actual results are

concerned, the damage caused by the bombardment of the city, which was not extensive, and the internment of two-and-a-half British naval battalions, on the one hand, must be weighed against the gain of five days in the resistance and the influence exercised on subsequent events by the 7th Division and 3rd Cavalry Division on the other.

At the time the British Government decided to send help to Antwerp, the total German field force in Northern Belgium had been correctly estimated at four or five divisions. But before the city capitulated, and while the British troops were still at Ghent, there began to manifest itself that tremendous, unexpected development of German force which, from the moment of Antwerp's fall, was launched against the allied left and aimed at Calais.

Besides the liberated Siege army and the troops which had threatened the Antwerp communications, no fewer than four fresh army corps, newly formed in Germany and concentrating in Belgium, were already at hand. And in front of this formidable army there stood, from October 10 to October 21, only the wearied Belgians, the Fusiliers, Marines, and the 3rd Cavalry and 7th British divisions (called 4th corps). The caution of the German advance may, perhaps, have been induced by their uncertainty as to the whereabouts and intentions of the British army, and their fear that it might be launched against their right from the sea flank. But, however explained, the fact remains, and to it we owe the victory of the Yser and ever-glorious Ypres.

Magnitude of Peril

A simple examination of dates will reveal the magnitude of the peril which the Allied cause escaped. Antwerp fell twenty-four hours after the last division of the Belgian field army left the city. Had this taken place on October 3 or 4, the city would have surrendered on the 4th or 5th. No British 4th Corps or Fusiliers or Marines would have been at Ghent to cover the Belgian retreat. But assuming that the Belgian army had made this good unaided, the same marches would have carried them and their German pursuers to the Yser by the 10th. There would have been nothing at all in front of Ypres. Sir John French could not come into action north of Armentieres till the 15th. His detrainments at St. Omar, etc., were not completed till the 19th. Sir Douglas Haig, with the 1st Corps, could not come into line north of Ypres till about the 21st. Had the German Siege Army been released on the 5th, and followed by their great reinforcements already detrainment and assembling, at once rolled forward, nothing could have saved Dunkirk, and perhaps Calais and Boulogne. Ten days were wanted, and ten days were won.

We had now without respite to meet the great German drive against the Channel ports.

We set to work forthwith to support the Allied left flank. I entrusted this operation, which required an officer of first quality, to Admiral Hood, till then my naval

secretary. He was now appointed to the Dover command, while I took in his stead Admiral Oliver. On the 18th the three ex-Brazilian monitors, renamed Humber, Mersey and Severn, escaped by four destroyers, arrived at Dunkirk, and the memorable series of naval operations on the Belgian coast began.

Devoured by War

From October onwards the German hosts could look upon salt water. First, Zeebrugge was occupied, then Ostend, then mile by mile the sand-dunes and golf courses and gay villas of that pleasure coast were devoured by invading war. In his first contact with the new element the land monster committed several imprudences. Apparently contemptuous of the power of ships' guns, he deployed batteries of artillery on the open beach, and opened fire on our scouts and destroyers. These experiments were not repeated.

Meanwhile the British Army was heavily engaged against the German drive for the Channel ports. Sir John French wrote to me October 21, a letter that contained some kind words about Antwerp.

26-10-14.

Mr. Churchill to Sir John French. (Private and Secret).

I am touched and honored by the kindness of your letter written from the field of Armentieres. It was a disappointment to have to give up my visit, but the press of events here was decisive.

Antwerp was a bitter blow to me, and some aspects of it have given a handle to my enemies, and perhaps for a time reduced my power to be useful. From minute to minute one does not know that some fine ship will not be blown up by mine or submarine. Great good fortune has attended us so far. Out of twenty-five submarine attacks only five have been effective, and only on ships of no value. But every reconnaissance ordered carries with it the risk of a disproportionate loss. And if an atmosphere of distrust and malice is created—as is deliberately and laboriously being done—an unlucky incident might produce a most unpleasant state of feeling. However, I am resolved not to be drawn by any impatience from these carefully considered plans of the naval war, which I revealed to you in July, which are the result of three years' study, and with which Jellicoe is in the fullest accord. These plans will not produce any feat of eclat, but they will keep England safe and prosperous, and enable her in good time to put in the field an army which will definitely and finally turn the scale.

Fear of Invasion

Kitchener is strangely alarmed about invasion, and on the C.I.D. we have witnessed an absolute reversal of roles—the W.O. declaring the country not safe and an invasion of 250,000 a possibility, and the Admiralty reassuring them, or trying to. You know how carefully I have examined that position, and how I have never minimized the risks. But now that we are face to face with reali-

ties, I am not alarmed, and my policy is that you should be reinforced by any effective division that can be formed and maintained; and that the navy will prevent and invasion of a serious character. The Prime Minister is solid as a rock; but waves of nervousness pass over others, and may result in some retardation of your reinforcements.

We are making extraordinary efforts to grapple with the submarine menace, which tends to drive our great ships far away, and during November we shall, I believe, have got the better of it, and have secured all our anchorages by network and other means. Then we shall be able to give a greater assurance to those who need it.

But my dear friend, I do trust you realize how damnable it will be if the enemy settles down for the Winter along lines which comprise Calais, Dunkirk, or Ostend. There will be continued alarms and greatly added difficulties. We must have him off the Belgian coast, even if we cannot recover Antwerp.

I am getting old ships with the heaviest guns ready, protected by barges with nets against submarines, so as to dispute the whole seaboard with him. On the 31st instant Revenge, four 13½-inch guns, will come into action if required, and I have a regular fleet of monitors and "bomb-catchers" now organized which they all say has hit the Germans hard, and is getting stronger every day.

If you could again passage off to the left, I could give you overwhelming support from the sea, and there you will have a flank which certainly they cannot turn.

Page of Military History

You have on your front gained a fine success in hurling back the whole weight of the German right. All your messages are so good—cool, resolute, and informing. They will make a good page of military history.

Looking back over these times I feel once more the battle going on, the exhausted Belgians clinging desperately to the last few miles of soil left to their nation, their dauntless King and Queen amid the shells at Furnes; the French troops hastening up, but only in dribbles; the heroic Fusiliers and Marines holding Dixmude till not a fifth were left alive; our little ships barking away along the coast with submarines stabbing at them from underneath and heavier metal opening on them every day from the shore; inundations slowly growing, a shield of merciful water rising inch by inch, hour by hour, between the fainting Belgian line and the cruel monster who had come up-

on them; and all the time our own men fighting against appalling odds, ten days, twenty days, thirty days, from Ypres to Armentieres; nothing to send anyone, not a man, not a musket. Each night Colonel Bridges spoke to me on the telephone from

the Belgian headquarters at Furnes. Each night we felt it might be the last time he would speak from that address. It was only very gradually towards the end of October that one began to feel that the French and

Belgian troops were getting a firm grip of the line of the Yser, and that French could write, "The Germans will never get further west." But three more weeks of agony ensued before the decision at Ypres finally declared itself in favor of the British Army.

Fortunes of Armies

We are, I feel, entitled to treat the Antwerp episode as an integral and vital part of the tremendous battle for the Channel Ports. If we had not made our belated effort to prolong its defence the whole after-course of events would have been different, and could hardly have been better. But for the time gained at Antwerp and the arrival in such a forward situation of the British and French forces assigned so hurriedly for its relief the impulsion of the Allied Armies towards the sea—already less than was required—must have been sensibly weakened. The great collision and battle with the German right would have taken place all the same. Perhaps the same result would have been achieved. But where? Where would the line have been drawn when the armies settled down into trenches from which they were not appreciably displaced for more than four years? At the very best the water defences, Gravelines-St. Omer-Aire, would have been secured. Dunkirk and its fine harbor would have become another nest of submarines to prey on our communications in the Channel; and Calais would have been exposed to a constant bombardment. The complications of these evils—the least that could be expected—must have reacted formidably upon the whole subsequent fortunes of the Allied Armies in France.

If this is true—and history must pronounce—the men who were responsible for the succour of Antwerp will have no reason to be ashamed of

their effort. Hazard and uncertainty pervade all operations of war. It is idle to pretend that Lord Kitchener or anyone else foresaw all the consequences that flowed from the decisions of October 4. The event was very different from both hopes and expectations. But rarely in the Great War were more important results achieved by forces so limited and for losses so small as those which rewarded this almost forlorn enterprise; nor is there in modern times a more remarkable example of the flexibility, the celerity, and the balling nature of that amphibious power which Britain alone wields, but which she has so often neglected.

XI.—Changes at the Admiralty

After giving a full account of the anxieties of the Grand Fleet in the Autumn of 1914 with regard to submarine attack, which prevented its resting secure in any of its bases, and of the strenuous efforts of the Admiralty to arrest the danger, Mr. Churchill proceeds:

The commander-in-chief, in accordance with the admiralty authorization, withdrew at the end of October to the north coast of Ireland for a few days' rest and gunnery practice. By extraordinary ill-luck, the arrival of the fleet off Lough Swilly coincided with the visit of a German minelayer to those waters. The minelayer had no idea of catching the fleet or that British war-ships would be in those waters. Her objective was the Liverpool trade route, but the shot aimed at a crow brought down an eagle.

On October 27 Prince Louis hurried into my room with the grave news that the Audacious had been struck by mine or torpedo north of Lough Swilly, and that it was feared she was sinking. In the afternoon the commander-in-chief telegraphed urging that every endeavor should be made to keep the event from being published; and that night, in reporting that the Audacious had sunk, he repeated his hope that the loss could be kept secret. I saw great difficulty in this, but promised to bring the matter before the cabinet. Meanwhile I telegraphed to the commander-in-chief, October 28, 12:30 a.m.:

We have been very fortunate to come through three months of war without the loss of a capital ship. I am sure you will not be at all discouraged by Audacious episode. I expected three or four by this time, and it is due to your unfailing vigilance and skill that all has gone so well. The army, too, though with at least 14,000 killed and wounded, has held its own along the whole line. Quite soon the harbors will be made comfortable for you. Mind you ask for all you want.

Loss of Audacious

Measured by military standards, the Audacious was the first serious loss we had sustained. She was one of those vital units in which we never were at that time more than six or seven to the good, and upon which all strategic calculations were based both by friend and foe. When I brought the question of keeping her loss secret before the cabinet there was a considerable division of opinion. It was urged that public confidence would be destroyed, if it were thought that we were concealing losses, that it was bound to leak out almost immediately, and that the Germans probably knew already. To this I replied that there was no reason why the Germans should not be left to collect their own information for themselves, that the moment they knew the Audacious was sunk they would proclaim it, and that then we could quite easily explain to the public why it was we had preserved secrecy. I

cited the effective concealment by Japan of the loss of the battleship *Yashima* off Port Arthur in 1904. If Sir John French had lost an army corps every effort would be made to conceal it from the enemy. Why then, should the navy be denied a similar freedom? Lord Kitchener strongly supported me; and our views were eventually accepted by the cabinet.

In the upshot it took more than five weeks before the German admiralty learned that the *Audacious* had been sunk, and even then they were by no means convinced that

they were not the victims of rumor.

I do not remember any period when the weight of the war seemed to press more heavily on me than these months of October and November, 1914. In August one was expecting the great sea battle and the first great battles on land; but our course was obvious, and, when taken, we had only to wait for decisions. All September was dominated by the victory of the Marne. But in October and November the beast was at us again. The sense of grappling with and being overpowered by a monster of appalling and apparently inexhaustible strength on land and a whole array of constant, gnawing anxieties about the safety of the fleet from submarine attack at sea and in its harbors oppressed my mind. Not an hour passed without the possibility of some disaster or other in some part of the world. Not a day without the necessity of running risks.

Fierce Reproach

My own position was already to some extent impaired. The loss of the three cruisers had been publicly attributed to my personal interference. I was accused of having overriden the advice of the sea lords and of having wantonly sent the squadron to its doom. Antwerp became a cause of fierce reproach. One might almost have thought I had brought about the fall of the city by my meddling. The employment of such untrained men as the naval brigades was generally censured. The internment in Holland of three of their battalions was spoken of as a great disaster entirely due to my inexcusable folly. One unhappy phrase—true enough in thought—about “digging rats out of holes,” which had slipped from my tongue in a weary speech at Liverpool, was fastened upon and pilloried. These were the only subjects with which my name was connected in the newspapers. My work at the admiralty—such as it was—was hidden from the public. No parliamentary attack gave me an opportunity of defending myself. In spite of being accustomed to years of abuse, I could not but feel the adverse and hostile currents that flowed about me. One began to perceive that they might easily lead to a practical result. Luckily there was not much time for such reflections.

The admiralty had entered upon the war with commanding claims on public confidence. The coincidence of the test mobilization with the

European crisis was generally attributed to profound design. The falsification one after another of the gloomy predictions that we should be taken unawares, that the German commerce destroyers would scour the seas, and that our own shipping, trade, and food would be endangered was recognized with widespread relief. The safe transportation of the army to France and the successful action in the Heligoland Bight were acclaimed as fine achievements. But with the first few incidents of misfortune a different note prevailed in circles which were vocal. The loss of the three cruisers marked a turning point in the attitude of those who in the evil times of war are able to monopolize the expression of public opinion. As the expectation of an imminent great sea battle faded the complaint began to be heard. “What is the navy doing?” It was perhaps inevitable that there should be a sense of disappointment as week succeeded week and the tremendous engine of British naval power seemed to be neither seen nor heard. There was a general opinion that we should have begun by attacking and destroying the German fleet. Vain to point to the ceaseless stream of troops and supplies to France, or to the world-wide trade of Britain proceeding almost without hindrance. Impossible, in the hearing of the enemy, to explain the intricate movement of reinforcements or expeditions escorted across every ocean from every part of the empire, or to unfold the reasons which rendered it impossible to bring the German fleet to battle. There was our little army fighting for its life and playing, to British eyes, almost as large a part as that of France; and meanwhile our great navy—the strongest in the world—lay apparently in an inertia diversified only by occasional mishap.

Endured in Silence

Thus it happened that the admiralty was inconsiderately judged in this opening phase. To me, who saw the perils against which we had prepared and over which we had triumphed, and who felt a sense of profound thankfulness for the past and absolute confidence for the future, these manifestations of discontent seemed due only to lack of understanding and to impatience pardonable in the general stress of the times. But they were none the less disquieting. Nor was it easy to deal with them. The questions could not be argued out in public or in parliament. No formal indictment was ever preferred; nor could one have been fully answered without injury to national interests. We had to endure all this carping in silence.

This censorious mood produced a serious development in the case of Prince Louis. In the first flush of our successful mobilization and entry upon the war no comment had been made upon his parentage. But now the gossip of the clubs and of the streets began to produce a stream of letters, signed and anonymous, protesting in every variety of method, and often in violent terms, against one of German birth filling the vital position of First Sea Lord. This was

cruel, but it was not unnatural, and I saw with anxiety and distress the growth of very widespread misgiving. I gather also from occasional remarks which he made that this atmosphere was becoming apparent to the First Sea Lord. He was thus coming to be placed in the invidious position of having to take great responsibilities and risks every day without that support in public confidence to which he was absolutely entitled, and with the certainty that accidents would occur from time to time. I was, therefore, not surprised when, towards the end of October, Prince Louis asked to be relieved of

his burden. The uncomplaining dignity with which he made this sacrifice and accepted self-effacement as a requital for the great and faithful service he had rendered to the British nation and to the royal navy was worthy of a sailor and a prince. I had now to look for a successor, and my mind had already turned in one direction, and in one direction alone.

Lord Fisher used to come from time to time to the admiralty, and I watched him narrowly to judge his physical strength and mental alertness. There seemed no doubt about either. On one occasion, when inveighing against someone whom he thought obstructive, he became so convulsed with fury that it seemed that every nerve and blood vessel in his body would be ruptured. However, they stood the strain magnificently, and he left me with the impression of a terrific engine of mental and physical power burning and throbbing in that aged frame. I was never in the least afraid of working with him, and I thought I knew him so well, and had held the upper hand so long, that we could come through any difficulty together. I therefore sounded him in conversation without committing myself, and soon saw that he was fiercely eager to lay his grasp on power, and was strongly inspired with the sense of a message to deliver and a mission to perform. I therefore determined to act without delay. I sought the Prime Minister and submitted to him the arguments which led me to the conclusion that Fisher should return, and that I could work with no one else. I also spoke of Sir Arthur Wilson as his principal coadjutor. I was well aware that there would be strong natural and legitimate opposition in many quarters to the appointment of Lord Fisher, but having formed my own conviction I was determined not to remain at the admiralty unless I could do justice to it. So in the end, for good or for ill, I had my way.

Lord Fisher Recalled

The decision to recall Lord Fisher to the admiralty was very important. He was, as has been here contended, the most distinguished British naval officer since Nelson. The originality of his mind and the spontaneity of his nature freed him from conventionalities of all kinds. His genius was deep and true. Above all, he was in harmony with the vast size of events. Like them, he was built upon a titanic scale.

But he was 74 years of age. As in a great castle which had long contended with time, the mighty central mass of the Donjon towered up intact and seemingly everlasting. But the outworks and the battlements had fallen away, and its imperious ruler dwelt only in the special apartments and corridors with which he had a lifelong familiarity. Had he and his comrade, Sir Arthur Wilson, been born ten years later, the British naval direction at the outbreak of the great war would have reached its highest state of perfection, both at the admiralty and afloat. The new figures which the struggle was producing—Beatty, Keyes, Tyrwhitt—had not yet attained the authority which would have made them acceptable to the navy in the highest situations. Fisher and Wilson had outlived their contemporaries and towered above the naval generation which had followed them. It was to these two great old men and weather-beaten sea-dogs, who for more than half a century had braved the battle and the breeze, and were captains afloat when I was in my cradle, that the professional conduct of the naval war was now to be confided.

Lord Fisher's age and the great strain to which he was now to be subjected made it necessary for him to lead a very careful life. He usually retired to rest shortly after eight o'clock, awaking refreshed between four and five, or even earlier. In these morning hours he gave his greatest effort, transacting an immense quantity of business, writing innumerable letters, and forming his resolutions for the day. Indeed, his methods corresponded closely to the maxims of the poet Blake: "Think in the morning; act in the noon; eat in the evening; sleep in the night." But I never heard him use this quotation. As the afternoon approached the formidable energy of the morning gradually declined, and with the shades of night the old Admiral's giant strength was often visibly exhausted. Still, judged from the point of view of physical and mental vigor alone, it was a wonderful effort, and one which filled me, who watched him

so closely, with admiration and, I will add, reassurance.

An Unsleeping Watch

I altered my routine somewhat to fit in with that of the First Sea Lord. I slept usually an hour later in the morning, being called at eight instead of seven, and I slept again, if possible, for an hour after luncheon. This enabled me to work continuously till one or two in the morning without feeling in any way fatigued. We thus constituted an almost unsleeping watch throughout the day and night. In fact, as Fisher put it, "very nearly a perpetual clock." Telegrams came in at the admiralty at all hours of the day and night, and there was scarcely an hour when an immediate decision could not be given, if necessary, with out arousing either of us from slumber.

This arrangement was also convenient from the point of view of business. The First Lord completed everything with which he was concerned before going to bed, and three hours later the First Sea Lord addressed himself to the whole budget, and I, awakened at eight, received his dawn output. I had not previously

seen the pulse of the admiralty beat so strong and regular.

We made the agreement between ourselves that neither of us should take any important action without consulting the other, unless previous accord had been reached. To this agreement we both scrupulously adhered. We had thus formed, for the first time, an overwhelmingly strong control and central authority over the whole course of the naval war, and were in a position to make our will prevail throughout the fleets and all branches of the naval administration, as well as to hold our own against all outside interference. I had for a long time been accustomed to write my minutes in red ink. Fisher habitually used a green pencil. To quote his words, "It was the port and starboard lights." As long as the port and starboard lights shone together all went well. We had established a combination which, while it remained unbroken, could not have been overthrown by intrigue at home or the foe on the sea.

XII.—Coronel and the Falklands—I.

Admiral von Spee, the German commander-in-chief in the Far East, sailed from Tsingtau (Kiauchau) the last week of June with the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, and on August 5, immediately after the British declaration of war, these two powerful ships were reported as being near the Solomon Islands. They were subsequently reported at New Guinea on August 7, and coaling at the Caroline Islands on the 9th. After this they vanished into the immense Pacific with its innumerable islands, and no one could tell where they would reappear. As the days succeeded one another and grew into weeks, our concern on their account extended and multiplied. When at length more than five weeks had passed without any sign of their presence, we took a complete review of the whole situation. All probabilities now pointed to their going to the Magellan Straits or to the west coast of South America. There was nowhere where they could do so much harm as in the Straits of Magellan. Moreover, we thought we had indications of German coaling arrangements on the Chilean coast. There were rumors of a fueling base in the Magellan Straits, for which diligent search was being made. There was certainly German trade still moving along the western coast of South America.

On September 16 all uncertainties, and with them our anxieties, vanished and news was received that both Scharnhorst and Gneisenau had appeared off Samoa on September 14. There was nothing for them to hurt there. The empty roadstead mocked their power. The British flag flew on shore, and a New Zealand garrison far too strong for any landing party growled at them from behind defences. Thus informed of the fate of their colony, the German cruisers put to sea after firing a few shells at the government establishments.

Bombarded Papeete

A week later, the 22nd, they were at Papeete, which they bombarded, destroying half the town and sinking the little French gunboat Zelee which was in harbor. They left the same morning, steering on a northerly course. We did not hear of this till the 30th. Then once again silence descended on the vast recesses of the Pacific.

On October 4 wireless signals from the Scharnhorst were heard by Suva wireless station, and also at Wellington, New Zealand. From this it appeared that the two vessels were on the way between the Marquesas Islands and Easter Island. Evidently the South American plan was in their mind. We passed our information to Admiral Cradock.

And on the 8th (received 11th) he reported evidences of the presence of the Dresden in South American waters:—

From Rear - Admiral Cradock,
From Rear Admiral Cradock, Montevideo, to Admiralty.

(Extract)

Following intelligence has been received re Gneisenau and Scharnhorst. Evidence found by Good Hope revisiting Orange Bay on October 7 that Dresden had been there September 11, and there are indications that Gneisenau and Scharnhorst may be joined by Nurnberg, Dresden and Leipzig. I intend to concentrate at Falkland Islands and avoid division of forces. I have ordered Canopus to proceed there, and Monmouth, Glasgow, and Otranto until German cruisers are located again . . . not to go farther north than Valparaiso.

This was an important telegram. It showed a strong probability that the enemy was concentrating with the intention to fight. In these circumstances we must clearly concentrate too. I now looked at the staff telegram of October 5 and thought it was not sufficiently explicit on the vital point of concentrating. In order that there should be no mistake, I wrote across the back of the telegram of October 12 the following minute:

First Sea Lord.

In these circumstances it would be best for the British ships to keep within supporting distance of one another, whether in the Straits or near the Falkland Islands, and to postpone the cruise along the west coast until the present uncertainty about Scharnhorst-Gneisenau is cleared up.

They and not the trade are our quarry for the moment. Above all, we must not miss them.

The First Sea Lord the same evening added the word "Settled."

Warship Dispositions

On October 14 I discussed the whole situation which was developing with the First Sea Lord, and in accordance with my usual practice I sent him a minute after the conversation of what I understood was decided between us.

I understood from our conversation that the dispositions you proposed for the South Pacific and South Atlantic were as follows:

1. Cradock to concentrate at the Falklands, Canopus, Monmouth, Good Hope, and Otranto.
2. To send Glasgow round to look for Leipzig and attack, and protect trade on the west coast of South America as far north as Valparaiso.
3. Defence to join Carnarvon on forming a new combat squadron on the great trade route from Rio.
4. Albion to join the flag of C-in-C. Cape for the protection of the Luderitz Bay expedition.

These arrangements have my full approval.

Will you direct the chief of the staff to have statement prepared showing the dates by which these dispositions will be completed, and the earliest date at which Scharnhorst and Gneisenau could arrive in the respective spheres.

I presume Admiral Cradock is fully aware of the possibility of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau arriving on or after the 17th instant in his neighborhood; and that if not strong enough to attack, he will do his utmost to shadow them, pending the arrival of reinforcements.

The following telegram was sent to Admiral Cradock at the same time:

Your concentration of Canopus, Good Hope, Glasgow, Monmouth, Otranto, for combined operation concurred in.

We have ordered Stoddart in Carnarvon to Montevideo as senior naval officer north of that place.

Have ordered Defence to join Carnarvon.

He will also have under his orders Bristol, Cornwall, Macedonia, and Orama.

Essex to remain in West Indies.

On the 18th Admiral Cradock telegraphed:

I consider it possible that Karlsruhe has been driven west, and is to join the other five. I trust circumstances will enable me to force an action, but fear that strategically, owing to Canopus, the speed of my squadron cannot exceed 12 knots.

H.M.S. Canopus

Thus it is clear that up to this date the admiral fully intended to keep concentrated on the Canopus, even though his squadron speed should be reduced to twelve knots. Officially the Canopus could steam from sixteen to seventeen knots. Actually in the operation she steamed 15½.

Let us now examine the situation which was developing. The Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau were drawing near the south coast of America. On the way they might be met by the light cruisers Leipzig, Dresden and Nurnberg. The squadron which might thus be formed would be entirely composed of fast modern ships. The two large cruisers were powerful vessels. They carried each eight 8-inch guns arranged in pairs on the upper deck, six of which were capable of firing on either beam. Both ships on permanent foreign service were fully manned with the highest class of German crews; and they had, in fact, only recently distinguished themselves as among the best shooting ships of the whole German navy. Against these two vessels and their attendant light cruisers, Admiral Cradock had the Good Hope and the Monmouth. The Good Hope was a fine old ship from the third fleet with a 9.2-inch gun at either end and a battery of sixteen 6-inch guns amidships. She had exceptionally good speed (23 knots) for a vessel of her date. Her crew consisted mainly of reservists, and though she had good gun-layers, she could not be expected to compare in gunnery efficiency with the best manned ships either in the British or German navies. The Monmouth was one of the numerous County class, against which Fisher had no often inveighed—a large ship with good speed but light armor, and carrying nothing heavier than a battery of fourteen 6-inch guns, of which nine could fire on the beam. These two British armored cruisers had little chance in an action against the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. No gallantry or devotion could make amends

for the disparity in strength, to say nothing of gunnery. If brought to battle only the greatest good fortune could save them from destruction. It was for this reason that the moment the admiralty began to apprehend the possibility of the arrival of the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau on the South American station, we sent a capital ship to reinforce Admiral Cradock. Our first intention had been to send the Indomitable from the Dardanelles, and at one time she had already reached Gibraltar on her way to South America when increasing tension with Turkey forced her to return to the Dardanelles. As we did not conceive ourselves able to spare a single battle-cruiser from the Grand Fleet at that time, there was nothing for it but to send an old battleship; and by the end of September the Canopus was already steaming from Abrolhos rocks through the South Atlantic.

Naval Concentration

With the Canopus, Admiral Cradock's squadron was safe. The Scharnhorst and Gneisenau would never have ventured to come within decisive range of our four 12-inch guns. To do so would have been to subject themselves to very serious damage without any prospect of success. The old battleship, with her heavy armor and artillery, was, in fact, a citadel around which all our cruisers in those waters could find absolute security. It was for this reason that the admiralty had telegraphed on September 15: "Keep at least Canopus and one county class with your flagship"; and again, on October 5: "Canopus should accompany Glasgow, Monmouth and Otranto." It was for this reason that I was glad to read Admiral Cradock's telegram: "Have ordered Canopus to Falkland Islands, where I intend to concentrate and avoid division of forces," on which I minuted: "In these circumstances it would be best for the British ships to keep within supporting distance of one another, whether in the Straits or near the Falklands"; and it was for this same reason that the Admiralty telegraphed on October 14: "Your concentration of Good Hope, Canopus, Monmouth, Glasgow, Otranto for combined operation concurred in."

It was quite true that the speed of the Canopus was in fact only fifteen and a half knots, and that as long as our cruisers had to take her about with them they could not hope to catch the Germans. All the Canopus could do was to prevent the Germans catching and killing them. But that would not be the end of the story: it would only be its beginning. When the Germans reached the South American coast after their long voyage across the Pacific, they would have to coal and take in supplies; they were bound to try to find some place where colliers could meet them, and where they could refit and revictual. The moment they were located, either by one of our light cruisers or reported from the shore, the uncertainty of their whereabouts was at an end. We could instantly concentrate upon them from many quarters. The Japanese battleship Hizen and cruiser Idzumo, with the British light cruiser Newcastle, were moving towards the

coast of South America—a force also not capable of catching Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, but too strong to be attacked by them. On the east coast of South America Admiral Stoddart's squadron with the powerful modern armored cruiser, Defence, with two more county class cruisers, Carnarvon (7.5 in. guns) and Cornwall, the light cruiser Bristol, and the armed merchant cruisers Macedonia and Orama. All these ships could be moved by a single order into a common concentration against the German squadron the moment we knew where they were; and meanwhile, so long as he kept within supporting distance of the Canopus, Admiral Cradock could have cruised safely up the Chilean coast, keeping the Germans on the move and always falling back on his battleship if they attempted to attack him. The Good Hope and Monmouth steaming together were scarcely inferior in designed speed to the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, and these last had been long at sea. Admiral Cradock could, therefore, have kept on observing the Germans, disturbing them, provoking them, and drawing them on to the Canopus. Moreover, in the Glasgow he had a light cruiser which was much superior in speed to the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, and superior both in strength and speed to any one of the German light cruisers concerned.

Awaiting Events

I cannot, therefore, accept for the admiralty any share in the responsibility for what followed. The first rule of war is to concentrate superior strength for decisive action, and to avoid division of forces or engaging in detail. The admiral showed by his telegram that he clearly appreciated this. The admiralty orders explicitly approved his assertion of these elementary principles. We were not, therefore, anxious about the safety of Admiral Cradock's squadron. A more important and critical situation would arise if, in cruising up the west coast of South America with his concentrated force, Admiral Cradock missed the Germans altogether, and if they passed to the southward of him through the Straits of Magellan or round the Horn, refuelling there in some secret bay, and so come on to the great trade route from Rio. Here they would find Admiral Stoddart, whose squadron when concentrated, though somewhat faster and stronger than the Germans, had not much to spare in either respect. It was for this reason that I had deprecated in my minute of October 12 Admiral Cradock's movement up the west coast and would have been glad to see him remaining near the Straits of Magellan, where he could either bar the path of the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau, or manoeuvre to join forces with Admiral Stoddart. However, I rested content with the decisions conveyed in the admiralty telegram of October 14, and awaited events.

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(To Be Continued on Tuesday)

XIII.—Coronel and the Falklands

Suddenly, on October 27, there arrived a telegram from Admiral Cradock which threw me into perplexity: Good Hope, October 26, 7 p.m. At sea.

With reference to Admiralty telegram received October 7 and to orders to search for enemy and our great desire for early success, I consider that it is impossible to find and destroy squadron enemy's owing to slow speed of Canopus.

Have therefore ordered Defence to join me after calling for orders at Montevideo.

Shall employ Canopus on necessary work of convoying colliers.

The Admiralty telegram to which Admiral Cradock here referred was as follows:

Oct. 5.—You must be prepared to meet Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Dresden in company. Canopus should accompany Glasgow, Monmouth, and Otranto and should search and protect trade in combination.

We were then in the throes of the change in the office of First Sea Lord, and I was gravely preoccupied with the circumstances and oppositions attending the appointment of Lord Fisher. But for this fact, I am sure I should have reacted much more violently against the ominous sentence: "Shall employ Canopus on necessary work of convoying colliers." As it was I minuted to the naval secretary (Admiral Oliver) as follows: "This telegram is very obscure, and I do not understand what Admiral Cradock intends and wishes."

I was reassured by his reply on October 29:

The situation on the west coast seems safe. If Gneisenau and Scharnhorst have gone north they will meet eventually Idzumo, Newcastle, and Hizen moving south, and will be forced south on Glasgow and Monmouth who have good speed and can keep touch and draw them south on to Good Hope and Canopus, who should keep within supporting distance of each other.

The half fear which had begun to grow in my mind that perhaps the Admiral would go and fight without the Canopus, which I thought was so improbable that I did not put it on paper, was allayed. It would, of course, be possible for him to manoeuvre forty or fifty miles ahead of the Canopus and still return close to her before fighting. To send the Defence to join Admiral Cradock would have left Admiral Stoddart in a hopeless inferiority.

Japanese Expected

The Admiralty staff had, however, already replied in accordance with all our decisions:

(Sent October 28, 1914, 6:45 p.m.).

There is no ship available for the Cape Horn vicinity.

Defence is to remain on East Coast under orders of Stoddart.

This will leave sufficient force on each side in case the hostile cruisers appear there on the trade routes.

Japanese battleship Hizen shortly expected on North American Coast; she will join the Newcastle and Japanese Idzumo and move south towards Galapagos.

But neither this nor any further message reached Admiral Cradock. He had taken his own decision. Without waiting for the Defence, even if we had been able to send her, and leaving the Canopus behind to guard the colliers, he was already steaming up the Chilean Coast. But though he left the inexpugnable Canopus behind because she was too slow, he took with him the helpless armed merchant cruiser Otranto, which was scarcely any faster. He was thus ill-fitted either to fight or run.

He telegraphed to us off Vallenar at 4 p.m. on October 27 (received November 1, 4:33 a.m.):

Your telegram 105 received. Have seized German mails. Monmouth, Good Hope, and Otranto at Vallenar coaling. Glasgow patrolling vicinity of Coronel to intercept German shipping, rejoining flag later on. After coaling I intend to proceed northward secretly with squadron and to keep out of sight of land. Until fur-

ther notice continue telegraphing to Montevideo.

And at noon on October 29 (received November 1, 7:40 a.m.):

Mails for Rear-Admiral Cradock, Good Hope, Canopus, Monmouth, Glasgow, Otranto, should until further notice be forwarded to Valparaiso.

The inclusion of the Canopus in the middle of the latter message seemed to indicate the Admiral's intention to work in combination with the Canopus even if not actually concentrated. These were the last messages received from him.

On October 30 Lord Fisher became First Sea Lord. As soon as he entered the Admiralty I took him to the war room and went over with him on the great map the positions and tasks of every vessel in our immense organization. It took more than two hours. The critical point was clearly in South American waters. Speaking of Admiral Cradock's position, I said, "You don't suppose he would try to fight them without the Canopus." He did not give any decided reply.

News of German Ships

Early on November 3 we got our first certain news of the Germans.

Consul-General, Valparaiso, to Admiralty. (Sent 5:20 p.m., November 2. Received 3:10 a.m., November 3).

Master of Chilean merchant vessel reports that on November 1, 1 p.m., five miles off Cape Carranza, about 62 miles north of Talcahuano, he was stopped by Nurnberg. Officers remained on board 45 minutes. Two other German cruisers lay west about 5 and 10 miles respectively. Master believes one of these was Scharnhorst. On October 26, 1 p.m., Leipzig called at Mas-a-Fuera, having crew 456 and 10 guns, 18 days out from Galapagos. She was accompanied by another cruiser, name unknown. They left same day, having bought oxen. An unknown warship was on October 29 seen in lat. 33 south, long. 74 west, steaming towards Coquimbo.

Here at last was the vital message for which the Admiralty staff had waited so long. Admiral von Spee's squadron was definitely located on the west coast of South America. He had not slipped past Admiral Cradock round the Horn as had been possible. For the moment Admiral Stoddart was perfectly safe. With the long peninsula of South America between him and the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, there was no longer any need for him to keep the Defence. She could join Cradock for what we must hope would be an early battle. After surveying the new situation we telegraphed to Admiral Stoddart as follows:

(Sent 6:20 p.m., November 3).

Defence to proceed to join Admiral Cradock on west coast of America with all possible dispatch. Acknowledge.

This telegram was initiated by Admiral Sturdee, Lord Fisher and myself. We also telegraphed to Admiral Cradock once more reiterating the instructions about the Canopus:

(Sent 6:55 p.m., November 3).

Defence has been ordered with all dispatch to join your flag. Glasgow should find or keep in touch with the enemy. You should keep touch with Glasgow concentrating the rest of your squadron, including Canopus. It is important you should effect your junction with Defence at earliest possible moment, subject to keeping touch with Glasgow and enemy. Enemy supposes you at Corcovados Bay. Acknowledge.

But we were already talking to the void.

When I opened my boxes at 7 o'clock on the morning of November 4, I read the following telegram:

Macleán, Valparaíso, to Admiralty.
(Sent November 3, 1914, 6:10 p.m.).

Chilean Admiral has just informed me that German Admiral states that on Sunday at sunset, in thick and wicked weather, his ships met Good Hope, Glasgow, Monmouth and Otranto. Action was joined, and Monmouth turned over and sank after about an hour's fighting.

Good Hope, Glasgow, and Otranto draw off into darkness.

Good Hope was on fire, an explosion was heard, and she is believed to have sunk.

Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, and Nürnberg were among the German ships engaged.

Enemy Sighted

The story of what had happened, so far as it ever can be known, is now familiar, it is fully set out in the official history and need only be summarized here. Arrived on the Chilean Coast, having refueled at a lonely island, and hearing that the British light cruiser, Glasgow was at Coronel, Admiral von Spee determined to make an attempt to cut her off, and with this intention steamed southward on November 1 with his whole squadron. By good fortune the Glasgow left harbor before it was too late. Almost at the same moment, Admiral Cradock began, to sweep northward, hoping to catch

the Leipzig, whose wireless had been heard repeatedly by the Glasgow. He was rejoined by the Glasgow at half past two; and the whole squadron proceeded northward abreast about fifteen miles apart. At about half past four the smoke of several vessels was seen to the northward, and in another quarter of an hour the Glasgow was able to identify the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and a German light cruiser. The Canopus was nearly 300 miles away. Was there still time to refuse action? Undoubtedly there was. The Good Hope and Monmouth had normal speed of 23 knots and 22.4 respectively and could certainly steam 21 knots in company that day. The Glasgow could steam over 25. The Scharnhorst and Gneisenau had nominal speeds of 23.2 and 23.5; but they had long been in Southern seas and out of dock. On the knowledge he possessed at that moment, Admiral Cradock would have been liberal in allowing them 23 knots. Rough weather would reduce speeds equally on both sides. Had he turned at once and by standing out to sea, offered a stern chase to the enemy, he could only be overhauled one knot each hour. When the enemy was sighted by the Glasgow at 4:45, the nearest armored ships were about 20 miles apart. There were scarcely two hours to sundown and less than three to darkness.

But the Otranto was a possible complication. She could only steam 18 knots, and against the head sea during the action she did in fact only steam 15 knots. As this weak, slow ship had been for some unexplained reason, sent on ahead with the Glasgow, she was at the moment of sighting the enemy only 17 miles distant. Assuming that Admiral von Spee could steam 22 knots, less three for the head sea, i.e., 18, he would overhaul the Otranto four knots an hour. On this he might have brought her under long-range fire as darkness closed in. To that extent she reduced the speed of the British squadron and diminished their chances of safety. This may have weighed with Admiral Cradock.

We know now, of course, that in spite of being cumbered with the Otranto, he could, as it happened, easily and certainly declined action had he attempted to do so. At the moment of being sighted, Admiral von Spee had only steam for 14 knots, and had to light two more boilers to realize his full speed. Moreover his ships were dispersed. To concentrate and gain speed took an hour and a half off the brief daylight during which the British ships would actually have been increasing their distance. Moreover, in the chase and battle of the Falklands, the greatest speed ever developed by the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau did not exceed 20 knots in favorable weather. There is, therefore no doubt he could have got away untouched.

Decision to Attack

But nothing was farther from the mind of Admiral Cradock. He instantly decided to attack. As soon as the Glasgow had sighted the enemy, she had turned back towards the flagship, preceded by the Monmouth and

the Otranto, all returning at full speed. But Admiral Cradock at 5:10 ordered the squadron to concentrate, not on his flagship, the Good Hope, the farthest ship from the enemy, but on the Glasgow, which, though retreating rapidly, was still the nearest. At 6:18 he signalled to the distant Canopus: "I am now going to attack enemy." The decision to fight sealed his fate, and, more than that, the fate of the squadron.

To quote the log of the Glasgow, "the British squadron turned to port four points together towards the enemy with a view to closing them and forcing them to action before sunset, which if successful, would have put them at a great disadvantage owing to the British squadron being between the enemy and the sun." The German admiral easily evaded this manoeuvre by turning away towards the land and keeping at a range of at least 18,000 yards. Both squadrons were now steaming southward on slightly converging courses—the British to seaward with the setting sun behind them, and the Germans nearer the land. And now began the saddest naval action in the war. Of the officers and men in both the squadrons that faced each other in these stormy seas so far from home nine out of ten were doomed to perish. The British were to die that night; the Germans a month later. At 7 o'clock the sun sank beneath the horizon, and the German admiral, no longer dazzled by its rays, opened fire. The British ships were silhouetted against the afterglow, while the Germans were hardly visible against the dark background of the Chilean coast. A complete reversal of advantage had taken place. The sea was high, and the main deck 6-inch guns both of the Monmouth and the Good Hope must have been much affected by the dashing spray. The German batteries, all mounted in modern fashion on the upper deck, suffered no corresponding disadvantage from the rough weather. The unequal contest lasted less than an hour. One of the earliest German salvos probably disabled the Good Hope's forward 9.2-inch gun, which was not fired throughout the action. Both she and the Monmouth were soon on fire. Darkness came on and the sea increased in violence, till the Good Hope, after a great explosion, became only a glowing speck, which was presently extinguished; and the Monmouth, absolutely helpless, but refusing to surrender, was destroyed by the Nürnberg, and foundered, like her consort, with her flag still flying. The Otranto, an unarmored merchantman, quite incapable of taking part in the action, rightly held her distance and disappeared into the gloom. Only the little Glasgow,

which miraculously escaped fatal damage among the heavy salvos, continued the action until she was left alone in darkness on the stormy seas. There were no survivors from the two British ships; all perished, from admiral to seamen. The Germans had no loss of life.

Quoth the Glasgow (Midnight, November 16):

... Throughout the engagement the conduct of officers and men was entirely admirable. Perfect discipline and coolness prevailed under trying circumstances of receiving considerable volumes of fire without being able to make adequate return. The men behaved exactly as though at battle practise; there were no signs of wild fire, and when the target was invisible the gunlayers ceased firing of their own accord. Spirit of officers and ship's company of Glasgow is entirely unimpaired by serious reverse in which they took part, and that the ship may be quickly restored to a condition in which she can take part in further operations against the same enemy is the unanimous wish of us all.

This, as it happened, they were not to be denied.

XIV.—Coronel and the Falkland Islands—

(Continued)

We had now to meet the new situation. Our combinations, such as they were, were completely ruptured, and Admiral von Spee, now in temporary command of South American waters, possessed a wide choice of alternative. He might turn back into the Pacific, and repeat the mystery tactics which had been so baffling to us. He might steam northward up the west coast of South America and make for the Panama Canal. In this case he would run a chance of being brought to battle by the Anglo-Japanese squadron which was moving southward. But, of course, he might not fall in with them, or, if he did, he could avoid battle owing to his superior speed. He might come round the east coast and interrupt the main trade route. If he did this he must be prepared to fight Admiral Stoddart; but this would be a very hazardous combat. Lastly, he might cross the Atlantic, possibly raiding the Falkland Islands on his way, and arrive unexpectedly on the South African coast. Here he would find the Union government's expedition against the German colony in full progress and his arrival would have been most unwelcome. General Botha and General Smuts, having suppressed the rebellion, were about to resume in a critical atmosphere their attack upon German Southwest Africa, and a stream of transports would soon be flowing with the expedition and its supplies from Cape Town to Luderitz Bay. Subsequently, or alternatively to this intrusion, Admiral von Spee might steam up the African coast and strike at the whole of the shipping of the expedition to the Cameroons, which was quite without means of defending itself against him.

Against a Sudden Blow

All these unpleasant possibilities had to be faced by us. We had to prepare again at each of many points against a sudden blow; and, great as were our resources, the strain upon them became enormous. The first step was to restore the situation in South America waters. This would certainly take a month. My minute of inquiry to the chief of the staff, written an hour after I had read the first news of the disaster, will show the possibilities which existed. In this grave need my mind immediately turned to wresting a battle cruiser from the grand fleet which, joined with the Defence, Carnarvon, Cornwall, and Kent, would give Admiral Stoddart an overwhelming superiority.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS DIVISION

1. How far is it, and how long would it take Dartmouth, and Weymouth to reach Punta Arenas, Rio, or Abrolhos respectively, if they started this afternoon with all despatch?

2. How long would it take—

(a) Kent to reach Rio and Abrolhos?

(b) Australia (1) without and (2) with, Montcalm to reach Galapagos via Makada Islands, and also Idzumo and Newcastle to reach them?

(c) The Japanese 2nd Southern squadron to replace Australia at Fiji?

(d) Defence, Carnarvon and Cornwall respectively to reach Punta Arenas?

(e) Invincible to reach Abrolhos, Rio, Punta Arenas?

(f) Hizen and Asama to reach Galapagos or Esquimalt?

W. S. C. 4-11-14.

But I found Lord Fisher in a bolder mood. He would take two battle cruisers from the grand fleet for the South American station. More than that, and much more questionable, he would take a third—the Prince Royal—for Halifax and later for the West Indies in case von Spee came through the Panama Canal.

We measured up our strength in home waters anxiously observing that the Tiger was about to join the first battle cruiser squadron, and that the new battleships Benbow, Empress of India, and Queen Elizabeth were practically ready. We sent forthwith the following order to Commander-in-Chief:—

November 4th, 1914.

Order Invincible and Inflexible to fill up with coal at once and proceed with all dispatch to Berehaven. They are urgently needed for foreign service. Tiger has been ordered to join you with all dispatch. Give her necessary orders.

I also telegraphed to Sir John Jellicoe as follows:

November 5, 12:5 a.m.

We fear from all reports that Cradock has been caught or has engaged with only Good Hope and Monmouth armored ships against Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. Both British vessels probably sunk. Fate of Glasgow and Otranto uncertain, and position of Canopus critical.

Proximity of concentrated German squadron of five good ships will threaten gravely main trade route control.

First Sea Lord requires Inflexible and Invincible for this purpose.

Sturdee goes commander-in-chief South Atlantic and Pacific.

Battle Cruisers Sent

Apparently we had not at this stage decided finally to send the Prince Royal. Sir John Jellicoe rose to the occasion and parted with his two battle-cruisers without a word. They were ordered to steam by the west coast to Devonport to fit themselves for their southern voyage. Our plans for the second clutch at von Spee were now conceived as follows:

1. Should he break across the Pacific he would be dealt with by the very superior Japanese 1st southern squadron based on Suva to cover Australia and New Zealand and composed as follows: Kurama (battle-ship), Tsukube and Ikoma (battle-cruisers), Chikuma and Yahagi (light cruisers). At Suva also were Montcalm and Encounter. Another strong Japanese squadron (four ships) was based on the Caroline Islands.

2. To meet him should he proceed up the west coast of South America, an Anglo-Japanese squadron, comprising Australia (from Fiji), Hizen, Idzumo, Newcastle, was to be formed off the North American coast.

3. Should he come round on to the east coast, Defence, Canarvon, Cornwall, Kent were ordered to concentrate off Montevideo, together with Canopus, Glasgow and Bristol, and not seek action till joined by Invincible and Inflexible, thereafter sending the Defence to South Africa.

4. Should he approach the Cape station, he would be awaited by Defence and also Minatur, released from the Australian convoy (after we knew of von Spee's arrival in South America waters), with the old battleship Albion, and Weymouth, Dartmouth, and Hyacinth, light cruisers; the Union expedition being postponed for fourteen days.

5. Should he come through the Panama Canal, he would meet the Princess Royal as well as the Berwick and Lancaster, of the West Indies squadron.

6. Cameroons were warned to be ready to take their shipping up the river.

7. Should he endeavor to work homewards across the South Atlantic, he would come into the area of a new squadron under Admiral de Robeck to be formed near the Cape de Verde Islands, comprising the very strong armored cruisers, Warrior and Black Prince and the Donegal, Highflyer, and later Cumberland.

Thus to compass the destruction of five warships, only two of which were armored, it was necessary to employ nearly thirty, including twenty-one armored ships, the most part of superior metal, and this took no account of the Japanese squadrons, or of French ships, or of armed merchant cruisers, the latter effective for scouting.

The strain upon British naval resources abroad was now at its maximum. One hundred and two ships of all classes were employed in the outer seas.

We literally could not lay our hands on another vessel of any sort or kind which could be made to play any useful part. But we were soon to have relief.

Emden Sighted

Already on October 30 news had reached us that the *Konigsberg* had been discovered hiding in the Rufgi River in German East Africa, and it was instantly possible to mark her down with two ships of equal value and liberate the others. On November 9 far finer news arrived. The reader will remember for what purpose the *Sydney* and *Melbourne* had been attached to the great Australian convoy which was now crossing the Indian ocean. On the 8th the *Sydney*, cruising ahead of the convoy, took in a message from the wireless station at Cocos Island that a strange ship was entering the bay. Thereafter, silence from Cocos Island. Thereupon the large Japanese cruiser *Ibuki* increased her speed, displayed the war flag of Japan, and demanded permission from the British officer in command of the convoy to pursue and

attack the enemy. But the convey could not divest itself of this powerful protection, and the coveted task was accorded to the *Sydney*. At 9 o'clock she sighted the *Emden*, and the first sea fight in the history of the Australian navy began. It could have only one ending. In a hundred minutes the *Emden* was stranded, a flaming mass of twisted metal, and the whole of the Indian ocean was absolutely safe and free.

The clearance of the Indian ocean liberated all those vessels which had been searching for the *Emden* and the *Konigsberg*. Nothing could now harm the Australian convoy. Most of its escort vanished. The *Emden* and the *Konigsberg* were accounted for, and von Spee was on the other side of the globe. The *Minotaur* had already been ordered with full speed to the Cape. All the other vessels went through the Red Sea into the Mediterranean, where their presence was very welcome in view of the impending Turkish invasion of Egypt.

Meanwhile the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* had reached Devonport. We had decided that Admiral Sturdee on vacating the position of chief of the staff should hoist his flag in the *Invincible*, should take general command on the South American station, and should assume general control of all the operations against von Spee. We were in the highest impatience to get him and his ships away. Once vessels fall into dockyard hands, a hundred needs manifest themselves

On November 9, when Lord Fisher was in my room, the following message was put on my table:—

The admiral superintendent, Devonport, reports that the earliest possible date for completion of *Invincible* and *Inflexible* is midnight, November 13.

Order to Sail

I immediately expressed great discontent with the dockyard delays and asked, "Shall I give them a shove?" or words to that effect. Fisher took up the telegram. As soon as he saw it he exclaimed, "Friday, the thirteenth! What a day to choose"; I then wrote and signed the following order which was the direct cause of the battle of the Falklands:—

Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief, Devonport.—(Nov. 10. Sent 12.5 a.m.)

Inflexible and *Invincible* are to sail Wednesday, November 11. They are needed for war service and dockyard arrangements must be made to conform. If necessary dockyard men should be sent away in the ships to return as opportunity offers. You are held responsible for the speedy dispatch of these ships in a thoroughly efficient condition.

Acknowledge.

The ships sailed accordingly and in the nick of time. They coaled on November 26 at Abrolhos, where they joined and absorbed Admiral Stoddart's squadron—*Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent*, *Glasgow*, *Bristol*, and *Orama*, and dispatched *Defence* to the Cape, and without even coming in sight of land or using their wireless they reached Port Stanley, Falkland Islands on the night of December 7. Here they found the *Canopus* in the lagoon, prepared to defend herself and the colony in accordance with the admiralty instructions. They immediately began to coal.

After his victory at Coronel, Admiral von Spee comforted himself with the dignity of a brave gentleman. He put aside the fervent acclamation of the German colony of Valparaiso, and spoke no word of triumph over the dead. He was under no delusion as to his own danger. He said of the flowers which were presented to him, "They will do for my funeral." Generally, his behaviour would lead us to suppose that the inability of the Germans to pick up any British survivors was not due to want of humanity; and this view has been accepted by the British navy.

Fleets in Action

After a few days at Valparaiso he and his ships vanished again into the blue. We do not know what were the reasons which led him to raid the Falkland Islands, nor what his further plans would have been in the event of success. Presumably he hoped to destroy this unfortified British coaling base and so make his own position in South American waters less precarious. At any rate, at noon on December 6 he set off from the Straits of Magellan with his five ships to the eastward; and at about 8 o'clock December 8 his leading ship (the *Gneisenau*) was in sight of the main harbor of the Falklands. A few minutes later a terrible apparition broke upon German eyes.

Rising from behind the promontory, sharply visible in the clear air, were a pair of tripod masts. One glance was enough. They meant certain death.* The day was beautifully fine and from the tops the horizon extended thirty or forty miles in every direction. There was no hope for victory. There was no chance of escape. A month before, another admiral and his sailors had suffered a similar experience.

At 5 o'clock that afternoon I was working in my room at the Admiralty when Admiral Oliver entered with the following telegram. It was from the governor of the Falkland Islands, and was as follows:

"Admiral Spee arrived at daylight this morning with all his ships and is now in action with Admiral Sturdee's whole fleet, which was coaling."

We had so many unpleasant surprises that these last words sent a shiver up my spine. Had we been taken by surprise and, in spite of all our superiority, mauled, unread, at anchor? "Can it mean that?" I said to the chief of the staff. "I hope not," was all he said. I could see that my suggestion, though I hardly meant it seriously, had disquieted him. Two hours later, however, the countenance of the stern and sombre Oliver wore something which closely resembled a grin. "It's all right, sir; they are all at the bottom." And with one exception so they were.

XV.—The German Cruiser Raids

Mr. Churchill, after giving an account of the German battle-cruisers' "silly demonstration off Yarmouth beach" on November 3, continues:

The silence of the North Sea remained unbroken until the afternoon of Monday, December 14. At about five o'clock Sir Arthur Wilson came to my room and asked for an immediate meeting of the war group. It took only a few minutes to gather them. He then explained that his examination of the available intelligence about the enemy indicated the probability of an impending movement which might possibly involve their battle cruisers and perhaps have a definitely offensive character against our coast. The German high sea fleet did not appear to be involved. The indications were obscure and uncertain. The information was conflicting. There were great gaps in the argument. But the conclusion which we all reached after hearing Sir Arthur Wilson was that we should act as if we knew that our assumptions and suppositions were true. Orders were given immediately for the battle cruisers and the second battle squadron, with three light cruiser squadrons and three flotillas of destroyers, to raise steam and to proceed to sea at such hours and at such speeds as to enable them to be in certain positions at daylight the next morning which would enable them to cut off the retreat of the raiders. Orders were also sent to Commodore Tyrwhitt's Harwich force to be at sea off Yarmouth and to Commodore Keves, in command of the submarines, to place our boats in a

position to guard against a southward raid and if necessary intercept any German force on its return to the Heligoland Bight.

Hartlepool Bombarded

These measures having been taken on the chance of their being necessary, we awaited during thirty-six hours the events of Wednesday morning with a doubting but expectant curiosity. On the morning of December 16 at about half-past 8 I was in my bath, when the door opened and an officer came hurrying in from the war room with a naval signal which I grasped with dripping hand. "German battle cruisers bombarding Hartlepool." I jumped out of the bath with exclamations of joy (Hartlepool, Scarborough, forgive me!). Pulling on clothes over a damp body, I ran downstairs to the war room. The First Sea Lord had just arrived from his house next door. Telegrams from all naval stations along the coast affected by the attack and intercepts from our ships in the vicinity speaking to each other came pouring in two and three to the minute. The Admiralty also spread the good tidings and the Chief of the Staff kept the fleets and flotillas continuously informed of all we knew.

The bombardment of open towns was still new to us at that time. But after all what did that matter now? The war map showed the German battle cruisers identified one by one within gunshot of the Yorkshire coast, while 150 miles to eastward between them and Germany, cutting mathematically their line of retreat, steamed in the exact positions intended four British battle cruisers and six of the most powerful battleships in the world forming the second battle squadron. Attended and preceded by their light cruiser squadrons and flotillas, this fleet of our newest and fastest ships, all armed with the heaviest gun then afloat, could cover and watch effectively a front of nearly fifty miles. In the positions in which dawn revealed the antagonists only one thing could enable the Germans to escape annihilation at the hands of an overwhelmingly superior force.

And while the great shells crashed into the little houses of Hartlepool and Scarborough, carrying their cruel message of pain and destruction to unsuspecting English homes, only one anxiety dominated the thoughts of the Admiralty war room.

Hoped for Collision

The word "visibility" assumed a sinister significance. At present it was quite good enough. Both Warrender and Beatty had horizons of nearly ten miles; near the coast fighting was actually in progress at seven thousand yards. There was nothing untoward in the weather indications. At 9 a.m. the German bombardment ceased and their ships were soon out of sight of land, no doubt on their homeward voyage. We went on tenterhooks to breakfast. To have this tremendous prize, the German battle cruiser squadron, whose loss would fatally mutilate the German navy and could never be repaired, actually within our claws, and to have the

event all turn upon a veil of mist, was a wracking ordeal. Meanwhile telegraph and telephone were pouring the woes of Hartlepool and Scarborough to all parts of the kingdom and by half-past ten, when the War Committee of the Cabinet met, news magnified by rumor had produced excitement. I was immediately asked how such a thing was possible. "What was the Navy doing, and what were they going to do?" In reply I pro-

duced the chart which showed the respective positions at the moment of the British and German naval forces, and I explained the subject to moderate visibility we hoped that collision would take place about noon. These disclosures fell upon all with a sense of awe, and the committee adjourned till the afternoon.

But now already ominous telegrams began to arrive. Warrender soon had horizons of only 7,000 yards; Beatty of only 6,000; some of the light cruisers nearer to the coast already mentioned 5,000; and later on 4,000 was signalled. Meanwhile no contact. Noon passed, and then 1 o'clock. The weather got steadily worse. It was evident that the mist curtains were falling over the North Sea. Three thousand yards visibility, 2,000 yards visibility were reported by ships speaking to each other. The solemn faces of Fisher and Wilson betrayed no emotion. But one felt the fire burning within. I tried to do other work, but it was not much good. Obscure messages were heard from our fleet. Evidently they were very close to the enemy, groping for him in a mist which allowed vessels to be distinguished only within 2,000 yards. We heard Warrender order his priceless ships to steam through the located German minefield off the Yorkshire coast, apparently in an endeavor to close with something just out of sight, just beyond his finger-tips. Then all of a sudden we heard Goodenough with the light cruisers report that he had opened fire upon a German light cruiser at 3,000 yards. Hope flared up. Once contact was established, would it not drag all the enemy should escape. Even the proposed movement of the second battle squadron through the minefield was received in utter silence.

Squadrons Warned

About half-past one Sir Arthur Wilson said, "They seem to be getting away from us." But now occurred a new development of a formidable kind. At 1.50 we learned that the High Sea Fleet was at sea. Up till noon this great fleet had not spoken. Once she had spoken and the necessary calculations had been made by our directional stations, which took some time, we could both recognize and locate her. She had already, in fact, advanced far into the North Sea, farther than she ever came at any time before or since except to surrender. The apparition of the German fleet, which we then thought to be advancing to the support of their battle-cruisers, entirely altered the balance of strength. Our ten great ships steaming together with their light squadrons and flotillas were not only the strongest, but the fastest naval force in the world.

No equal German force existed which could at once overtake and overcome them. On the other hand, they were not capable of meeting the High Sea Fleet. The German battle-cruisers were still separated from their fleet by 150 miles, but it seemed to us that a running action begun with the German battle-cruisers might in the thick weather then prevailing conceivably as the day wore on lead to a surprise collision with the main naval power of the enemy. This was certainly not the wish of the admiralty. We instantly warned our squadrons.

Admiralty to second battle squadron and first battle-cruiser squadron. Urgent.

High set fleet is out and was in latitude 54.38 N., longitude 5.55 E., at 0.30 p.m. today, so do not go too far to eastward.

These sinister possibilities soon faded like our earlier hopes. The High Sea Fleet was not, as we supposed, coming out, but had long been out and was now retiring.

At 3 o'clock I went over and told the war committee what was passing; but with what a heavy heart did I cross again that Horse Guards parade! I returned to the Admiralty. The war group had re-assembled around the octagonal table in my room. The shades of a Winter's evening had already begun to fall. Sir Arthur Wilson then said in his most ordinary manner, "Well, there you are, they have got away. They must be about here by now," and he pointed to the chart on which the chief of the staff was marking the positions every fifteen minutes. It was evident that the Germans had slipped past our intercepting force, and that even their light cruisers with whom we had been in contact had also escaped in the mist. Said Admiral Warrender afterwards in his report. "They came out of one rain-storm and disappeared in another."

"A Terrible Message"

Was it then all over? I inquired about our submarines. They had already been collected by Commodore Keyes from their first position and were now moving on to the German line of retreat. But whether the enemy's course would come within their limited range was a matter of luck. Sir Arthur Wilson then said: "There is only one chance now. Keyes, in the Lurcher, is with the submarines. He could probably make certain, at about 9 o'clock tonight, of attacking the German battle-cruisers or battleships as they enter the Bight. He may torpedo one or even two." It seemed indeed a forlorn hope to send this single frail destroyer, far from home, close to the enemy's coast utterly unsupported, into the jaws of this powerful German force with its protecting vessels and flotillas. There was a long silence. We all knew Keyes well. Then someone said: "It is sending him to his death." Someone else said, "He would be the last man to wish us to consider that." There was another long pause. Darkness had almost fallen in the room, for no one had entered to light the lights and draw the curtains. It

was a grim decision to send this poor destroyer with her gallant admiral and crew on such an errand. However, the chief of the staff had already written the order. The first Sea Lord and I initialed it. He got up heavily and quitted the room. Then we turned to the ordinary business of the day, and also to the decision of what could be told to the public about the event.

Two days later when I received Admiral Keyes in my room at the

Admiralty, I said: "We sent you a terrible message the other night. I hardly expected to see you again." "It was terrible," he said, "not getting it till next morning. I nearly did it on my own responsibility"; and he proceeded to reproach himself without reason.

And such was the episode of the Scarborough and Hartlepool raids.

A Momentous Day

This had been indeed a momentous day. But for the sudden downcoming of the mist the German battle-cruiser squadron would have been destroyed. A rencontre in the mist—prevented only by a hair's breadth—might similarly have led to their destruction or alternatively to a running fight in the mist with growing risk of our ships encountering the German High Sea Fleet if these had not precipitately retreated in the early morning. Naturally there was much indignation at the failure of the navy to prevent or at least to avenge such an attack upon our shores. What was the Admiralty doing? Were they all asleep? Furious protests arrived from the bombarded towns, and dissatisfaction was widespread. However, we could not say a word in explanation. We had to bear in silence the censures of our countrymen. We could never admit where our squadrons were or how near the Germans had been to their destruction. One comfort we had. The indications upon which we had acted had been confirmed by events. The sources of information upon which we relied were evidently trustworthy. Next time we might at least have average visibility. But would there be a next time? The German admiral must have known that he was very near the powerful British ships, but which they were or where they were or how near he was might be a mystery. Would it not also be a mystery how they came to be there? The exultation, however, of Germany at the hated English towns being actually made to feel for the first time the real lash of war might encourage a second attempt. Even the indignation of our own newspapers had a value for this purpose. One could only hope for the best. Meanwhile British naval secrets remained wrapped in impenetrable silence.

XVI.—The First Great Task Completed

Coming to the entrance of Turkey into the war, Mr. Churchill looks back over our previous relations with Turkey, and describes the doubts which existed as to the intention of Turkey and the hopes that were vainly entertained of keeping her out of the war.

Not till long after did we learn the blasting secret, which would have destroyed all doubts. Already in the crisis of July the leaders of the Young Turk party were in vital negotiation with the Germans, and on August 3 the German admiralty telegraphed to Admiral Souchon, on board the Goeben, than an alliance had been signed with Turkey, and that he was to proceed at once to Constantinople. Thus all this time we were deceived.

After describing the Turkish attack upon Russia in the Black Sea and the consequent allied ultimatum, he proceeds:—

Russia declared war on Turkey at the expiry of the ultimatum; and the British and foreign ambassadors, in company with their Russian colleague, left Constantinople on November 1—the same day on which at the other end of the world the battle of Coronel was being fought. Naval orders to commence hostilities were sent, in concert with the foreign office, in conformity with the expiry of the ultimatum.

Admiralty to all ships—

October 31, 1914.

Commence hostilities at once against Turkey. Acknowledge.

On November 1 two of our destroyers entering the Gulf of Smyrna, destroyed a large armed Turkish yacht, which was lying by the jetty carrying mines; and late that same day Admiral Carden was instructed to bombard the outer Dardanelles forts at long range on the earliest suitable occasion. This bombardment was carried out on the morning of November 3. The two British battle-cruisers, firing from a range beyond that of the Turkish guns, shelled the batteries on the European side at Seddul Bahr and Cape Helles. The French battleships fired at the Asiatic batteries at Kum Kali. About eighty rounds were fired altogether, resulting in considerable damage to the Turkish forts and in several hundred casualties to the Turks and Germans, who manned them.

Outside the Dardanelles

The reasons for this demonstration have been greatly canvassed. They were simple though not important. A British squadron had for months been waiting outside the Dardanelles. War had been declared with Turkey. It was natural that fire should be opened upon the enemy as it would be on the fronts of hostile armies. It was necessary to know accurately the effective ranges of the Turkish guns and the conditions under which the entrance to the blockaded port could be approached. It has been stated that this bombardment was an imprudent act, as it was bound to put the Turks on their guard and lead them to strengthen their defences at the Dardanelles. At the Admiralty

(we did not think it would have this effect: nor were we wrong. When, three and a half months later (February 18, 1915), Admiral Carden again bombarded these same forts, the Gallipoli Peninsula was totally unprepared for defence, and was still weakly occupied; and small parties of marines were able to make their way unopposed into the shattered forts and a considerable distance beyond them. That no harm was done can therefore be plainly proved. On the other hand valuable data was obtained.

We are now to provide against the impending Turkish attack upon Egypt.

I scraped the oceans for every available ship. Admiral Pierse and the Swiftsure reached Suez early in November and in the next few days his squadron entered the canal for the defence of Egypt. The Turkish attack proved, however, to be only of a tentative character. Finding themselves confronted with troops and ships, they withdrew into the eastern deserts, after feeble efforts, to gather further strength. Towards the end of November it was found possible to allow the Wessex Territorial division, which had been temporarily stopped in Egypt to meet the emergency, to proceed on its journey to India.

All this time the great Australasian convoy, carrying the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, "A. N. Z. A. C." had been steaming steadily towards France across the Pacific and Indian oceans. Preparations had been made if necessary to divert them to Cape Town. But before the convoy reached Colombo General Botha and General Smuts had suppressed the rebellion in South Africa. The Australians and New Zealanders, therefore, continued their voyage to Europe with little escort, since the oceans were now clear. By the middle of November their transports were entering the canal. As the Turkish invasion of Egypt was still threatening, the need of resolute and trustworthy troops in Egypt was great, and at the end of November Lord Kitchener, in the fateful unfolding of events, disembarked the whole Australian and New Zealand force at Suez for the double purpose of completing their training and defending the line of the canal.

At this point we may leave the Turkish situation for a time. The German grip on Turkey was strengthening every day. The distresses of her peoples and the improvement of her military organization were advancing together. Under the guns of the Goeben and Breslau, doubt, division, and scarcity dwelt in Constantinople. Outside the straits the British squadron maintained its silent watch. Greece, perplexed at the attitude of Britain, distracted by the quarrels of Venizelos and King Constantine, had fallen far from the high resolve of August. Serbia stoutly contended with the Austrian armies. Roumania and Bulgaria brooded on the past and watched each other with intent regard. In Egypt the training of the Australian and

New Zealand Army Corps perfected itself week by week.

World Drama

Thus, as this act in the stupendous world drama comes to its close, we see already the scene being set and the actors assembling for the next. From the uttermost ends of the earth ships and soldiers were approaching or gathering in the eastern Mediterranean in fulfilment of a destiny as yet not understood by mortal man. The clearance of the Germans from the oceans liberated the fleets: the arrival of the Anzacs in Egypt created the nucleus of the army needed to attack the heart of the Turkish empire. The deadlock on the western front, where all was now frozen into Winter trenches, afforded at once a breathing space and large possibility of further troops. While Australian battalions trampled the crisp sand of the Egyptian desert in tireless evolutions, and Commander Holbrook, in his valiant submarine, dived under the mine fields of Chanak and sank a Turkish transport in the throat of the Dardanelles, far away dockyard men were toiling night and day to erect the 15-in. guns and turrets of the Queen Elizabeth. As yet all was unconscious, inchoate, purposeless, uncombined. Any one of a score of chances might have given, might still give, an entirely different direction to the event. No plan has been made, no resolve taken. But new ideas are astir, new possibilities are coming into view, new forces are at hand, and with them there marches towards us a new peril of the first magnitude. Russia, mighty steam roller, hope of suffering France, and prostrate Belgium—Russia is failing. Her armies are grappling with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and behind their brave battlefronts already the awful signs of weakness, of deficiency, of disorganization are apparent to anxious cabinets and councils. Winter has come and locked all Russia in its grip. No contact with her allies, no help from them, is possible. The ice blocks the White Sea. The Germans hold the Baltic. The Turks have barred the Dardanelles. It needs but a cry from Russia to make vital what is now void, and to make purposeful what is now meaningless. But as yet no cry has come.

Strain on Admiralty

The reader has now followed the steady increase of strain upon Admiralty resources which marked in every theatre the months of September, October, and November. He must understand that, although for the purposes of the narrative it is necessary to deal in separate chapters with each separate set of strains and crises, the events were proceeding simultaneously in all theatres at once, and the consequent strains were cumulative and reciprocally reacting on one another, with the result that during November an extraordinary pitch of intensity was reached which could not well be prolonged and which could not possibly have been exceeded.

It is worth while to review the whole situation. First, the transport of troops and supplies to France was unceasing and vital to our army. On the top of all this came the operations on the Belgian coast, the approach of the enemy to the channel ports, and the long-drawn crisis of the great battle of Ypres-Yser. Secondly, all the enemy's cruisers were still alive, and a number of hostile armed merchantmen were free in the outer seas, each threatening an indefinite number of points and areas and requiring from five to ten times their number to search for them and protect traffic while they were at large. At the same time, the great convoys of troops from India, from Canada, from Australia, and the collection of the British regular garrisons from all parts of the world were proceeding; and no less than six separate expeditions, viz., Samoa, New Guinea, the Persian Gulf, German East Africa, the Cameroons, and German South-West Africa, were in progress and at a critical stage. Upon this was thrust the outbreak of war with Turkey and the attack upon the Suez Canal.

To meet these fierce obligations we had to draw no less than three decisive units from the Grand Fleet. This fleet, which at the outset of the war was in perfect order, was already requiring refits by rotation, with consequent reduction of available strength. Meanwhile the submarine menace had declared itself in a serious form, and was, moreover, exaggerated in our minds. Although the most vehement efforts were being made to give security to our fleets in their northern harbors, these measures took many weeks, during which anxiety was continual. Behind all stood the German fleet, aware, as we must suppose, of the strain to which we were being subject, and potentially ready to challenge the supreme decision. With the long nights of Winter, the absence of all regular troops from the country, the then inadequate training of the territorial force, and the embryonic condition of the new Kitchener armies, the fear of invasion revived and, although rejected, nevertheless required a whole series of precautionary measures. It was a formidable time. More than once the thought occurred that the

Admiralty would be forced to contract their responsibilities and abandon to their fate for a time some important interest, in order that those which were vital might be secured. It may be claimed that during these months we met every single call that was made upon us, guarded every sea, carried every expedition, brought every convoy safely in, discharged all our obligations both to the army in France and to the Belgians, and all the time maintained such a disposition of our main forces that we should never have declined battle had the enemy ventured to offer it.

Tension Relaxed

Then suddenly all over the world the tension was relaxed. One after another the German cruisers and commerce destroyers were blocked in or hunted down. The great convoys arrived. The expeditions were safely landed. Ocean after ocean became clear. The boom defences of our harbors were completed. A score of measures for coping with the submarine were set on foot. Large reinforcements of new ships of the highest quality and of every class began to join the fleet. The attack on the Suez Canal was beaten off. The rebellion in South Africa was quelled by the Boer leaders. The dangers of invasion, if such there were, diminished every day with the increasing efficiency of the Territorials and the new armies. The great battle for the channel ports ended in decisive and even glorious victory. And, finally, with the battle of the Falkland Islands, the clearance of the oceans was complete, and except in the land-locked Baltic and Black Seas and the defended area of the Heligoland Bight the German flag had ceased to fly on any vessel in any quarter of the globe.

As December passed, a sense of indescribable relief stole upon the Admiralty. We had made the great transition from peace to war without disaster, almost without mishap. All the perils which had haunted us before the war, and against which we had prepared, had been warded off or surmounted, and had never come to pass. There had been no surprise. The fleet was ready. The army had reached the decisive battlefield in the nick of time and was satisfactorily maintained. The mining danger had been overcome. We thought we had the measure of the submarine, and so indeed we had for nearly two years to come. All the enemy's plans for commerce destruction and all our alarms about them had come to nought. British and Allied commerce proceeded without hesitation throughout the world; the trade and food of Britain were secured; the war insurance dropped to 1 per cent. A feeling of profound thankfulness filled our hearts as this first Christmas of the war approached; and of absolute confidence in final victory.

The mighty enemy, with all the advantages of preparation and design, had delivered his onslaught and had everywhere been brought to a standstill. It was our turn now. The initiative had passed to the great amphibian. The time and the means were at our command. It was for us to say where we would strike and when. The strength of the Grand Fleet was, as we believed, ample; and in addition the whole of those enormous fleets which hitherto had been spread over the outer seas now formed a surplus fleet capable of intervening in the supreme struggle without in any way compromising the foundation of our naval power.

But these realizations were only permissible as the prelude to fresh and still more intense exertions. It would indeed be shameful, so it seemed at least to me, for the Admiralty to rest contented with the accomplishment of the first and most hazardous stage of its task and to relax into a supine contemplation of regained securities and dangers overcome. Now was the time to make our weight tell, perhaps decisively, but certainly most heavily, in the struggle of the armies. Now was the time to take these Germans by the throat or by the nose, "to dig the rats out of their holes," to fasten an offensive upon them unexpected and unforeseeable, to present them with a succession of surprising situations leading on from crisis to crisis and from blow to blow till their downfall was achieved.

Moreover, these same Germans were, of all the enemies in the world, the most formidable when pursuing their own plans; the most easily disconcerted when forced to conform to the plans of their antagonist. To leave a German leisure to evolve his vast, patent, accurate designs, to make his slow, thorough, infinitely far-seeing preparations was to court a terrible danger. To throw him out of his stride, to battle his studious mind, to break his self-confidence, to cow his spirit, to rupture his schemes by unexpected action, was surely the path not only of glory but of prudence.

End of First Phase

Here then ends the first phase of the naval war, and with it this volume. The first part of the British task is done both by land and sea. Paris and the channel ports are saved, and the seas are cleared. It is certain that the whole strength of the British Empire can be turned into war power and brought to bear upon the enemy. There is no chance of France being struck down before the British Empire is ready; there is no chance of the British Empire itself being paralyzed before its full force can be applied to the struggle. The supreme initiative passes from the Teutonic powers to the allies. Resources, almost measureless and of indescribable variety in ships, in men, in munitions and devices of war, will now flow month by month steadily into our hands. What shall we do with them? Strategic alternatives on the greatest scale and of the highest order present themselves to our choice. Which shall we choose? Shall we use our reinforced fleets and great new armies of 1915 either to turn the Teutonic right in the Baltic or their left in the Black Sea and Balkans? Or shall we hurl our manhood against sandbags, wire and concrete, in frontal attack upon the German fortified lines in France?

Shall we by a supreme effort make direct contact with our Russian ally or leave her in a dangerous isolation? Shall we by decisive action, in hopes of shortening the conflict, marshal and draw in the small nations in the north and in the south who now stand outside it? Or shall we plod steadily forward at what lies immediately in our front. Shall our armies trample the mud of Flanders, or shall we break new ground? Shall our fleets remain contented with the grand and solid results they have won, or shall they ward off future perils by a new inexhaustable audacity?

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