

# DISCREPANCIES OF THE NAVAL CENSOR

BY  
JAMES M. COOPER

CHIEF OF THE NAVAL CENSOR

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

1918

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INDISCRETIONS OF THE NAVAL  
CENSOR







*Photo: Histed*

REAR-ADMIRAL SIR DOUGLAS BROWNRIGG, BT.



INDISCRETIONS  
OF  
THE NAVAL CENSOR

BY  
REAR-ADMIRAL  
SIR DOUGLAS BROWNRIGG, Bt.

jd

*WITH TWELVE PLATES*

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TO THE  
ROYAL NAVY  
WHICH I HAVE LOVED FOR THIRTY-NINE YEARS



## PREFACE

I HAVE been induced by some people for whom I have a high regard, and in some cases even affection, to attempt to set down some of my recollections of the four and a half strenuous years of my service as Chief Censor at the Admiralty during the late War.

I am painfully aware that in the pages which follow there is to be found—

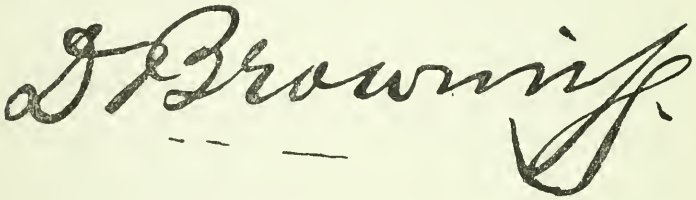
- (1) No trace of literary merit; that is a gift which but few naval officers are so fortunate as to possess.
- (2) A deplorable lack of continuity, and hence no “construction” in the trivial narrative. That is due to the fact that I never kept a diary for two reasons. Firstly, it was too dangerous to do so, and, secondly, I was too dead tired to have any inclination to write when the day’s work was done. To say that I now regret this omission is to put it very mildly.

Now that it is all over, I realise how fortunate I was to have such an interesting job, and I gratefully acknowledge the consideration I received from all the high Admiralty officers under whom I served, from many members of the Press, from authors, artists and

## Preface

photographers (both moving and still) in carrying out my duties. My reward is that I feel I have more friends among that section of the community than I had before the War, and if I may judge from the many letters I have received from them they appreciated my efforts to *help* them and realised that I never desired to *hinder* them.

I do not feel disposed to apologise for the launching of this record, as the public, unlike me, who, during my term of service, had to read any and everything that came before me in proof form, need NOT wade through the following pages.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "J. Browning". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background. Below the signature, there are two short horizontal lines, one dashed and one solid, serving as a decorative flourish or separator.

N.B.—I gratefully acknowledge valuable help kindly given me by Mr. Archibald Hurd in the final stages of preparing the book for press, and I need not assure his many admirers that he is in no way responsible for its literary style.

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# Indiscretions of the Naval Censor

## CHAPTER I

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NAVAL CENSORSHIP

Acceptance of Appointment in the Spring of 1914 —  
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Organisation at the Admiralty—The Birth of the Press  
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of the Admiralty War Staff—Captain Richard Webb and  
Commander Leverton Harris—Mr. Churchill in Bed—  
Mr. Churchill and the Dardanelles—The First Official Naval  
Photographer—Relations with Prince Louis of Batten-  
berg and Lord Fisher.

WHEN I retired from the Navy in January, 1913, I was invited to sign a paper stating whether I would volunteer for service in the event of mobilisation for war, and if so, whether afloat or ashore. I said that I would volunteer for service afloat, and thought no more about it.

I had entered the Navy in 1881 and had seen some fighting in the Soudan, had served in the Naval Intelligence Department at the Admiralty, as well as at Tokio as Naval Attaché, and had had a good deal of sea experience of one kind and another. But for family reasons I decided to retire, and I came ashore,

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thinking never again to have anything to do with the Navy. Who in 1913 had any idea of what was going so soon to happen? I will be honest. I hadn't. I was not among the prophets, and am content to belong to the small minority who had not foretold the war and all its wonders and horrors.

In the spring of 1914 I was asked, in the event of mobilisation, if I would accept the appointment of Chief Censor of Radio-Telegraphy. I answered that I was entirely at their Lordships' disposal, and in a week's time I received the appointment of Chief Censor of Radio-Telegraphy, with instructions to go to the Admiralty from time to time to make and keep myself acquainted with the progress of radio-telegraphy in the United Kingdom. I went during June and July and read the various handbooks on the subject; and when, during the middle and towards the end of July, it became increasingly evident that war might break out, I reviewed the situation in so far as it concerned my own appointment and came to the conclusion that I could not possibly do the work single-handed.

On the Friday before the outbreak of war, therefore, I telegraphed to two officers (Commander Thomas Crease and Lieutenant Cyprian Bridge), who were indirectly connected with me in the business world, and asked them to lunch with me the next day at the Naval and Military Club. They came, and I put the situation before them, after which, having looked at the books and office and considered various

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details, they agreed to act as my assistants. Then I sent them both away for the week-end and remained on duty myself. On that memorable Saturday, August 1, all our radio stations were placed under control, and messages for censorship thereafter came pouring in night and day.

There was no staff, so we assembled a body of clerks, all experts at shorthand and typewriting, drawn from the associated firms of which we had special knowledge, Messrs. Cammell Laird and the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company; and these men immediately sorted themselves out into four shifts, covering the twenty-four hours, and arranged their meal-relief and so on between themselves. They saved the situation for me, and their single-mindedness and devotion to their arduous duties fully justified me in forwarding to their two firms on August 25, 1914, the following message circulated by the First Lord of the Admiralty five days previously, to the Admiralty Staff:

ADMIRALTY, S.W.

The First Lord has directed me to express to the Admiralty Staff his great satisfaction at the excellent work done by them during the period of strain involved in the mobilisation of the Fleet for War. The First Lord considers that the manner in which all Departments have responded to the call made upon them has been admirable. This expression of appreciation is thoroughly concurred in by all the members of the Board.

It gives me much pleasure to circulate this message of commendation.

W. GRAHAM GREENE.

20th August, 1914.

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I am anticipating events, however. When Sunday dawned it was upon a day of unforgettable excitement. It was still uncertain on the following day whether we should go to war or not, though the die, as we now know, had already been cast by Germany, and, throughout the country, the great mass of the people were enjoying the beautiful August Bank Holiday. At the Admiralty the tension was such, however, that nobody who was there will ever forget it.

I was now trying to organise the proper distribution of the hundreds of messages that were flooding in from all the radio stations, at each of which I had a staff of censors, ten in all, I think. The Trade Division of the Admiralty War Staff, though still small, was in a state of rapid expansion, and it must be remembered that it was upon this division that the safety of our immense merchant service largely depended, since it was the recipient of intelligence from all parts of the world of the doings of our own shipping and the whereabouts and movements of hostile vessels. In those days it was snowed under by rumours. The Operations Division, too, was also growing swiftly, and it will be readily understood that the sifting, censoring and circulation of messages soon became a pretty stiff job.

During that Sunday, Monday, Tuesday—the day on which war was declared at midnight—Wednesday and Thursday I was working in my room for twenty-two hours a day, my scheme of rest being to go away

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about 6 P.M. to my bedroom at my club, strip and go to bed till a quarter to eight, get up, have a hot bath and shave, and so back again to the office. In the first week or so I had all my meals there.

It was on the Wednesday night about 9 o'clock that I met the Assistant Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. (now Sir) Oswyn Murray, in the passage outside my little room looking over the quadrangle off Whitehall, and he asked me if I would "take on the Press." With regard to this a Consultative Committee had some time before been set up by the Admiralty and War Office and it had done good work, supported with fine patriotism by the proprietors, editors and staffs of the principal newspapers. But actual censorship of the Press! That was another matter, requiring courtesy and tact. However, I told Mr. Murray that I would undertake it, but, at the same time, I said that I must have a quieter room, as the roar of the traffic in Whitehall made the use of a 'phone extremely difficult and very tiring, and I realised that the 'phone would be my salvation. He agreed and suggested to me that I should occupy Room 37, an offer I gladly accepted, as that room overlooked the inner quadrangle and was perfectly quiet. It turned out, however, that it was for six months or so even more noisy than the other room, as a series of galvanised iron buildings (known as "tin tabernacles") were being erected for the accommodation of the increased Admiralty staff necessitated by the War. A really infernal din raged night and day

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throughout that time. But this was not Mr. Oswyn Murray's fault, and he was most helpful and considerate on all occasions, and I could always rely on him for wise counsel in any difficulty.

The change was rapidly effected, and it was in this room that we first issued communiqués to the Press. They were limited to seven copies, distributed respectively to the four British agencies, Reuter's, Central News, Exchange Telegraph Company and Press Association, to two American agencies, and, I believe, to one Overseas Dominions agency. The number was limited to seven, partly on account of lack of accommodation in the office, and partly because the typewriter we had would not take off more than about nine legible copies, two being retained for our own reference! Our facilities in those days were very modest!

From these small beginnings sprang the Press Bureau, which was first installed under Sir F. E. Smith (now Lord Birkenhead) in an old part of the Admiralty, viz., 40, Charing Cross, where we used to supply them with matter for communiqués and public information, and whither they had taken some of my assistants, naval officers who had volunteered or been recalled for service.

The growth of the Press Bureau was not accomplished without some "pull devil, pull baker" between them and me. They wished to break away completely from all naval control, while I took the line that, though the naval side of the Bureau was



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competent to censor most material, it was not in a position to know what could be safely "passed" and what must on no account be made public. I therefore insisted that reference should in the last resort be made to me, as representing the Admiralty view and being in the closest touch with the Sea Lords and the hourly reported course of naval events. For my position at the Admiralty I was very fortunately equipped, as it so happened that I was of that sort of seniority and age as to know all the members of the Board well and many of them intimately as personal friends. It was, therefore, easy for me to establish the practice of having free access to each and all of them, and I was thus able to settle any question referred to me from the naval side of the Press Bureau by going to whichever Sea Lord was concerned, which meant absence of delay and freedom from red tape.

This applied equally to the First Lord, Mr. Winston Churchill, who, though he was extremely busy and hard worked, usually spared time to see me and settle points that I wished to put before him, and if during the day his secretaries, exercising a wise discretion, headed me off I invariably succeeded in tripping him up at 1.30 A.M. when he had finished his work and was off to bed, as he would look into my room and give me the decisions I was after.

This freedom of access to all heads of departments I enjoyed throughout the War, and I cannot but think that it accounted for whatever measure of success I

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achieved, if that is a term that can properly be used in connection with such an unpopular institution as a censorship! At all events the decisions given had ample sanction behind them. They were always carefully considered, and were invariably approached from the point of view of concealing as little as possible and allowing publication of as much news as might safely be given to a hungry Press and an anxious public.

The Directors of the Press Bureau tried on several subsequent occasions to sever the connection between the Navy Room in the Bureau—which was subsequently housed in the Royal United Service Institution—and my office, and on every occasion, and under each Home Secretary, and finally by a decision of the War Cabinet, they failed to achieve their object; and I cannot help repeating that I think it fortunate that the direct communication between the Press and the Admiralty, via the Navy Room of the Press Bureau, continued to the end.

Now let me return to the early days of the War. The stenographers whom we had borrowed from the firms already mentioned had in due course to return to their ordinary work, and so it became necessary to recruit a staff of stenographers of our own, and we were uniformly fortunate in the men that we thus gathered together. They worked (three of them) in twelve-hour shifts—10 A.M. to 10 P.M., and vice versa—twelve hours on and twenty-four off for many months, until the work became so heavy and exacting

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that a fourth man had to be taken on, thus enabling each of the clerks in rotation to get one week of day duty, i.e. from 10 A.M. to 8 P.M., and to be free that week from night duty. That is to say that, once in three weeks, each of them had what navy men call a week of "nights in." Later on we had again to add to our staff, having three men always on duty besides the usual night duty shifts. *From the day War started the office never closed night or day*—not a bad record!

At an early stage I decided that practically all secret cables and messages of all sorts ought to be sent to me, as, if I was not in possession of all facts, I could not censor intelligently. In the very early days of the War secrecy was a bit of an obsession at times, and many matters were kept so "pink"\*—secret—that many who were closely concerned did not know what was going on; and it was to get myself admitted into the sacred ring of those who received all "pinks" that I struggled, though I must say I did not meet with very serious opposition. I won my point, in fact, with considerable ease, and my work was all the easier and more satisfactory thereafter.

One branch of the work of my office was that connected with the sifting, circulating and giving of decisions on commercial messages intercepted both by the Cable Censors and the Wireless Telegraph Censors. As is well known, the Cable

\* So called from the colour of the paper on which these "secret telegrams were circulated.

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Censorship all over the world is conducted by the War Office; and in order to make communication between the Chief Censors at the War Office and Admiralty complete and to get decisions promptly, a Post Captain was appointed as Naval Adviser to the Chief Censor at the War Office. It was this officer (Captain John H. Trye) who communicated directly with me on a private 'phone from his room at the War Office to mine. Any matters that could be settled on the 'phone were done in that way, but, in addition, some seven or eight hundred typed copies of commercial cables were sent by that officer to me daily for decision or reference to other departments, or for copies to be circulated among those who were interested in the contents of the messages. For nine months I handled these messages myself, and then I got another officer, Commander the Hon. Gerald Digby, to come and take it over and do nothing else—a dull, thankless task—and I am very grateful to him for sticking to it for three and a half years.

The method of handling this business was to refer doubtful matters to various experts who were attached to Captain—now Rear-Admiral—Richard Webb, R.N., the Director of the Trade Division. This officer, of whom not much was heard by the public, was one of those who worked like a nigger for three years without a break until he got away to a battle-cruiser in the Grand Fleet. But Lloyd's and the shipping interests could give a satisfactory account

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of his work. Among other valuable traits in his character, he had the knack of attracting to him men of rare ability in the varied walks of commercial life. Among those with whom I was frequently in contact through the nature of my work were Mr. Bilborough, who dealt with all questions of insurance, and Commander F. Leverton Harris, R.N.V.R., who dealt with all questions of copper and beef and other imports. He seldom left his office before 2 A.M. He had a passion for work, and no one handled it with more rapidity and accuracy. Though I was glad to see his great ability recognised by his promotion to Assistant Minister of Blockade, it was a bitter blow to me and to all his friends and admirers that his successful policy for the restriction of enemy trade and the vigorous enforcement of the blockade should have been rewarded by his being dropped overboard at the moment when the results of his work culminated in the Germans being compelled to ask for the Armistice which finished the War. His official ruin was brought about through the machinations of a "party" which, as some newspaper wittily remarked, could take itself to Westminster in a side-car. He did fine service for the country.

Presently, when the War Trade Intelligence Department came to be set up, some of the work of sorting and sifting gradually fell to that department, but the circulation of messages containing information of use to Admiralty departments still remained in our hands.

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In fact, from the day we started down to the end, when the ether was thick with Armistice messages and no cables were coming through from Germany, our office was a distributing centre for all manner of information on every conceivable topic! That may seem curious as part of the duty of one who is supposed to have existed to suppress information.

During the Dardanelles days, for instance, we were very busy indeed. Mr. Churchill naturally took a very keen interest in the whole proceedings, and he said to me one day: "For this business I am Chief Censor, not you." The result was that I used, as I have mentioned, to see the last of him at 1.30 A.M., and I would take him the cable copies and radios that had come in during the night, properly typed out, and be by his bedside at 9.15 A.M. He presented a most extraordinary spectacle, perched up in a huge bed, with the whole of the counterpane littered with dispatch boxes, red and all colours, and a stenographer sitting at the foot—Mr. Churchill himself with an enormous Corona Corona in his mouth, a glass of warm water on the table by his side and a writing-pad on his knee! On one occasion he had a badly swollen face, and with two turns of a flannel bandage round it and a scanty lock escaping here and there, presented a truly extraordinary picture. The Corona Corona, however, was still there!

Here I would like to say that, barring one "bust up" that I had with Mr. Churchill—in September, 1914, I think—I never had anything but pleasant

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relations with him. I could not help admiring his appetite for work and his pluck in taking decisions. He was indeed a whale for work, and I dare say a little thoughtless of others, but so far as I am concerned I can say that I was sorry to say good-bye to him when he left the Admiralty, and I enjoyed serving under him. He was, of course, a master of language and had a *flair* for framing communiqués, and I still have some of his which have never seen the light and are, to my mind, masterpieces. He was also a bit of a gambler, i.e. he would hold on to a bit of bad news for a time on the chance of getting a bit of good news to publish as an offset, and I must say that it not infrequently came off! On the other hand, there were days when it did not, and then there was a sort of “Black Monday” atmosphere about—a bad “settling day” sort of look on all our faces.

After he left I always pleaded for the immediate publication of disasters, or at any rate, that they should be made known as soon as the number of casualties had been reported and the relatives informed; and this soon became more or less the established practice.

I well remember taking up to Mr. Churchill the messages reporting the failure of the attack by the fleet on the Dardanelles and how the fleet had withdrawn owing to the sinking of so many ships. He looked up at me and said: “You can’t do this sort of job without casualties; they are having scores of

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hundreds of casualties on the Western Front!" There is no doubt he badly wanted the attempt renewed on the second day, and I believe it is now admitted that it would have been successful had it been undertaken. Perhaps, in retrospect, the chief tragedy of the War was due to the lack of pluck and determination by those responsible at home; and Mr. Churchill was not among them.

It was over the Dardanelles business that an official photographer was first employed, Ernest Brooks, a most gallant and delightful little man, who had previously been round the world with the King, and had done many other jobs. This started a fresh line of work, every one of his pictures passing through my hands before being marketed or issued to the Press. Brooks remained out till the Gallipoli force was withdrawn, when he wired me asking for instructions. I put forward a suggestion that the Commanders-in-Chief in the Mediterranean and of the Grand Fleet should be consulted as to his retention, but nothing came of it and he was lost to us and was, of course, snapped up by the Army. I subsequently had to go on my hands and knees to the Minister of Information (Lord Beaverbrook) to borrow him. I have never ceased regretting our losing hold of him.

A year or so later I was authorised to communicate direct with Commanders-in-Chief and senior Naval officers on all matters concerned with my department, and had I been so authorised then we



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should, I am confident, never have lost Brooks, for the little man was liked wherever he had served, and he *never* fell foul of anybody.

That, at any rate, was the inauguration of the photographic side of my office. Every plate sent home by Brooks we turned over to the Central News photographic section, run by Mr. George Knight, M.B.E., who throughout the War handled every single photograph that we had. He in turn issued them to a rota of photographic publishing agencies, and these supplied the Press, via the Press Bureau, and the net proceeds were remitted to the Admiralty. Everybody was thus kept sweet, and I think the business gave satisfaction.

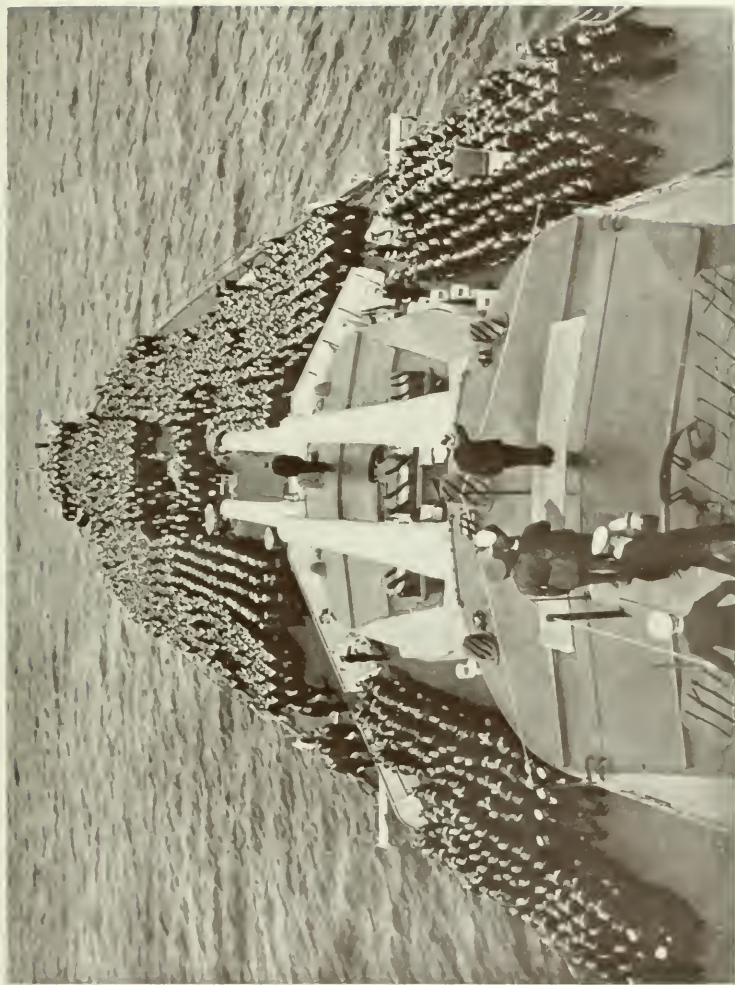
It was no slight business keeping track of all the artistic and other efforts of those who were permitted to take photographs of naval objects. Soon after the War broke out it was decided that no pictures of British ships of war should be sold by anybody, and an embargo was placed upon all the familiar books like "The Naval Annual," "Jane's Fighting Ships," the "Naval Pocket Book," the "Navy League Annual," and so on. The authorities were determined that nothing should appear which could by any chance assist the enemy. When, later on, it was decided that it was desirable to let the public have such pictures of ships and naval incidents as could not benefit the Germans, it was my task to see that they were innocuous. By that time all sorts of new "gadgets" had been introduced into the fleet about

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which we wanted the enemy to know nothing. Consequently a lot of the photographs contained dangerous matter, and they had to be manipulated. I would receive proofs and examine them, marking in some cases ships on the horizon to be omitted, and in others sighting hoods, paravanes, range-finder towers, fire control stations and other distinctive features to be taken out of them. Mr. Knight and his staff showed great ingenuity in faking these pictures, as the illustrations which are reproduced in this book show.

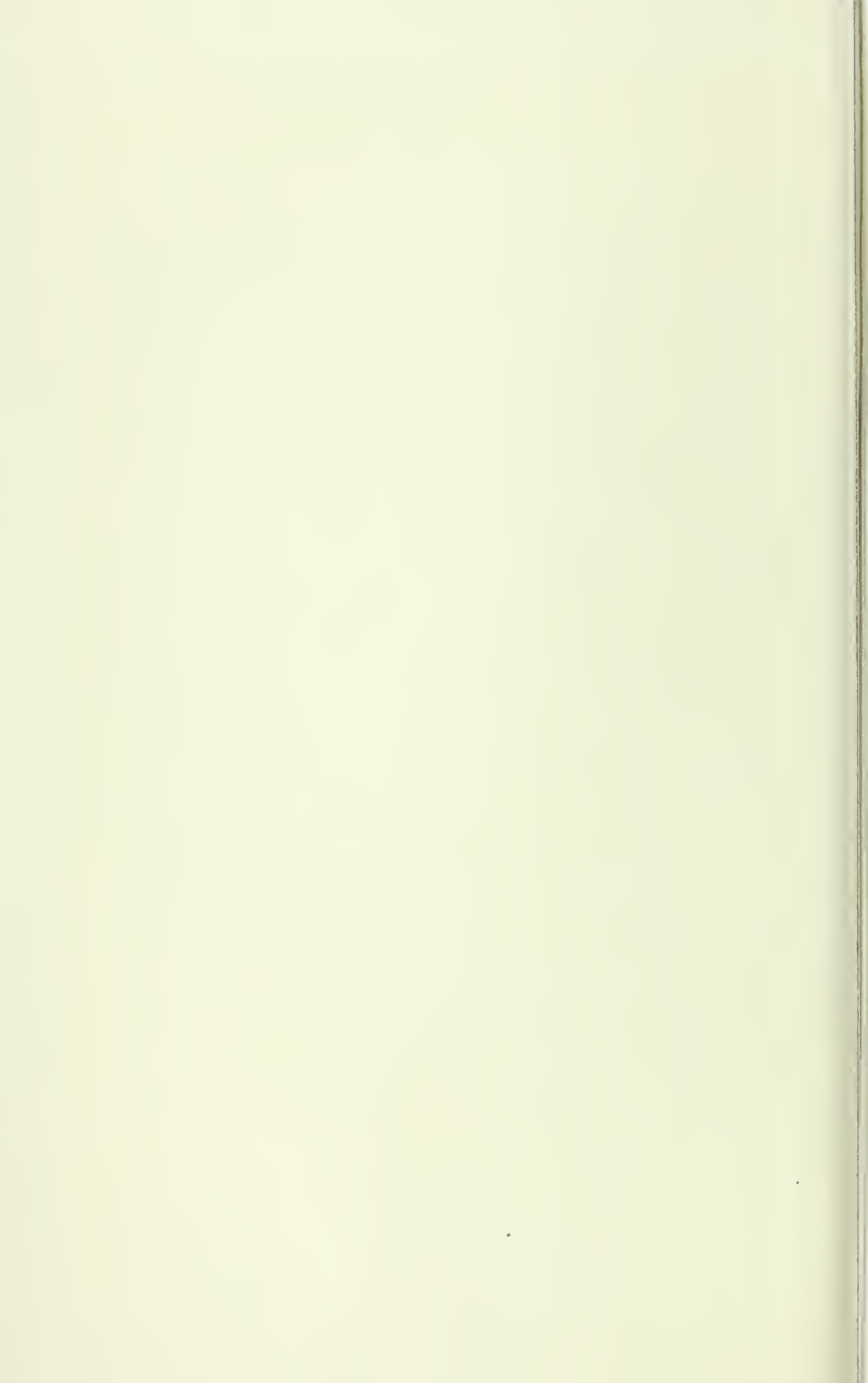
As everybody knows, when the War broke out Prince Louis of Battenberg was the First Sea Lord, and all business with him was very easily and pleasantly carried on. At that time he sat in the old Board Room, next door to which was my office, and his Naval Assistant, Captain T. P. H. Beamish, occupied the room just across the passage from us, whilst the Chief of Staff (Admiral Frederick Doveton Sturdee) and the Director of Operations (Admiral Arthur Leveson) were in some of the first floor rooms of the old Admiralty House, all close to my office. I was therefore able to obtain decisions from each and all of these officers quickly and without having to search the building for them.

At the end of October, 1914, i.e. immediately before Admiral Cradock's squadron was destroyed in action with von Spee off Coronel, Lord Fisher came back to the Admiralty as First Sea Lord and took Commander Crease, who had been working with me since the beginning of the War, as his Naval Assist-



H.M. THE KING WITH THE GRAND FLEET: THE KING SALUTING

*Showing the Censor's markings. The next plate shows how the photograph was published*





H.M. THE KING SALUTING

*The preceding photograph as censored*



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ant, while about the same time Lieutenant Bridge left to go to the Naval Division. I therefore had to look about for another assistant, and I was fortunately able to get Paymaster-Commander E. H. Shearme,\* who had been employed at the Central Telegraph Office as a censor, and had then been transferred to the Naval Room at the Press Bureau. He thus came armed with a working knowledge of both these other departments of censorship, and his help was invaluable to me down to the end of the censorship four years after, with the exception of a short interval during which he filled the post of Paymaster of Contingencies. It is impossible for me to rate the value of his assistance too highly, and I am glad to acknowledge it here.

Lord Fisher was no stranger to me. I had been his Flag Commander when he was Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth eleven years before. I knew his methods and fully appreciated that things had to move with a "snap," and that in order to keep on terms with him one had to remember the maxim, "Get on or get out."

One of the first things I had to do for him was to send long cables *en clair* and *in extenso* to President Wilson, Prince Henry of Prussia and Admiral von Tirpitz, all dealing with a request for the release of his daughter, Mrs. Neeld, and her husband, Rear-Admiral Neeld, who had been detained in Germany on the outbreak of war, where they were undergoing

\* Promoted to Paymaster-Captain in November, 1918.

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a "cure." These cables presently achieved their object—thanks, I believe, to the representations of the President of the United States.

My next clear recollection of Lord Fisher's term of office was the chronic hustle and bustle in the passages. He had placed himself in the First Sea Lord's room in the West Block, i.e. at the other end of the building from my office, and he must have often regretted it, for he had to go trapesing down that long corridor many, many times a day to get to the Chief of Staff's room and to the Map Room beyond. I felt sorry for him when, towards the end of the day, he came along in company with the First Lord, who, of course, was as fresh as paint, and seemingly never thought that his old First Sea Lord might be tired!



## CHAPTER II

### HOW THE NEWS CAME OF THE BATTLES OF CORONEL AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Admiral Cradock and the "Immortal Memory"—The Battle of Coronel—Admiral von Spee's Version—Captain Luce's Message—Lord Fisher and the Battle-Cruisers—A Suppressed Communiqué to the Press—Wanderings of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*—Necessity for Precautions in Convoying Troops—Admiral Cradock's Probable Reason for Attacking—Disposition of Forces after Coronel—Departure of Vice-Admiral Sturdee with the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*—His Final Instructions—Action off the Falkland Islands.

AFTER Rear-Admiral Cradock left the Falklands on his way to Coronel, I, at all events, heard but little more of him. We knew that he had passed through the Magellan Straits and was busy on the west coast of South America coaling where he could, steaming hard, landing on the off-chance of obtaining any news of von Spee and his ships, and very probably getting false news from many of the German settlers down in those parts.

Cable communication was poor and radio practically non-existent, so it was not surprising that we were all somewhat in the dark as to what was going on. The last definite news from him was, I think, a message saying that he would send ashore for cables at Coronel on such and such a date. This

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interested me as I had recently passed a private cable out to him from a friend in this country, which was evidently to remind him that he was to keep up what perhaps was an established habit between them, namely, to drink to the memory of Lord Nelson on October 21—the words used were: “To the immortal memory.” It was sent on its way, and I only hope that it reached him so that he may have been cheered by the knowledge of the sympathy of this friend thousands of miles away; and likely enough it was an inspiration to him as he went into action on that fateful Sunday evening.

The news of the action and its dramatic ending came to us from various sources, in little snippets, rumours from this port and the other on that far-away coast, and we were all sad and perplexed. Then came fairly precise information from our consul at Valparaiso giving von Spee’s version, upon receipt of which, the outstanding fact being seemingly no longer in doubt, the bitter story was given out to the public. The evidence on which it was based—von Spee’s message to Germany—was plainly stated.

It was not till some ten days later that we got the actual story cabled home by Captain John Luce, of H.M.S. *Glasgow*, who had taken part in the action till Cradock ordered him off, seeing that the *Glasgow* was no match for ships of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* type in ordinary fair weather, let alone the weather conditions then prevailing. Captain Luce was able to give, and did give, a clear and

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thrilling account of Cradock's last day ; of his gallant signal, " Am going to attack the enemy now " ; of his orders to the *Glasgow* to clear out, and of the flames of glory in which the old *Good Hope* sank with her fine crew and magnificent Admiral.

A few days before this news reached us Lord Fisher had succeeded Prince Louis of Battenberg as First Sea Lord, and I very well remember the sending off of the cables which ordered the two battle-cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible*—then with the Grand Fleet—to come south, and the further messages which flatly declined to listen to any reasons for delay at Plymouth—where they were preparing for their long voyage to the south—stating bluntly that, whether this or that fitting was completed or not, the ships were positively to sail on the date and at the time ordered. The workmen, if necessary, were to be taken to sea in the ships to finish their work en route to the south. Under no considerations was the departure of the ships to be delayed. On that point Lord Fisher was inflexible. The ships left as arranged, and fortunately for this country the imperious and forceful old man had his way.

This order of his had a curious sequel apart from, though incidental to, the Falkland Islands battle. The ships had to sail, taking with them some workmen and special officials belonging to Messrs. Vickers, who were employed on some of the gunnery fittings. This staff was in charge of Lionel Leveson, a brother

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of the then Director of Operations at the Admiralty, and he—a civilian—went through the Falklands battle and returned to England, having been present in a sea battle, whereas his brother, a Rear-Admiral, who had been nearly thirty-one years at sea, had never seen a shot fired in action.\*

Well I remember the excruciating anxiety of the evening (I think it was December 8) when Admiral Leveson came to my room and, calling me outside, told me of the receipt of the first of Sturdee's cables, "I am engaging German ships," and then we had to wait. Leveson and I both found we could not do any work. The excitement was too great. It must be remembered that we had had our bad times. There had been a goodish number of losses during those first four months of war. The morning on which the *Hogue*, *Aboukir* and *Cressy* were sunk was, for example, a bit of a facer. So was the day on which the tidings came of the loss of the *Audacious*; whilst the news of the fight off Coronel, though it had come in bit by bit, was pretty heartbreaking. We were in a state, therefore, of peculiar tension; but presently the blessed news came in that we had sunk all the enemy's ships but one,† and the relief was tremendous, the feeling of elation glorious. "Well, thank God," we all said, "Kit Cradock is avenged."

\* In the Battle of Jutland, later on, Rear-Admiral Arthur C. Leveson was in command of the 2nd Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet, with his flag flying in the battleship *Orion*.

† The light cruiser *Dresden* escaped, but was rounded up and sunk on March 14, 1915, near Juan Fernandez Island.

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That evening Crease and I left the old Admiralty entrance at about 8.30 to go and get some dinner. It was pouring cats and dogs and we had a taxi, and the hall porter was so elated that he jammed my middle finger in the door of the taxi as he slammed it to. I believe he will long remember what I said to him; and even though I spent the evening at White's that hall porter spoilt it (and the finger) for me!

The following communiqué to the Press was prepared by Mr. Churchill on Christmas Day and actually got as far as the Press Bureau, when my assistant (Paymaster-Commander Shearme) got peremptory orders to rescue it and stop its getting out to the Press. I believe some editors pleaded for its publication, but it died stillborn, the reason being that Lord Fisher told Mr. Churchill that if it were published he, the First Sea Lord, would resign!

It may now be given, however, and I append it:

“It is now possible to state the salient points in the operations which ended in the destruction of the German Pacific Squadron.

“The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* sailed from Shanghai on July 31, and on August 5, immediately after the declaration of war, they were reported as being near the Solomon Islands. They were subsequently reported at New Guinea on August 7, and coaling at Ponape, Caroline Islands, on August 9. After this they disappeared, and complete uncertainty as to their point of reappearance prevailed.

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Nearly six weeks later, on September 14, they were reported as having been off Samoa, which had in the meanwhile been captured by a New Zealand Expedition and was flying the British flag. All the small vessels which had carried or convoyed that expedition had dispersed, the conquered colony was adequately garrisoned and the German vessels sailed without making any attack. They were next heard of on September 22 as having bombarded Papeete and sunk the French gunboat *Zelée*. After this they were never definitely located until they touched Valparaiso after the action of Coronel on November 1.

“ During all this period the naval forces of the Allies in the Pacific and Indian Oceans were engaged primarily in the transport of large numbers of troops for the European theatre of the War, and, secondly, in a number of expeditions against German colonies and possessions, of which the reduction of Tsing-tau and the capture of Samoa and New Guinea were the most important. It was necessary in all cases to provide escorts capable of meeting the concentrated German squadron wherever it should appear.

“ In the early days of September the possibility of the enemy's squadron crossing the Pacific to the American coast or entering the Atlantic had to be taken into consideration. Their possible objectives now became very numerous, and during the month of September preparations were made by the British, Australian and Japanese navies to meet them on the west coast of North America, on the west coast

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of South America, on the east coast of South America and on the South African coast, as well as to safeguard all the convoys proceeding from Australia, India and the Far East, and to guard Chinese and Australasian waters. Large as were the naval resources at the disposal of the Allies, it was not possible to form at every point a squadron not only strong enough to fight, but fast enough to catch the enemy. Forces, each of which was capable of fighting the enemy, were, however, disposed at all points of potential contact and reached these points, or could have reached them, before it was possible for the enemy to arrive.

“ As part of this general disposition, in which the Japanese Navy took a most important share, the *Canopus* was on September 4 sent from St. Vincent to join Rear-Admiral Cradock's flag on the South American station. On October 12 Rear-Admiral Cradock telegraphed to the Admiralty that the indications showed the possibility of the *Dresden*, *Leipzig* and *Nürnberg* joining the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and that he had ordered the *Canopus* to the Falkland Islands, where he intended to concentrate and avoid division of forces; and on October 14 their Lordships approved by telegram Rear-Admiral Cradock's proposed concentration of the *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, *Canopus*, *Glasgow* and *Otranto* for combined operations. The squadron thus formed was amply strong enough to defeat the enemy if attacked by them. It was not fast enough

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to force an engagement, but, in view of the uncertainty as to which part of the world the enemy's squadron would appear in, it was not possible at that time to provide another strong fast ship at that particular point. Although the *Canopus* was an old vessel she was a battleship, and no cruiser force, least of all one which had no repairing base open to it, would have been likely to come within range of her 12-inch guns. By keeping concentrated the five ships which he had named, the Rear-Admiral would have been safe, whether at the Falklands, in the Straits of Magellan, or on the Chilean coast; and although unable immediately to bring the enemy to battle could have constantly disturbed their coaling and reprovisioning arrangements until other fast ships could have joined him. These reinforcements were, of course, available from the moment that the German squadron was definitely located on the South American coast.

“ A separate dispatch dealing with the action off Coronel had been received from the *Glasgow* and will shortly be published. No authoritative explanation of the reasons upon which Rear-Admiral Cradock acted will ever be forthcoming. Their Lordships, however, are of opinion that, having scouted up the Chilean coast with his cruisers and finding himself directly in face of the enemy, he decided to attack them with his fast ships alone, in the belief that, even if he were destroyed in the action, he would inflict damage upon them which, in the circumstances,



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would be irreparable and lead to their certain subsequent destruction. This was not an unreasonable hope, had the conditions of sea and light been favourable; and though the Admiralty have no responsibility for Admiral Cradock's decision, their Lordships consider that it was inspired by the highest devotion.

“As soon as the impending arrival of the German squadron on the Chilean coast became evident through the movements of German colliers and other indications, and news of it good enough to act on reached the Admiralty, their Lordships ordered the squadron on the south-east coast of America to reinforce Admiral Cradock's flag; but before any such concentration was possible news was received that the action of November 1 had already been fought and that the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* had been sunk. The loss of these ships left the *Glasgow*, *Otranto* and *Canopus*, which last had been left behind by Rear-Admiral Cradock about two hundred miles from the scene of the action, in a position of considerable danger. The *Canopus* received orders to proceed to the Falklands to cover that colony, which was now exposed to hostile attack, and here she remained in a position in which it would certainly not have been worth while for the enemy's squadron to molest her until the arrival of Vice-Admiral Sturdee's fleet. The *Glasgow* and *Otranto*, after escaping from the action, succeeded in making their way to a new point of concentration off the Brazilian coast

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and joining Vice-Admiral Sturdee's flag on November 11.

“The action off Coronel and the location of the German squadron off the Chilean coast required an entirely new set of dispositions. The possible objectives open to the enemy were still numerous and varied. But the strength of the British Fleet in home waters had been sensibly increased since the beginning of the War by the addition of new units of the highest power and by the withdrawal of some of the battle-cruisers from the Mediterranean, rendered possible through the complete control of that sea established by the French Navy. Five separate squadrons were therefore formed to deal with all contingencies. A powerful Japanese squadron was disposed in Australasian waters in case the enemy should attempt to return across the enormous expanse of the South Pacific. A squadron composed of Japanese, British and Australian ships concentrated off the coast of Mexico and moved down to the Galapagos Islands. A third squadron was formed in the West Indies in case the enemy should come through the Panama Canal. A fourth was formed at the Cape of Good Hope; and, fifthly, Vice-Admiral Sturdee with the battle-cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible* was dispatched from England to join Rear-Admiral Stoddart's squadron off the Brazilian coast. All these squadrons were complete by November 27. Meanwhile, the enemy was still reported as remaining off the Chilean coast, and

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appeared to be in some difficulties both with regard to coal and supplies.

“As soon as Vice-Admiral Sturdee’s fleet was concentrated he was directed to search from the Argentine coast, coal at the Falkland Islands, and then proceed round the Horn and through the Straits of Magellan searching for the enemy in conjunction with the movements of the British-Japanese-Australian squadron moving southward from the Galapagos Islands. Both the Galapagos Islands and Falklands seemed indicated as likely objectives of the enemy.

“On December 7 Vice-Admiral Sturdee, with a British squadron consisting of the *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, *Carnarvon* (flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A. P. Stoddart), *Cornwall*, *Kent*, *Glasgow*, *Bristol* and the auxiliary cruiser *Macedonia*, arrived at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, and began to coal.

“On the morning of December 8, while that operation was still in progress, a report was received from the shore signal station that the German squadron was in sight. Colliers were at once cast off, and the squadron put to sea, with the exception of the *Bristol* and *Macedonia*, who had not got steam for full speed.

“The enemy were quite unaware of the composition of the British force, and on discovering its strength endeavoured to escape to the south-eastward. A general chase took place.

“At about 2 P.M. the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, on getting within range, engaged the *Scharnhorst*

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and *Gneisenau*, while the fast light cruisers *Leipzig*, *Dresden* and *Nürnberg*, who had scattered, were pursued by the *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent* and *Glasgow*.

“After about three hours the *Scharnhorst*, who had received many hits on the waterline and was on fire, turned over and sank. The *Gneisenau* continued the action until she was little more than a wreck, her two foremost funnels gone, the unarmoured parts of all decks blown away, and her battery guns disabled. Shots had also penetrated into her engine and boiler rooms through the armoured deck, and her fires were out. At about 7 P.M., two hours after the sinking of the *Scharnhorst*, she foundered.

“While this action with the heavy ships was in progress the *Glasgow* had overhauled and engaged the *Leipzig* and before long managed so far to reduce her speed as to allow the *Cornwall* to come up and join in the action. The *Leipzig* was set on fire and sank shortly afterwards.

“The *Kent*, meanwhile, chased and eventually sank the *Nürnberg*, but owing to her wireless having been disabled by a lucky shot, was unable to report the fact until the next day.

“The *Carnarvon*, finding that the enemy's light cruisers had the speed of her, returned to assist in the final stages of the heavy ships' action.

“The *Dresden*, who started well ahead of the German squadron, continued to increase her distance, and finally made good her escape and is still at large.

“The *Bristol* and *Macedonia*, having raised steam

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with all speed, proceeded to sea about an hour after the rest of the squadron, and were ordered to deal with the enemy's colliers. They sighted two, which they captured and sank.

“ Every effort not incompatible with the prosecution of the action was made by the British vessels to save life. About two hundred officers and men were rescued from the *Gneisenau*, and about twenty-five from the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig*.”

That is the story as the First Lord would have had it told to the public. Nothing can rob Lord Fisher of the credit of having engineered that victory, nor Sir Frederick Sturdee of the glory of having won the only *complete* victory we had during the whole War, and the only victory of annihilation in modern history, unless we except the Nile.

## CHAPTER III

### PROBLEMS OF PUBLICITY AND PROPAGANDA

The Loss of the Battleship *Audacious*—Long Hours during the Dardanelles Campaign—The Harwich Cure for Bronchitis—Good-bye to Mr. Churchill—Mr. Balfour as First Lord—The Proposal for a Naval Film—Mr. Balfour at the Alhambra without the Ballet—Fate of the Film in America—Sir Henry Jackson as First Sea Lord—His Dislike for Publicity shared by the Navy generally—Mr. Balfour and Air-raids—Pros and cons as to the Publication of Merchant Shipping Losses—Co-operation of Lloyd's and *Lloyd's Register*—Threat of a Libel Action—Sir Graham Greene to the Rescue—The Zeppelin Raid of April 1.

SHORTLY after the Battle of the Falkland Islands the House of Commons was going to adjourn till mid-January, and Mr. Churchill made up his mind to go down to the House and make a statement as to the loss of the battleship *Audacious* which—though the nation generally knew nothing about it—had been sunk in a German minefield off the north coast of Ireland on October 27, 1914. But just as he was about to go out of the Admiralty door he was tackled by Lord Fisher, who cajoled and threatened and browbeat him to such an extent that he (the First Lord) allowed himself to be turned away from his intended course, and he remained silent on this point; and at no subsequent date could I induce anybody to agree with me that we might as well let the matter out

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since it was *un secret de Polichinelle*, and, even if we were abused for a day or so in the Press, things happened so fast that the incident would soon be forgotten.

There is no doubt that the continued suppression of the loss of that ship cost us the confidence of the public both here and abroad, and gave the Germans a useful bit of propaganda to use against us, and confidence in our truth-telling capacity was not wholly restored until the Jutland battle. I would not have it thought that I did not agree with the suppression of the news for about a couple of months, and indeed I am confident that the German Naval Staff must have been considerably puzzled as to the actual truth, as I have in my possession now a copy of a New York paper giving a "block" picture of the *Audacious* as she appeared when she *rejoined* the Grand Fleet, and describing in detail the work done on the vessel during the time she was in dock in Belfast, when day and night shifts were, it was stated, working on her.

The story was so circumstantial as to convince anybody of its truth, and I think that the German Naval Staff must have been very hard put to it to decide whether the ship was sunk or whether or not she had been actually raised. But I think, on the whole, that we should have gained if the First Lord had carried out his intention and given the public the facts on the adjournment of Parliament, December, 1914; and I believe the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet would have agreed, for he had suggested sup-

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pression only until the conditions existing at the period of the disaster had ceased to operate.\*

It was not without some enjoyment that I got my way, a day or two after the Armistice was signed, and I had my tongue in my cheek as I drew up the Admiralty communiqué announcing the vessel's loss some four years before!

The Dardanelles business, to which I have already referred, and the long hours of work that it gave me (I used to get home to Savile Row at about 1.45 to 2 A.M. and leave again at 8.30 A.M.) eventually led to my getting a bad attack of bronchitis and asthma in the spring, and the kindness of the Assistant Secretary in offering me a room in the Admiralty,

\* "I wired to the Admiralty suggesting that the loss of the *Audacious* should be kept secret as long as possible, so that the enemy should not learn of it, as the fact would afford him encouragement at a time when the military situation was extremely critical for the Allies, and also because, as a general policy, it was desirable to conceal from the enemy any serious losses of which he could otherwise have no immediate knowledge. This procedure was approved for the time, because of the military situation, and the *Olympic* was kept at Lough Swilly for several days. This was necessary as she had on board a considerable number of United States passengers, and it was known that they had taken photographs of the *Audacious* in a sinking condition. . . . The Grand Fleet was considerably weakened at this time, apart from the loss of the *Audacious*. The *Ajax* had developed condenser defects; the *Iron Duke* had similar troubles; the *Orion* had to be sent to Greenock for examination of the turbine supports, which appeared to be defective; the *Conqueror* was at Devonport refitting, and the *New Zealand* was in dock at Cromarty. The *Erin* and *Agincourt*, having been newly commissioned could not yet be regarded as efficient, so that the Dreadnought Fleet only consisted of 17 effective battleships and 5 battle-cruisers; the German Dreadnought Fleet at the time comprised 15 battleships and 4 battle-cruisers, with the *Blücher* in addition. The margin of superiority was, therefore, unpleasantly small in view of the fact that the High Sea Fleet possessed 88 destroyers and the Grand Fleet only 42."—"The Grand Fleet, 1914-16: Its Creation, Development and Work," by Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa, pp. 152-153.)



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so as to avoid having to go out at night, will always be remembered by me. It was then, after having tried every known and some unknown remedies, that I bolted to Harwich and put myself in the care of Commodore George Cayley. I was cured by the sun and wind in a week, and I formed the habit—which I stuck to right through the War, until Admiral Cayley, as he became, left the Harwich Command—of flying off to Harwich whenever my chest became troublesome or I began to lose the habit of sleep, as sometimes occurred after protracted bouts of heavy days and weeks.

The Dardanelles and one or two bombardments of the coast towns are the landmarks of 1915, and I suppose it was the former that led to the change of First Lord and First Sea Lord in May of that year. Certainly Mr. Churchill's departure from the Admiralty, which he undoubtedly felt very acutely, was extraordinarily dignified and won him a great deal of sympathy, even amongst those over whom he had at times ridden rough-shod. He personally interviewed all Heads of Departments and had a talk with each of us, and when I got back to my room—it was on May 22—I wrote down what he had said to me, and give it here :

“ I want to thank you for all you have done for me. I have been surprised, as we did not, I think, like one another at the start; but I have been immensely struck by the way you have done your work, which has been extraordinarily difficult. You

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have displayed extraordinary tact, shrewdness, and a wide judgment and a broad outlook, and I want to thank you for the wonderfully loyal way you have protected my interests and those of the Service."

To this I replied: "I suppose you will get some other job soon," and he answered, "Oh yes! I shall turn up again shortly, I expect." I did not see the First Sea Lord, my old chief, to say good-bye to him, which is not surprising, as he was living through somewhat hectic times just then.

With Mr. Balfour's arrival the hours of work relaxed a bit—and it was as well they did! There had been a very considerable amount of sickness among the Admiralty staff, whose numbers had been increased, I believe, from 1,400 to 3,500, while passages (and therefore ventilation) had been encroached upon by building semi-permanent erections for their accommodation, all existing rooms being in addition much overcrowded. In fact, it was said, and with truth, that had the Admiralty been a factory the conditions of housing, i.e. room space, would not have been tolerated for a moment by the most lenient factory inspector.

One of the first results to me of Mr. Balfour's term of office was that, as he did not usually return after dinner, unless there was something very special going on with the Fleet or an air-raid was in progress, I was able to take a longer interval for dinner, if I thought fit, though it was not until another year had elapsed that I got into the habit of taking turns of

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after-dinner duty, and not till the fourth year of the War was ended that I dropped the after-dinner work altogether.

Mr. Balfour also caused an order to be issued that everybody, including Heads of Departments, was to have one day per week off and to have fourteen days' leave, or two lots of seven days, during the summer. This was a merey for all of us, though it was really the first thing, perhaps, that brought home to all hands that the War had, so to speak, come to stay!

It was in the year 1915 that pressure was put on the Admiralty by the Foreign Office, whose newly-formed Department of Information was tentatively trying to start some propaganda, to produce a naval film, which should be shown together with a military film, depicting the various phases of naval training and so on, under the title of "Britain Prepared," and Mr. Balfour succeeded in overcoming the rooted objection of the Grand Fleet to this (or any other) form of publicity.

Once Sir John Jellicoe had accepted the proposal, he threw himself into it heart and soul, with the result that a magnificent film was produced under the direction of Mr. Charles Urban. The time of year was rather far advanced, and consequently we had some very fine rough weather effects which have never since been equalled. The film was presently run off at the Alhambra Theatre before a distinguished company, which included Mr. Balfour and Sir Robert Borden. I imagine that nobody who

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witnessed that scene will ever forget it. Mr. Balfour walked on to the vast stage of the Alhambra, which was flanked by a few flowers in pots, and after the roar of applause had subsided, and looking about him with a quizzical look, started his speech by saying, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I find myself in somewhat unaccustomed surroundings." He appeared to be a little at a loss in the absence of the ballet which did not exist!

The film was a success, but owing to some misunderstanding it fell, I believe, into the hands of persons in the United States other than those who were solely imbued with pro-Ally sentiments. In fact, it was shown in many places under the title of "*How Britain Prepared*," and the pro-Germans used it as propaganda against *us*.

The arrangement come to between the Admiralty and Mr. Masterman's Committee—a Committee at the Department of Information responsible for propaganda\*—was that we should share the net profits in certain clearly defined proportions. Some eighteen months afterwards, however, an ultra-clever custodian of the public purse came along and said that he wanted *all* the profits. I pointed out that we had a perfectly clear agreement with those who had begged us to have the film made, but all

\* The existence of this committee was unknown to the general public as it was thought that the less publicity which attached to its operations at home and in Allied and neutral countries, the better. I think the reasoning was sound, but it was afterwards the subject of debate in the House of Commons.

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the answer I could ever get was that those with whom we had made the agreement had no business to make it; and the Treasury was anxious to fob the lot, to the injury of the naval charities.\*

That was our first venture in the realm of films, though we subsequently became fairly active in this line, the whole of which was run by my department. But I shall refer to that presently.

When Mr. Balfour came, the new First Sea Lord, Sir Henry Jackson, arrived. He treated me as his predecessors had done, i.e. with the greatest consideration. I had one or two amusing interludes even with Sir Henry. Several American journalists urged me to obtain an interview for them, and I said that I would see what I could manage. I therefore started to lay siege to whatever weakness in this line Sir Henry might possess; and here I may say that I never would, or did, put forward a suggestion for an interview without the clear conviction, amounting to a certainty, that it would be of direct benefit to the country and the Navy.

The First Sea Lord's Naval Assistant, Commodore Allan Everett, an old and intimate friend of mine, merely smiled and looked down his nose and went on with his work when I told him what I proposed to say to his "Master," the First Sea Lord. So I sailed in, and after a certain amount of preliminary talk I gradually *suggested* what I had been

\* After this was written, the Treasury relented, if the Treasury ever relents, and the naval charities got their money after all.

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approached about by my American pressmen. Sir Henry was quite patient and calm and certainly did not refuse me flatly, as I had fully expected, and on emerging again into the Naval Assistant's office and being jovially asked how I fared, I said that I thought I had carried the first-line trenches! This remark, however, was greeted with derision by Commodore Everett and Commander Sinclair, who were with him, and I ought, perhaps, to add that I tried on several subsequent occasions to carry the second-line trenches, but failed dismally, though I must also confess that Sir Henry never actually "bit" me, as his cheery assistants assured me that he would!

When the necessity for publicity was much to the front and I had to put before Sir Henry Jackson the papers concerning the taking of the film, "Britain Prepared," he read them through carefully, signed the order to the Grand Fleet, and then said to me: "Take it away. I don't agree with any of it, though I have signed it!"

The attitude of the Navy towards publicity was very slow to change, and I think I can say to-day with a perfectly clear mind, that though the officers of the Navy may grudgingly agree that some measure of publicity is an absolute necessity, since the Fleet belongs to the nation (i.e. the public) and not to the Navy, they thoroughly detest it. The lower deck, perhaps, regards the matter somewhat more jocularly.

During the air-raids in the summer of 1915 Mr. Balfour used to get on top of the Admiralty Arch

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and watch the proceedings from that position. It was from there that he saw the big fire in the City, when the bombs were dropped in Wood Street and its surroundings, and we all waited up there for the reported return of the Zeppelins, which, however, did not reappear that particular night.

This was a lovely summer night, and I remarked at the time that we should probably tire of climbing up on the Arch, or else the colder nights would keep us from going up there. As a matter of fact, both these reasons, and the additional one of keeping out of the way of falling pieces of shrapnel and dud shells, kept us in our offices during most subsequent raids. It was certainly an odd sight to see the hundreds of clerks going down to the basements when the "Muffin Bell" rang as a signal that the Zepps were nearing the London area. Fortunately most of these raids took place at night, when there were no women clerks about; but on the occasions when daylight raids were going on I frankly detested the thought of what might happen if a bomb were to drop on the building when it was half full of young women.

A raid took place one morning about 11.30, when one very high-flying aeroplane dropped five bombs which just missed Buckingham Palace. Being in the Private Office, I said to the First Lord's Private Secretary, Mr. Masterton-Smith,\* "What is that? Is it a salute of any sort? Whose birthday is it?" And Mr. Masterton-Smith laughingly said, "Oh

\* Now Sir James E. Masterton-Smith.

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no! I expect it is the Germans bombing London.”

We both laughed and thought no more about it till, but half an hour afterwards, we heard that bombs had actually been dropped at the back of the Victoria Palace Music Hall, in Eaton Square, Chesham Place, and Brompton Road, falling along a straight line which missed Buckingham Palace by two or three hundred yards. I have little doubt that the bombs were *intended* for the Palace.

The question of the publication of the losses of merchant ships through enemy action was one which was repeatedly and hotly discussed in the Press and in Parliament all through the War, and I always took the view that the publication of this news merely gave the Germans definite information which they could never be sure of getting by any other means. They could never, for instance, know what particular ships were sunk by mines as distinct from submarines, and their submarine commanders, attacking at night, must often have been in doubt as to the name of the ship torpedoed as well as sometimes of its ultimate fate, for a good many managed to reach port damaged but afloat. In many cases they did not know what ships had been sunk by certain submarines which never returned home, but that did not prevent them from issuing lying figures. Our shipping community, on the other hand, knew what ships had gone, since the owners and Lloyd's were always informed. The owners, of course, informed



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shippers and insurers of cargo, so that repeat orders could be placed for cargoes lost and insurance "ramps" could not very well be worked.

Different views were held, however, by all sorts of people, and in the end a compromise was effected whereby we published the numbers of ships lost per week. After nearly two years of this a fresh agitation produced an alteration in the form of publication, and the amount of tonnage lost was published, the number of ships being withheld. This, in its turn, produced a fresh chorus of indignation, and the number of ships lost was clamantly asked for. The amended form, however, held the field till the Armistice was signed, when the cessation of sinkings put an end to the controversy. All manner of publications, such as *Lloyd's Register*, and every book of reference dealing with mercantile tonnage were either stopped or their circulation enormously restricted.

There had been a considerable outcry from France concerning the lack of precaution in this country against the leakage of news of sinkings, &c., so the circulation of *Lloyd's Register* was suspended as regarded France, as one possible channel of leakage, until there came a violent protest to the effect that the French Admirals could not do without it! So they had perforce to have it. Presently we so restricted the information put into *Lloyd's Register* that it no longer retained its unbroken record of reliable figures, and it was with a very light

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heart that, on the signing of the Armistice, I sent out letters saying that they could revert to their pre-war practice. I would, if I did not feel utterly impenitent, apologise for having so harried the shipping authorities, but I believe they agreed with me that every step taken was intended to hamper the enemy and to safeguard our shipping. At all events the officials and staff of *Lloyd's Register*, as well as Lloyd's, co-operated with us most loyally throughout the War and were really helpful, and I was glad to see this recognised in the knighthood conferred on the Secretary of Lloyd's, Admiral E. F. Inglefield, at the New Year.

We had to worry equally all people responsible for the railway time tables that showed cross-Channel connections—Cook's, Bradshaw's, Cassell's, the A B C, and those responsible for many other such publications. They all came under our ban in regard to advertising times of cross-Channel sailings, and this must have been a nuisance to the public and a worry to the railway officials. We of course knew this, and every step taken by us was in consequence very carefully reasoned out. The convenience of the public was borne in mind, but still more so the safety of the ships, and it says much for the care taken by all and sundry that no cross-Channel craft was lost until late in 1918, when the *Leinster* was sunk in daylight in the Irish Channel.

Some time during 1915 I was travelling north and happened to find myself in company with Mr.

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Blackwood, the publisher. On this occasion I had the good fortune to be introduced to him by a fellow-passenger. I had had recently to go through a manuscript which Blackwood's had sent in giving an interesting account of some operations on the west coast of Africa. Some small excisions had been made, and Mr. Blackwood asked me if I were a fervent admirer of Mr. Lloyd George.

I said that I was at all events opposed to him in politics, when I had any time in which to think about them, and then I asked why he was interested in my feelings towards Mr. Lloyd George. "Oh," said he, "I noticed you cut out a paragraph in which the writer said he had 'rope's-ended' a West Coast negro called Lloyd George." The reason I had cut it out was because rope's-ending is not a *legal* punishment in the Navy, and I did not want to have a lot of questions asked in the House. "Oh, now I understand," said Mr. Blackwood, to which I added, "I suppose you thought it was merely due to the stupidity of the Censor, eh?" And he had the grace to laugh, thus admitting the soft impeachment!

It was during this year that I got involved with one of the leading London dailies in a slight discussion which became somewhat acrid and culminated in the paper in question informing me that they would proceed against me for libel. That was a bit stiff, so I journeyed down the passage to where the imperturbable Secretary of the Admiralty (Sir

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Graham Greene) lived, and gave him the papers to read through. He went through them, and then, glancing up at me with his tired but charming smile, said, "That will be all right, Brownrigg. Leave it to me," and in answer to my question as to sending a reply he said, "No, don't send any answer; I will look after that."

I had got myself into this difficulty, and had not troubled him with it till I was near getting into deep water, when without a word, to my intense relief, he shouldered the whole business. I never heard any more of the matter. I merely mention the incident to show the type of man Sir Graham Greene is. He was a loyal friend, and though at times he was maddening when communiqués had to be submitted to him for signature and he would spend what seemed to me a terribly long time going through them, yet I dare say I was maddening to him with my impatience!

On the morning of April 1, 1916, I was early in my office and read the messages describing the bringing down of a Zeppelin in the Thames during the early hours of that morning. Knowing that Mr. Balfour would be keenly interested, I rang up his Private Secretary, Masterton-Smith, and gave him the news, suggesting that he should call in at Carlton House Terrace and tell Mr. Balfour. Masterton-Smith got me to repeat the message carefully, and said he would inform Mr. Balfour. I then, as usual, passed the news on to Buckingham Palace and certain

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Government Departments concerned, and thought no more about it beyond preparing a communiqué for the Press, so that it might be ready for approval and signature as soon as I could get the First Lord's and First Sea Lord's signatures. Shortly after eleven o'clock, however, Masterton-Smith came running along and admitted that he had not told Mr. Balfour, as, being the first of April, he thought that it was a hoax!

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

First News through the German Wireless—Inland Messages from Officers and Men to their Relatives—Necessity for Official Statement—Commander-in-Chief Approached—Issue of the First Communiqué and the Criticisms provoked by it—Issue of the Second Communiqué—Leakage of Information through the Publication of Private Letters—First Appreciation of the Battle written by Sir Julien Corbett—Editing the Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch—Its Publication and Reception—Self-constituted Naval Critics—Mr. Rudyard Kipling asked to write of the Destroyer Actions—Grumbles in the Navy.

THE outstanding naval event in 1916 was, of course, the Battle of Jutland. Our first news that there had been a battle was the German Wireless message that announced to the world that "a portion" of their High Sea Fleet had met our Grand Fleet in full force and had defeated it. Presently we got various single "intercepts" between Sir David Beatty and the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet referring to losses of various ships. The damaged ships began to come into East Coast ports with many hospital cases on board. Of course, wild rumours were flying about all over the country, since officers and men were wiring to their friends saying that they were all right. There was normally no censorship of inland messages, but on this occasion messages of the nature indicated were held up for inquiry before being sent on. It



WITH THE BRITISH NAVY IN WAR-TIME: EVENING IN THE NORTH SEA

*Permission to publish this photograph was refused, as it showed a number of modern men-of-war*





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was at once decided, however, that the number—about 6,000—being so enormous, it was out of the question to hold them up. In addition a great many people in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh had learnt that a battle had been fought at sea.

We were thus faced with the situation that it was known all over the country that there had been a great naval battle, whilst we at the Admiralty were, officially, in ignorance of what had actually occurred. In these circumstances, whilst fully appreciating the preoccupations of the Commander-in-Chief, it was decided to ask him for a statement for publication. In reply we received a message at 3.30 P.M. on June 2 from the Commander-in-Chief giving brief details which he had received from Sir David Beatty stating what ships had been sunk and giving extracts from reports by Senior Naval Officers of various flotillas indicating their losses. The message added a few words as to damage apparently inflicted on the German battleships by our Battle Fleet, which had been only “a short time in action.”

On that bare information it was decided that it was necessary to make an announcement to the Press, since it was obviously impossible to maintain further silence in view of the conditions to which I have referred.

The first communiqué was therefore issued to the Press at 7 P.M. on June 2, and it has been very much criticised from various points of view. Its wording was not arrived at without intense care and thought

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and discussion, and those who framed it were Mr. Balfour (the First Lord), Admiral Sir Henry Jackson (the First Sea Lord), and Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Oliver (the Chief of Staff). It cannot be suggested by anybody that more *brains* could have been got together in any Government Department or, for that matter, in any other building in London. On the other hand, it might be said that they lacked "imagination." I question, however, whether "imagination" would have been of much service on this occasion, since to give rein to "imagination" at that particular time was apt to land one in a very dismal frame of mind.

This was the communiqué as issued to the newspapers :

June 2, 7 P.M. On the afternoon of Wednesday, May 31, a naval engagement took place off the coast of Jutland.

The British ships on which the brunt of the fighting fell were the Battle-Cruiser Fleet and some cruisers and light cruisers, supported by four fast battleships. Among these the losses were heavy.

The German Battle Fleet, aided by low visibility, avoided prolonged action with our main forces, and soon after these appeared on the scene the enemy returned to port, though not before receiving severe damage from our battleships.

The battle-cruisers *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable*, *Invincible*, and the cruisers *Defence* and *Black Prince* were sunk.

The *Warrior* was disabled, and after being towed for some time had to be abandoned by her crew.

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It is also known that the destroyers *Tipperary*, *Turbulent*, *Fortune*, *Sparrowhawk*, and *Ardent* were lost, and six others are not yet accounted for.

No British battleships or light cruisers were sunk. The enemy's losses were serious.

At least one battle-cruiser was destroyed, and one severely damaged ; one battleship reported sunk by our destroyers during a night attack ; two light cruisers were disabled, and probably sunk.

The exact number of enemy destroyers disposed of during the action cannot be ascertained with any certainty, but it must have been large.

I have heard from many men and women all over the world that this communiqué came as a frightful staggerer, especially to friends of this country in neutral States where German propaganda was going strong, and no doubt our exiled compatriots suffered mentally very acutely.

None the less I still think, at this distance of time, that the only proper course was pursued and the only possible version given to the public from the facts as they were then known at the Admiralty. The only source of information was Sir John Jellicoe, the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, and it was not until he had got his ships back to their bases that he was aware what losses we had sustained and inflicted. As he has explained, the battle having taken place on May 31, he himself was not aware even of the loss of the *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable* until the following day. He remained at sea, hoping to find the enemy again, until the morn-

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ing of June 1. It was not until later, when he had received the reports of the other admirals—there were nine of them—and of the senior officers of the destroyer flotillas that he knew exactly what had happened, and all these reports had to be carefully read, fact being sifted from surmise, and then co-related one to the other.

It has been said that we should have waited till we had fuller news before making any announcement at all, but I cannot agree with that argument for the reason that, as I have said before, our ports were full of damaged ships and the hospitals were full of wounded men, *and* the Germans had got away with their fairly complete story of the battle through their wireless to every country in the world except these islands. As it was, some American papers, in fact, on the German statement assumed that the Grand Fleet had been defeated, and that kind of thing did not do us any good.

Somewhere about 11.15 P.M., June 2, we got a somewhat fuller account from the Commander-in-Chief, setting out in detail the damage done to the German Fleet, and at 1.15 A.M. on the 3rd the second communiqué was put out, which somewhat eased the situation :

June 3, 1.5 A.M. Since the foregoing communiqué a further report has been received from the Commander-in-Chief, Grand Fleet, stating that it is now ascertained that our total losses in destroyers amount to eight boats in all.

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The Commander-in-Chief also reports that it is now possible to form a closer estimate of the losses and damage sustained by the enemy fleet.

One Dreadnought battleship of the "Kaiser" class was blown up in an attack by British destroyers, and another Dreadnought battleship of the "Kaiser" class is believed to have been sunk by gunfire.

Of three German battle-cruisers—two of which it is believed were the *Derfflinger* and the *Lutzow*—one was blown up, another was heavily engaged by our Battle Fleet, and was seen to be disabled and stopping, and the third was observed to be seriously damaged.

One German light cruiser and six German destroyers were sunk, and at least two more German light cruisers were seen to be disabled.

Further repeated hits were observed on three other German battleships that were engaged.

Finally, a German submarine was rammed and sunk.

Whatever be the rights or wrongs of the first Admiralty communiqué, it had this effect all the world over—our reputation for telling the truth was re-established, and, from that time onward, I believe it fair to say that what appeared in our communiqués was accepted as fact, whereas the Germans suffered irretrievably by their original lying and vainglorious communiqué, which they were compelled to alter in the course of two or three days. Only very gradually did they admit their losses, whereas we did so at once.

It occurred to me soon after the second communiqué had been issued that it could do nothing but good to obtain the late First Lord's

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(Mr. Churchill's) views on the battle, as he, having become a somewhat keen critic of the Admiralty, might be expected to give an unbiased opinion on it, particularly for consumption in neutral countries. I personally approached him on the 'phone, and, when he came in, I urged and begged him to undertake the job for us, and at last he consented, his statement appearing in the Sunday papers. I never made a greater mistake in my life (and that is saying a good deal), for the whole Press let off a scream asking why the Admiralty had given the ex-Minister opportunities of examining all the material denied to everybody else, and they attacked him for having had the temerity to give his views! I apologised to Mr. Churchill very sincerely for having brought down all this abuse on his head, but he took it with characteristic sang-froid, and I believe he thinks, as I do still, that it was a good move. Nevertheless, I was bitterly sorry that I had added to the abuse that was being at that time showered on the Admiralty, for which I was unable, publicly, to shoulder the responsibility.

Subject to the very minimum of restriction, all censorship was taken off regarding this battle, as it was felt that the public should have any and every personal detail, such as would have been published in regard to an epochal event in time of peace. That concession produced a fine crop of criticism, not to say abuse, from my many friends in the Grand Fleet, who were by no means enamoured of "publicity."

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It also proved very inconvenient to us, as certain items of information—I refer principally to the cause of the sinking of the *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable* and one or two others by the bursting of their magazines through one projectile going through the turret-hood, and the blast from the explosion getting down the ammunition up-takes—got out in letters published by relatives of the men, and, when they were seen by the Grand Fleet, strong protests were made by the Commander-in-Chief.

As soon as the protests reached us, we had to stop all mention of these facts, with the result that infuriated editors and writers bombarded me with requests to know why such and such a paper had been allowed to print so and so, whereas now they were forbidden to do so? My invariable reply was: “Because we made a ‘bloomer’ in that case, we are not going to permit its repetition.” And with that they had to be content. Other criticisms came officially and unofficially from the Grand Fleet. “Was there a censor at all, and if so what did he do?” “We should be better without one, &c. &c.” So far as I personally was concerned, I was in cordial agreement with the last remark.

When there was sufficient material in the Admiralty to render it possible for an appreciation of the battle to be written, I obtained the necessary sanction, and pressed Mr. (now Sir) Julian Corbett to write it for me, and this he did while we, so to speak, stood over him waiting for him to deliver

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the goods. I commandeered a room, turned out its disgruntled occupant, and shut Sir Julian up with all the information available, some paper and pens—and waited. The appreciation was produced in six or eight hours, I think, and very grateful we were for it, for it was a work of art, and as true and impartial a record as one could ever get. Alas! it had to run the gauntlet of approval of various people, and it did not eventually reach the Press until three or four days after it had been written!

The next problem was the editing of the Commander-in-Chief's dispatch for publication. It was difficult to reconcile the desire to give the public a true and authentic account, with the imperative necessity of not disclosing to the enemy any information of which he was not already in possession. This difficulty was acutely raised by the mention by name of many new destroyers, none of which was known to the enemy. It was settled by compromise, the names of those vessels specially distinguished by their gallant actions *were* named, and others left out.

Then came the question of issuing a chart of the battle. I urged upon the Board the necessity of doing so, saying that, if we issued one, we could prevent any other chart being made and quoted in support of this or that line of criticism. I put my views before both Sir John Jellicoe and Sir David Beatty on their different visits to the Admiralty, and eventually the chart was compiled and agreed to by all parties, and published with the dispatch.



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It then became a job to get the hundreds of copies of the chart ready for issue simultaneously with the dispatch, and this was done through the Press Bureau. I may say that on this and other occasions they got similar work done very promptly through the photographic trade.

When at last the dispatch was finally edited and sent to press and issued, together with its chart, I believe I knew every word of it by heart, so many times had I been through it. However, to make assurance doubly sure we *indexed* it. Every ship's name, every officer's name, and every detail to which we might ever wish to refer, or by which we could check other statements, was indexed, and it was well that we did so. This index proved invaluable to us. This "concordance," if I may so call it, is now in the archives with all the various stages of the dispatch. I then discovered that I had lost my sleep, and so fled to Harwich for seventy-two hours' rest.

The newspapers of the country generally received the dispatch much as might have been expected. They were puzzled, sore, and for the most part anxious to do what was best for the country; but, in the War, events moved so rapidly, and one crisis followed another so swiftly, that it soon ceased to be much discussed, except among certain writers, who by the volume of output of words, have become self-constituted "Naval critics." My one object in dealing with all writings emanating from this class of critic was to avoid the driving of a wedge between

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any two schools of thought in the Navy, or of letting it be thought outside that such a cleavage was possibly in existence, or in process of formation or growth. The object of certain of these writers was obviously to drive the wedge in, and to hold up one officer to ridicule and abuse, and to laud the other. I imagine the attempts were equally offensive both to the officers concerned and their schools of thought. At all events, I like to think so.

As soon as the dispatch was out of the way, I tried to get permission to have the battle described for the public by one of the outstanding writers of the day, and I succeeded so far as to be authorised to ask Mr. Rudyard Kipling if he would undertake a series of articles on the destroyer attacks during the battle. As a matter of fact, I had already, on my own initiative, approached him and obtained his consent.

I then collected all the reports, which filled a large dispatch box, and proceeded to invade Mr. Kipling in his country house. As soon as I had shown him what I had brought him, he was enthusiastic about the job, and having explained to him what points we wanted left alone, he accepted the task, notwithstanding the numbing and withering censorship that had to be imposed on him. Let me add that in those priceless articles which he produced for us not one word was ever deleted by me or anybody else.

The articles, however, were not appreciated by the Navy as a whole. It was said that I had sold my

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soul to the Press (though the Press would not have offered much, I imagine, for an organ which they frequently said I did not possess!); that the Navy was going to the dogs; and what was the Censor for, anyway? However, the public, I think, did very much appreciate them, and as the public who read the Press and provide the money for the Navy number some forty-five millions or so, and as it was admitted the enemy could gain neither information nor consolation from the articles, I felt quite happy about them.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DEATH OF LORD KITCHENER

Interview with Colonel Fitzgerald—Secret Plans for the Russian Visit—News of the Loss of the Cruiser *Hampshire*—The Commander-in-Chief's Conclusions—The Rumours of his Capture by the Germans and their probable Origin—A so-called Mystery solved.

WHEN I came into the office on the morning of June 6, 1916, I found the cables giving the sad news of the loss of the *Hampshire* overnight—i.e. on June 5. Coming on the top of the Jutland losses, which were only just out, this was really a heavy shock. I had seen Colonel Fitzgerald, Lord Kitchener's Military Secretary, in the room of the Director of Naval Intelligence, and had had a yarn with him just before his departure, which was being kept so secret that we wouldn't even speak of it out loud. But we had just had a short chat and a "chin-chin" and "good luck," and now here were the messages saying that the whole party was drowned!

Lord Kitchener, it may be recalled, had set out on a special mission to Russia, intending to proceed by way of Archangel. He left London on June 4, and went on board the Fleet-flagship *Iron Duke* at Scapa Flow on the following morning, and about 4 o'clock that afternoon he embarked in the armoured cruiser *Hampshire*, which had returned from the

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Battle of Jutland four days before. The Secretary of State for War was accompanied by his Staff—comprising Brigadier-General Ellershaw, Sir F. Donaldson, of the Ministry of Munitions, Colonel Fitzgerald, Military Secretary, Mr. O'Beirne, of the Foreign Office, Mr. Robertson, of the Munitions Department, and Second-Lieutenant McPherson, Cameron Highlanders.

A gale from the north-eastward was blowing in the afternoon, and Sir John Jellicoe discussed with his Staff the route which should be taken. In "The Grand Fleet, 1914-16," the Commander-in-Chief has remarked: "I have often wondered since that fatal day whether anything could have been done that was not done; but short of postponing the departure of the *Hampshire* altogether, until weather conditions admitted of a channel being swept ahead of her, no safeguards were possible.\* Such a decision would have resulted in two or three days' delay in starting, and would never have been agreed to by Lord Kitchener."

I felt—as no doubt every sailor felt—a pang that this great man should have come to his end whilst in the charge of the Navy, as Sir John Jellicoe expressed it in his message which was included in the communiqué issued to the public at midday the same day, June 6.

There was at the time a good deal of talk that the news was out in Berlin before it was issued in this

\* The enemy had previously laid no mines in this area.

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country, and it was therefore suggested by many people that this pointed to the fact of spies having engineered the whole tragedy, and that Lord Kitchener had been taken prisoner by a U-boat and was in Berlin, and a lot more similar rubbish. I believe that what gave rise to all this mass of conjecture, apart from the desire to believe anything except what is true on the part of a small but hysterical portion of the public, was the following sequence of events.

The Prime Minister was informed at about 10.12 A.M. by Masterton-Smith. The facts were got together; a wire was sent to the Grand Fleet asking for the last details to date; and presently a communiqué was produced setting out as much as was known of the facts and handed to me about 11.30 A.M. I had it retyped and sent two copies to the Press Bureau for them to distribute to the newspapers and news agencies, home and foreign. Being a short communiqué, it did not take long to do this, and no doubt it was in the hands of the agencies by 12 o'clock, about which time I got an urgent message to stop the issue if possible! I at once telephoned to the Press Bureau (on our private line) and was told that the best they could do was to stop the Press getting out special editions, which would probably have been difficult in any case, as their first editions were out and they were then preparing for their 2.30 editions. But, of course, the agencies had *at once* cabled it abroad,

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direct from the Press Bureau. Hence the message must have been in Holland and the Scandinavian countries instantly, and naturally whoever got it in Holland would see gold in it and 'phone it to Berlin and all over the north.

Hence what actually happened was that the news was on sale in Berlin before it was here. The reason for the delay was that a fresh message had just come in from Sir John Jellicoe. A couple of lines were added to the original communiqué, and it was once more sent over to the Press Bureau and was eventually in the hands of the public by about 1.30 P.M., I believe.

I have repeatedly tried to explain this simple but strange sequence of events, but some "hot air merchants" in the Press have liked to keep the cruel story going that Lord Kitchener was still alive, that spies knew all about his proposed movements, and that there was still an uncontrolled and secret cable from our east coast to Germany or Holland of whose existence our sleepy authorities knew nothing, and—by innuendo—cared less! There was no mystery about the business, as everyone will realise on reading what I have written.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDUCATING THE PEOPLE

Interviews with Mr. Joseph Conrad and Mr. H. G. Wells—Lord Jellicoe and the Press—Arrival of Admiral Sims from the United States—Filming the Historical Arrival of the First American Destroyers—Pictures of General Pershing's Landing—A Dinner-time Indiscretion—Providing Cinema Entertainments for American Sailors—Establishing the Censorship of the American Naval Mail—Regular Conferences with the Press.

It was in the autumn of 1917 that I came to the conclusion that it was time the doings of the wonderful mercantile navy should be written up, by which I do not mean slobbered over or "boosted," but described by somebody whose heart would be in the job and who would understand the hearts and minds of the merchant seamen as well as those of the public.

I therefore approached Mr. Joseph Conrad, and he very kindly came up and saw me and agreed to take on the business, though he said he was not a writer for the Press. I was overjoyed at securing his co-operation, and we fixed up an extensive programme for him, and he travelled all over the country and had access to every ship and the free entry into every port in which the Royal and Mercantile Navies were co-operating. I can honestly say, now the War



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is over, that no man has seen as much as Mr. Conrad saw in those few months when he was going round observing all the various sorts of work the Mercantile Marine was performing. I even got permission for him to go out in one of the "Q" boats, which were at that time more or less in their infancy. I should say that when I got him permission, this perhaps should not be taken *au pied de la lettre*. I asked the imperturbable Chief of the Staff (Admiral Sir Henry Oliver) if I might send him out. He looked up at me and, merely saying "I don't want to know anything about it," went on writing and smoking his pipe; so I darted out of the room knowing that I could go ahead, and that all I had to do was to square the Senior Naval Officer at the port of departure, which I did! In due course, therefore, Mr. Conrad went for a cruise in a "Q" boat. He was a perfectly delightful man to have to deal with, enthusiastic over everything he saw and did, including a flight in a Royal Naval Air Service machine against a 60-mile an hour gale, piloted—as he put it—by a child, meaning a young officer of twenty-one or so. This was a sporting effort for a man then about sixty, I believe.

To my unceasing regret, indisposition prevented him doing any of the writing he and I had thought possible. None the less, I hope and believe that we shall yet see the result of those trips and expeditions, and when that comes about, my regret will go by the board.

In November of that year, when there was much

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talk of the R.N.A.S. being amalgamated with or mopped up into a new joint Air Force, it seemed to me that I should endeavour to get its story written up to date. Its performances had been sufficiently brilliant, though, owing to our then policy of secrecy and silence, but little of its everyday work was known.

I therefore wrote to Mr. H. G. Wells, and asked him if he would undertake the work, since no one could have a better claim, as he had written of flying when the rest of us were marvelling at motor cars. He did not turn the suggestion down, and so I waited and hoped. After some little time, greatly daring, I went to find him at the block of flats where he lived. Here, according to the board in the hall, he was always "out," and also according to the lift boy—the latter a well-trained and imperturbable little liar! On or about my third call, and it being then nearly 11 A.M., I was told as usual by my friend the lift boy that Mr. Wells was out, and so, merely saying that was quite all right, I told him to take me upstairs, which he had to do.

I felt rather like the man who "travels" in books. I went to the door of the flat and rang, and was informed that Mr. Wells was out, and so, keeping the man in conversation for a moment and talking somewhat loudly, I said it was a pity as I had a letter from Mr. Wells (which indeed I held in my hand), and that I was anxious to see him about it. Round the corner appeared Mr. Wells, and I then gave him my card, and we went together into his study or

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library, and with mutual apologies we got to work. I put before him what I had in my mind concerning the R.N.A.S. Mr. Wells said, which was true, that he had just returned from the Italian Front, and was extremely busy on that series of articles which we all were reading, and he was very tired. That, I said, was all to the good, as, when he wanted a change of scene and air, he could go down to any of our air stations, stay two or three days or as many as he liked, and that every arrangement would be made for housing him and taking care of him. He might fly when he liked. He said that he could not produce anything just yet, but I was quite unmoved. Would I wait a month or two? Any number of months within reason, I told him. I only wanted to have his version of its record and performances since its birth to the time of its prospective amalgamation. It was all agreed, and we parted on the best of terms, with renewed apologies on both sides.

And that, alas! was the last of that particular effort. Mr. Wells forgot the R.N.A.S. and the persevering Chief Censor—in thinking about Mr. Britling, I suspect!

None the less these were two bitter disappointments for me, and all the time the newspapers were sniping away at the Admiralty for their idiotic and unimaginative attitude towards publicity!

In December, 1916, Sir John Jellicoe arrived as First Sea Lord, the third under whom I was to serve. When he came in I told him that he had “a bad

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Press," and did he want anything done about it? He said, with his quizzical smile, that he knew he had, and no doubt by the time he had told the truth a few times regarding the submarine position he would have a still worse one. So I asked him again if he would not allow me to see what could be done. No, he must allow the Press to form its own judgment, and if it elected to be guided by one set of writers more than any others—well, that was its own business. Anyway, he did not expect to last twelve months, and in any case he had no time to read the papers. So I had no more to say.

His attitude towards me was as charming as it could be. He had known me for thirty years exactly, and it was pleasant to have him as "Chief." He was always get-at-able and his decisions were always given pat. I tried once or twice to get him to use his influence with the new Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet when I wanted to send writers up north so as to obtain a little more publicity, but his invariable reply was: "Well, I would not have them up there when *I* was Commander-in-Chief, so how can you expect me to ask Sir David Beatty to do so?" And, that being a bit of a poser, I merely said that times were changing, *autres temps, autres mœurs*, and so on. But I felt it was beating the air, so I presently tried my hand on the Commander-in-Chief personally.

In March, 1917, Admiral Sims came over, his arrival being necessarily kept very secret owing to

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the United States being still neutral, so, most unfortunately, no film was taken of this incident. When, however, the United States *had* come into the War, and the first flotilla of their destroyers was due to reach Queenstown, I came to the conclusion that this scene *must be* filmed.

At that time I knew nothing whatever about the cinema business, so I sent and asked Dr. Distin Maddick, who had been responsible for the taking of the Somme and other Western Front battle films, to come and help me out. I had previously secured a sort of negative permission (which sounds paradoxical, but in my experience such a permission is often quite effective) to get the business done if, and a very big if, I could get the Admiral Commanding at Queenstown, Sir Lewis Bayly, to agree to such a spectacular course.

I knew that would be a difficult task. However, I put the case fairly and squarely before Dr. Maddick—Captain Maddick he then was—and in two hours' time he left London with his operators and paraphernalia for Queenstown. He got on so well with everybody, including Sir Lewis Bayly and Admiral Sims (who christened him "Major Movie"), that he was entirely successful, and so this historic incident of the U.S. destroyers coming to the aid of their erstwhile enemy—very erstwhile—is on record. We had the film showing all over the country as soon as it was considered wise to let the enemy know that the U.S. destroyers were really

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operating here, and we sent two copies of the film to the United States, one as a gift to the American Red Cross and the other to the Naval College at Annapolis.

This was the beginning of the film business of my department, which presently grew to serious proportions, and of which I have written elsewhere.

Presently General Pershing was due, and his arrival was also, and very necessarily, kept a close secret; but, as I have said before, not many secrets were kept from me, and so I knew when he was really due to arrive at Liverpool, and I had a hard task to keep it to myself. For, first, the Ambassador was to give a big dinner in General Pershing's honour—or, at all events, he was to be greeted at this dinner—and so His Excellency was naturally anxious to know at least on what *date* he would arrive and if he would be in time for dinner. I had to put him off for about three days, and then finally told him the General could *not* be present on the fixed date, so the arrangements for the dinner had to be changed.

Then, secondly, the U.S. pressmen were quite naturally after me and after information like bees round a honey-pot. To make a long story short, I acted this time without consulting anybody, and sent up a large batch of them, under absolute pledges of secrecy, to Liverpool, together with Dr. Maddick and his satellites, and 'phoned through to the Senior Naval Officer, Liverpool (Admiral Stileman), request-

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ing him to do everything possible to give the American pressmen as good a view as possible and to make the whole show a success.

The General arrived in the early morning, and he was filmed (for us) almost as much as he might have been in his own country; the newsmen had a real good time with him, and the whole business went off with a snap and was a great success; and, in the preoccupation of the moment, and I may add in the relief at his safe arrival, my "bosses" took the filming and Press stunt as an ordinary everyday event, without comment!

I had very pleasant relations with Admiral Sims, extending over the whole of his time in this country, almost exactly two years. But he had many a kindly dig at me in public speeches, over which he and I laughed together afterwards, and so I hope he will not deny me another laugh, but will join me in it, though this time the laugh is at his expense.

Shortly after he came here it will be remembered that he went to Queenstown, and after staying there a few days with our Commander-in-Chief the latter went on a short leave, and Admiral Sims hoisted his flag in command of the British and American vessels. On his return from that visit he was the central figure at a dinner at the Carlton Hotel (at which he lived), and he explained to his party all about our "Q" boats, which he had seen at Queenstown, how long it took for their sham bulwarks to be dropped and for the guns to be

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brought into action, and so on, together with every conceivable and extremely interesting detail connected with what was then, and indeed right down to Armistice Day, a very secret branch of our service.

The next morning the whole conversation was reported to me, whereupon I decided to let the Admiral know that what he said in public places was apt to come home to roost, and I gave him word for word what he had regaled his friends with. I apologised profusely for venturing, &c. &c. He had the grace to blush, whilst he said that he had forgotten one had to be so "darn cautious." I have never repeated this story to anybody, so I hope he will forgive me for doing so now. His blush was a thing to see—and remember!

When the U.S. destroyer flotillas at Queenstown began to grow, the officers and men speedily found it necessary to build a club for their men, as they were unable to go to Cork, and the attractions of Queenstown soon palled. They wanted films, and the captain of the depot ship *Melville*, Commander Pringle—one of the best among the many excellent gentlemen they sent over to this country—sent an emissary to me to see if I could help him to provide a series of films for the use of the men of the flotilla at their club. I got in touch with Sir William Jury (then Mr. Jury), and he at once gave a very sympathetic hearing to the case, and in a week he had got several of the leading film "renters" in this country to join him in assuring us a good and bright pro-



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gramme, completely changed three times a week. The service was started in a fortnight and continued down to the time the last boat left Queenstown—“ free, gratis and for nothing.”

The films were sent down to my office. We trained them to Queenstown direct to the *Melville*. They were similarly returned direct to me, and a register was kept of them, so that we could tell how long they were away on tour. In the eighteen months during which this service was carried on not a film was lost, and they were much appreciated by the officers and men of those flotillas. Hats off to Sir William Jury and the other “ renters ” who so generously lent the films !

Subsequently I extended this film service to the 6th Battle Squadron (Admiral Rodman's U.S. Battle Squadron) of the Grand Fleet, and continued it for some two or three months, but they were able to make other arrangements with the Y.M.C.A., and so we dropped out.

We also started a service for the U.S. Squadron at Gibraltar, and we had an unfortunate experience with them, as, for some reason, they allowed about thirty films to accumulate and shipped them home in a U.S. coastguard cutter which was torpedoed and sunk with all hands ; we lost about £480 worth of films. However, I had arranged that this service should be at the disposal of our men as well as the U.S. Navy men, and had agreed with Admiral Niblack (U.S.N.) that in case rent was required for the service we would

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halve it; so when the loss occurred we agreed to pay half each.

The censoring of the mail from the U.S. destroyer flotillas at Queenstown was started on exactly the same lines as on our own vessels, i.e. by their own officers, after which they were posted to the Chief Postal Censor at Queenstown by arrangement with Colonel Pearson, the Chief Postal Censor in London, with whom I arranged to make careful examination of a certain percentage of letters to see that the new U.S. censorship was efficient. All this was done by agreement with, and at the request of, Admiral Sims, who in everything wished to conform to British Navy ruling and experience.

At the end of a month the Liverpool Censor's Department reported that the U.S. officers' censorship was efficiently done, even if it was over drastic, and that the tone of all the letters was excellent, and he suggested, therefore, that we should drop the censoring of these mails. I told this to Admiral Sims with great satisfaction, and, as I knew that the U.S. naval ratings resented the British authorities going over their correspondence, I naturally expected that this suggestion would be agreed to by the Admiral. Not a bit of it. He begged me not to disturb the existing arrangement, except in so far as we were welcome not to open and examine their letters. "But for goodness' sake," said he, "let them go on thinking you are censoring their letters!" And so the mails continued to be consigned to our censor-

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ship, and I do not doubt that we continued to enjoy being reviled by the U.S. naval ratings of the flotilla at Queenstown—an innocent ruse and all in a good cause!

During 1917 and 1918 publicity was being more and more urgently forced on the Admiralty, and each successive First Lord gave interviews to the Press, and we had usually some eighty or ninety Press representatives at these informal talks. At one of these, whilst Mr. Balfour was First Lord, he read a letter from Lord Northcliffe, couched in somewhat brusque language, to the effect that as he (Lord Northcliffe) did not agree with these conferences, which he considered had the effect of muzzling the Press, he would not have any of his papers represented. Mr. Balfour said that, though he regretted the absence of representatives of any of the Northcliffe papers, he begged those present to believe that there was no intention or idea of muzzling the Press, and he thought that they all understood that. In his opinion it was a convenient and interesting way of giving representatives of the Press certain facts which, though they could not be made public, would enable them to treat various subjects at all events from an informed point of view, and to be better equipped in guiding public opinion.

Lord Burnham, on behalf of the Press, said that they were all quite agreed as to their absolute freedom, and were grateful for the conferences. Mr. H. Wickham Steed, then foreign editor of *The Times*,

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at this point got up from the back of the room, and, to the intense amusement of his colleagues, said that he was there representing one of Lord Northcliffe's papers and had no instructions to stop away. In view of the terms of Lord Northcliffe's letter, did Mr. Balfour wish him to withdraw? The reply, of course, was that the First Lord certainly did not wish him to do so, and that he must please himself. So he stayed, and I hope Lord Northcliffe was content. He had written a very abrupt and, as it seemed, unnecessary letter, and, however undesignedly, he also got the benefit of his representative's attendance.

These Press talks used to occupy about one to one and a half hours, and I dare say the journalists thought that was all there was in it, but as a matter of fact there was a very great deal of work thrown on the First Lord's staff in preparing the subject of the talk and also in issuing the invitations to editors or their representatives which was at first done by the Admiralty, but subsequently through the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. Whichever way they were issued, however, there always came a crop of letters of protest from some of those who had not been bidden. The 'phone was kept busy attacking me and anybody else, through whom it was thought an invitation might be "wangled." But I knew that our largest room could not hold more than ninety persons, and, as it was my business not to irritate anybody who might "turn nasty," I had resort to what

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is known as "passing the buck"; I would suggest that the applicant should "try number so and so. *He* might arrange it for him." When the same gentleman returned to the attack, I would get one of my assistants to take the message whilst I used the second listener. The applicant would then be referred to the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, but, if he were not a member of that Association and was still insistent, the answer was given that the Chief Censor was out just now and would ring him up on his return; and that might purchase immunity for an hour or so.

I need hardly say that I never rang up anybody on any subject at *their* request—I had enough to do to answer the 'phone and get through the work as best I could. When and if the applicant returned to the charge again, and if I was caught napping, I had to say that I would see what could be done and would write him, after which he went home, or, I hope, out to play golf, probably cursing me for having put him off his game.

When Sir Eric Geddes became First Lord and sent for me on the subject of more publicity, I urged him to have these Press meetings once a month, as it would keep the Press informed and in sympathy with the work of the Navy. He only had two of these Press talks, however, as, I believe, he found they took up more time than he could spare. I was struck by his extraordinary fluency at these meetings. He could talk for an hour with practically no notes, and

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would answer any and every question without trouble.

In addition to the First Lord and his private secretary there was usually a goodly array of Admiralty officers at these functions, including, as a rule, the Chief of Staff or the Vice- or Deputy-Chief of Staff, the Director of Naval Intelligence and myself.

Nor did the work of preparation of the actual matter to be put before the Press and the arranging of the invitations finish the business. After the little function was over the whole proceedings had to be typed from the shorthand notes, and I had to have a copy so as to be able to check writers who might quote from the information given. All this work "chucked in," as one may say, on top of the ordinary everyday work made the First Lords chary of having the meetings as often as they would have wished.

It is only fair to say, however, that no disagreeable incident ever arose from those meetings, and the Press was, I think, satisfied with them, and they undoubtedly did good all round. We certainly had every reason to be grateful to the newspapers for their absolute loyalty and discretion in handling the information they had received.

## CHAPTER VII

### CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

The Foreign Office Department of Information—An American Lady Journalist's "Scoop"—Advent of Colonel John Buchan—Attempt to Capture my Cinema Organisation—Lord Beaverbrook's Work—The Exhibition of Naval Photographs at Princes Galleries—Their World-wide Tour—Filming the Grand Fleet—Relations with the Newspaper Proprietors' Association and Sir George Riddell—Special Conference at the Admiralty—Motion of Dissatisfaction Defeated.

THE Foreign Office Department of Information, as I remember it, was first under Mr. C. H. Montgomery of the Foreign Office, who was indirectly responsible for getting facilities for Government guests, and for Allied and neutral journalists, to visit places of interest. That, at all events, is my recollection of the beginning of the work which subsequently came under the Ministry of Information. Working with Montgomery was Mr. G. H. Mair, who had especially to do with visits to the Fleet, which we arranged together. If I may put it so, these gentlemen resembled eager bridegrooms, ever pressing and coaxing me, the elusive bride, to grant them more and yet more favours in the shape of permits to visit the Fleet. In reality I was a sort of buffer between the importunity of the Foreign Office and the dislike of the Fleet for visitors in any shape or

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form. However, we got along fairly well, what with sending M. Protopopoff (since beheaded), Mr. Bottomley, Mr. Stevenson (the billiard player), and hundreds of others, and so managed to keep the Foreign Office comparatively quiet and the Fleet from actual revolt.

We kept careful records of all who went, but, alas! not from the very beginning. Every newspaper representative was, *pace* Mr. Montgomery, *most* important. Presently the Fleet tumbled to this chronic use of superlatives in describing these journalistic visitors, and they wrote down and asked me what adjective I should use if I had to send the Archangel Gabriel up to them. My only reply was "Wait and see."

I have a pleasant recollection of an attractive lady journalist from across the Atlantic who was favoured more than many, whether owing to her personal charm or her journalistic ability I have never been able to say, nor would I if I could; but having seen something of our Naval side she was very anxious to see a submarine. I made a very special favour of this, as well I might, for nobody was allowed on board a submarine even before the War. However, it so happened that we had one in dry dock at Chatham, which had had her bows blown off through bumping a German mine off the German coast; and her safe return to this side was one of the epics of the War at that time. Every arrangement was made for the lady's visit, and she

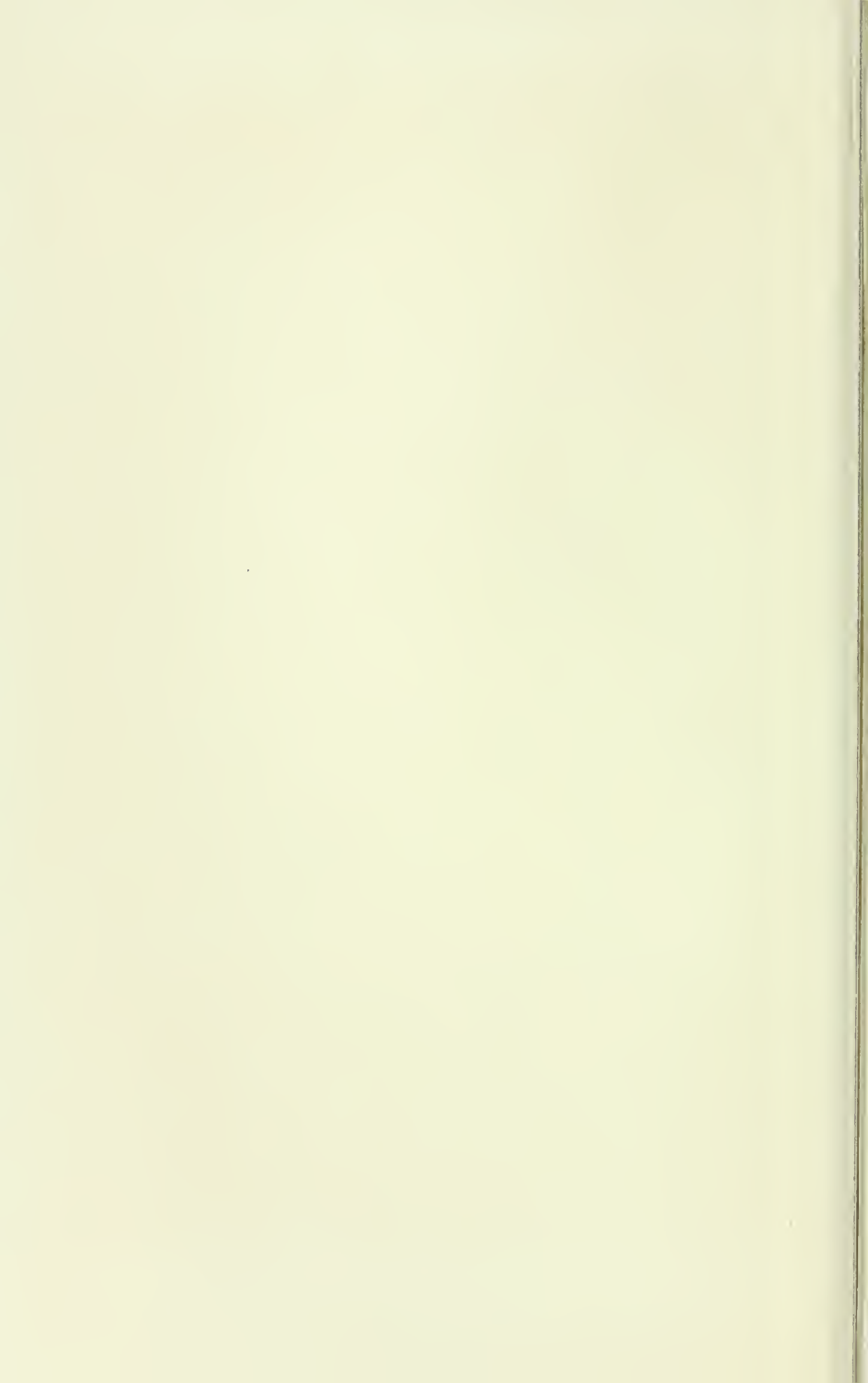




WITH THE GRAND FLEET : SHIPS ASTERN, H.M.S. *AGINCOURT*  
AND H.M.S. *BENBOW*



The above photograph as published. Smoke was added to obscure the  
fire-control of the ships



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was well received by the submarine's officers, shown over the boat and entertained at luncheon and so on. She came back to me delighted, as well she might be, and wrote an excellent story for her magazine or paper, and I hope she was really proud of her achievement. But what I never told her, but now confess, is that it was one of the Schwab-built submarines which had come to us from the other side of the Atlantic, so an American lady going over it did not matter! Her countrymen had nothing to learn concerning *that* boat.

During all the time that Montgomery, Mair, and our office worked together, Montgomery used to squeeze the concessions out of me, Mair then worked out the itineraries, and extraordinarily smoothly and well did he and his organisation do it.

Presently the business was put under Mr. (afterwards Colonel) John Buchan. I had equally pleasant relations with him, but the work was not made easier, nor was it handled more successfully, by reason of constant changes in the personnel connected with it.

It soon became evident to me that Colonel Buchan's department, in its zeal for propaganda, was anxious to nobble my newly formed cinema organisation. I was asked on the 'phone if I would receive one of Colonel Buchan's representatives, and at once agreed. In due course there arrived a gentleman who had been in pre-war days private secretary to one of our Scottish Prime Ministers. He was well

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gifted with words (Colonel Buchan's representative, I mean), and it took him one and a half pleasant hours to unfold to me his simple plan for nobbling our moving picture business, just then getting well into its stride. I hope I was honest enough to make it quite clear to him that I hadn't yet got into my brain how the propaganda business of the country would benefit, nor how the Admiralty was going to come out of it. Several lengthy letters reached me subsequently on the same subject, and we had one or two additional (and pleasant) interviews, but no change was made!

In due course the Ministry of Information was created by Lord Beaverbrook, and I wish to place on record that from the very first my relations with him were most pleasant. He was an extraordinarily hard-working man, though in poor health. I frequently went down to the Ministry at 7 P.M., and found him full length, flat, on the sofa, physically exhausted, I imagine. He was not so mentally, however, and he would dictate instructions for whatever I asked him, and I would be away in five minutes.

We never had a disagreement. His new department came along with claims for detachments and veritable armies of visitors for the Fleet. These I played off on various ports, and trips were worked out which would be really instructive to the visitors, whilst reserving the Grand Fleet for specially "big bugs" whom I could not side-track elsewhere.

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I told Lord Beaverbrook what I was doing and why, namely, that the Fleet, then frequently at Rosyth and very accessible, would not hear of such chronic and huge invasions, and if the Government or any Minister tried to put pressure on them they would merely lift their anchors and proceed to Scapa, where they were secure from attack, since very few visitors could spare the time for the long journey, finishing up with two or three hours of a beastly crossing, made, moreover, in the dark, except in the summer months. Here also pressure *could* not be exercised on the Fleet, as visitors had to sleep on board, and the ships might have to proceed to sea at any moment to fight an action. Lord Beaverbrook perfectly understood my difficulties, and we could not have got on better.

When he was preparing his exhibition of military photographs at the Grafton Gallery for the Red Cross, he asked me to supply him with enough naval photographs to fill two rooms, so I told him plump and plain that we had not then sufficient pictures available for exhibition, nor could they be obtained in the time. He agreed with me that it was better that we should not go in at all unless we could go in with credit, so we let that exhibition go by.

He then started to work on the First Lord to get a Naval Photographic Exhibition. The First Lord sent me an order to get in touch with Lord Beaverbrook, and see what could be done. I told Lord

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Beaverbrook that, for the purpose of this show, I wanted the services of Mr. Ernest Brooks, who had been our photographer at Gallipoli. "Where is he?" asked Lord Beaverbrook. "On the Western Front," I told him. "Very well, you shall have him the day after to-morrow," and I got him sure enough.

He also lent me one of his own (Ministry) men, Captain Castle. I had had a "tame" photographer, Captain Bernard Grant, an excellent man, who had been taking photographs for me for the use of the Press and general propaganda purposes for some months, but he had recently joined the Air Force. So I also borrowed him for a time. My own photographer, Lieutenant Neal, R.N.V.R., who had succeeded Grant, completed the number. Altogether I had a fine team for working up material suitable for a really first-class show.

I rushed up to the Fleet and got round Sir David Beatty, and pointed out that the Navy wanted a little bit of advertising, and that our charities needed the money. The interview was a success, and I returned with the necessary sanction in my pocket. The team worked for three months, and under the business control of the late Sir Bertram Lima\* produced the show which was opened by the First Lord at the Princes Galleries. It afterwards toured the States, Canada and France, and then moved through

\* He may fairly be said to have killed himself by his devotion to his varied work in journalism during the War.

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our own provinces. When it came to settling the terms on which the Ministry and Admiralty should divide the profits, or stand the loss if any, Lord Beaverbrook agreed to what I suggested, and within a quarter of an hour dictated the agreement between the two departments.

Of course, from Lord Beaverbrook's point of view, that exhibition was pure propaganda, and the Navy owes him a great deal for having put it forward, pushed it through, and made it, owing to his business-like methods, such a huge success. I should add that, after touring the States in charge of Lieutenant Walker, R.N. (who had lost an arm at Zeebrugge), the whole of the pictures were presented to the Canadian Government, and, after touring Canada, will find a permanent home in Ottawa.

At the same interview, in which Lord Beaverbrook sketched out his schemes for this exhibition, he told me that his representatives abroad kept on reporting the necessity for a new naval film, which was to be the very last thing in naval cinema work. I told him it could be done if we went easy, and pointed out to him that the one essential was to carry the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet with us. The scheme would be stillborn if he went against us. Lord Beaverbrook agreed with me in this, and further suggested that, as I knew what arguments to use, he would be obliged if I would write a letter to the First Lord for him (Lord Beaver-

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brook) to sign. This I presently did, and handed it to Mr. R. W. Needham, his secretary, and in due course it reached Sir Eric Geddes, who sent it to me with an instruction to get busy, and see what could be done.

I thereupon saw Sir Eric Geddes, and asked him if he would write and put the proposition up to Sir David Beatty. "No," he said, "the First Sea Lord had better do that." So I went to the First Sea Lord, and showed him Lord Beaverbrook's letter to Sir Eric, and repeated the First Lord's message. But no, the First Sea Lord thought I had better go up myself and see the Commander-in-Chief, and show him the letter and see what I could get out of him. So, thoroughly enjoying the humour of the situation, I journeyed north, and on telling my friends on Sir David's staff what my business was, they had a cheery laugh at my expense, saying I would be "strafed," as the Commander-in-Chief didn't like publicity "stunts." However, Sir David Beatty entered into the whole thing, and I came back with the goods in my pocket—i.e. I had a free hand to send my operator and our indefatigable Major Maddick up to the Fleet to get anything and everything that was wanted. That film took some two months to make, and was killed by the Armistice with its subsequent surrender scenes. Nevertheless, it afterwards did grand business, and Naval charities benefited accordingly.

Whilst I think I may honestly claim that our



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relations with nearly all individual papers were on the whole friendly, I should be overstepping the bounds of strict accuracy if I said the same of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. 'This body, as represented by their chairman, developed—or shall I say voiced?—the urgent desire clamantly expressed for more publicity and yet more, and whatever may have passed between Sir George Riddell and myself, it is but fair to add that the degree of publicity which was won for the Press as a whole was *entirely* due to his consistent advocacy of the need for *home* propaganda through the medium of the Press.

Sir George thought, as no doubt he was informed by some persons who desired my removal, that *I* stood in the way of letting the public know what the Navy was doing. Such was not the case, as my friends in the Navy knew. However that may be, Sir George and I had some stormy interviews, and also some lively conversations on the 'phone.

When Sir Graham Greene left the Admiralty to go to the Ministry of Munitions, he said during our farewell talk he would ask me to oblige him in one matter, and that was to reopen communications with Sir George Riddell, and I told him that nothing but my affection for him would make me consent to such a thing.

However, coming out of Sir Graham Greene's room, I ran right into Sir George Riddell, and we shook hands and carried on from that time as if

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nothing had happened. From that time forward my work with the Newspaper Proprietors' Association was quite comfortably and easily performed, to the mutual advantage of the Press, the Navy, and the public. We all certainly owe Sir George Riddell a great deal, and I am glad here to confess it. Looking back on the period of the War, anyone can understand how difficult it was to bring into some sort of agreement the Naval authorities and those who were responsible for running the newspapers of the country. This was the first war by sea to be fought under modern conditions, for Nelson and his contemporaries and the Sea Lords of their day knew nothing of cables, wireless telegraphy, the penny post or penny newspaper, and the dangers associated with the unrestricted publication of news were small a hundred years ago compared with those which now exist. It was in the highest national interests during the Great War that information which might be useful to the enemy should be suppressed. Secrecy in war, particularly at sea, is an asset of enormous value, and though I became involved in propaganda work, which was essential, I was never unconscious of the point of view of the officers in high command at sea. Complete secrecy was, of course, impossible, but if the restrictions on the publication of news were lifted beyond what may be described as the "safety line," plans of operations might be affected, hundreds of lives endangered, and the cause of the Allies imperilled. I had consequently to move cautiously.

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On March 11, 1918, and solely on Sir George Riddell's recommendation and advice, it was decided to appoint an Admiralty Press Officer, and it was Sir George who suggested to us that Lieutenant-Commander Beer, R.N.V.R. (then working under the Controller's Department), would be a suitable man for the work. We had him transferred, and from the moment he came and I took him round to all departments, he was a complete success. Naturally he was hungry for information, but he speedily appreciated what could and what could not be given out for publication, for British newspapers reached Germany through neutral countries. He was a whale for work, and he never upset anybody and never let us down, and that is saying a great deal. We owe Sir George Riddell another debt of gratitude for that.

Early in 1918, however, Sir George again approached the First Lord with a view to getting yet more information, and a conference was called at very short notice by the N.P.A. and held at the Admiralty. It was attended by Sir Oswyn Murray, Captain—now Rear-Admiral Sir Reginald—Hall (Director of Naval Intelligence), and myself. The following representatives of the Press were present :

Sir George Riddell, of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association.

Mr. Thomas Marlowe, of the *Daily Mail*.

Mr. Robert Donald, of the *Daily Chronicle*.

Mr. Archibald Hurd, of the *Daily Telegraph*.

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Representatives of the *Times*, the *Morning Post*, and three or four others.

It speedily became evident that this was an attempt to remove somebody who, it was thought, was standing in the way of naval publicity; and in due course, and after some talk by Sir George Riddell and Messrs. Marlowe and Donald, Mr. Marlowe proposed a motion to the effect that "grave dissatisfaction was felt by the Press of the country at the attitude of the Admiralty towards publicity."

This was seconded by Mr. Robert Donald, and it was thought that all was over bar the shouting. There were a few moments of silence, and then Mr. Archibald Hurd intervened. He stated that the *Daily Telegraph* was not dissatisfied, and that he was not prepared to support such a resolution; that the Admiralty was responsible for the Fleet and the Fleet for the Empire, and it was for the Admiralty to decide what could or could not be published with safety.

The *Morning Post's* representative followed, saying that he had instructions to say that his editor would in all cases support the censorship, and was content with things as they were. The remaining four representatives said much the same. It was obvious, therefore, to the dissatisfied trio that their motion could not go through. The proceedings were, in fact, a fiasco, so far as that resolution was concerned.

After that we settled down to business on a

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friendly basis, with the result that it was agreed we should appoint a British Press representative to the Grand Fleet; set up a Press Panel at various bases, so as to have men ready to "write up" at once any special event, and give the Press various records and reports to browse over and serve up, subject, of course, to the censorship. I had long been trying to get a well-known British writer to join the Grand Fleet as resident writer for the whole British Press, but this gentleman, who was a Commander, R.N.V.R., had other fish to fry in London, and conveniently got out of going there. Without revealing his name, I informed the conference of this. They affected to be annoyed at not being consulted as to who the representative was to be, so I cried "peccavi" and bided my time, as I well knew that the Press would never agree among themselves on the choice of a man. In due course the Newspaper Proprietors' Association wrote me, and informed me that they were unable, owing to shortage of staffs, &c., to secure anybody to go to the Grand Fleet. My man was not *only* a newspaper writer; he was very versatile, had written much priceless propaganda matter and some revues or plays, and would have filled the bill to perfection, but, for reasons of his own, he wriggled out of the offer.

From the date of that conference the "head hunting," if I may so put it, ceased, and I was allowed to get on with my work without, at all events, any frontal attacks, and my subsequent relations with the

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N.P.A. were all that could be desired. Press Panels were set up at various places, but it so happened that they were never required, as no serious Naval action occurred, with the exception of the Zeebrugge attack, and in that case the censorship was practically lifted altogether, the Press being virtually given a free run.

I wind up this chapter by assuring Sir George that at this distance of time I have forgotten all the little "incidents" between us, and remember only his extraordinarily valuable work on behalf of the newspapers generally, and so, indirectly, of the public. The Press may rest assured that it has in him a good champion, and if perhaps there is more *fortiter in re* than *suaviter in modo* in his methods—well, we all have our little failings. I dare say that being overtired I was not as patient and accommodating at times as I might have been. Nevertheless, Sir George will permit me a slight chuckle at the sight of him as champion of the censorship at the Peace Conference!

## CHAPTER VIII

### ZEEBRUGGE AND THE CENSORSHIP

Precautions taken in Respect of the Commandeering of the Ferry Boats *Iris* and *Daffodil*—The News of the Attack—Mr. Perceval Gibbon's Account—Sir Roger Keyes' Thanks for Lord Jellicoe's Support during the Preparations for the Attack and desire that this Support should be known—Publication in the Newspapers—Inquiry by Detectives as to the Source of the Paragraph—Interview with Sir Eric Geddes—I am told to go on Leave immediately—I am asked to Return.

ONE day very early in 1918 I heard a Lieutenant-Commander asking one of my assistants, who sat just behind me, what papers were printed in Liverpool, so I inquired what he wanted to know this for. He said he could not tell me, upon which I asked him what department he came from, and, on his giving me the desired information, I told him he might go away and I would find out what was in the wind, and would do whatever was required with the newspapers as Press matters were my particular business.

I went at once to the Deputy-Chief of Staff and told him what had happened, and he of course told me of the proposed taking up by the Admiralty of the Mersey ferry-boats *Iris* and *Daffodil*, and the great necessity for secrecy as to their use in connection with the proposed Zeebrugge operations. So I there and then told him that it would be useless to tell only the

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Liverpool papers, since the removal of these ferry-boats would inconvenience and be known to some million or two of people in Liverpool, Birkenhead and right away to Manchester and Salford, each of which places had one or more newspapers of its own to which disgruntled folk would be sure to write letters of questioning or complaint. This naturally was not a point of view that had presented itself to him, and he therefore asked me to take the matter in hand and do what I considered necessary. I thereupon went and saw the Directors of the Press Bureau, and we all agreed that to circularise the papers *in that district only* would be no good, as if anybody in any other part of the country saw fit to drop a casual remark into any paper the secrecy which was so urgently necessary would be jeopardised or lost.

It was decided, therefore, to circularise the whole Press confidentially, and surely a wiser decision never was taken, for in the three months of preparation for the raids on Zeebrugge and Ostend, and in spite of the two attempts which were made, never a sign or trace of the news got out. Not the vaguest reference was ever made, and the Press, as was invariably the case when it was told what was expected of it, loyally carried out the wishes of the Admiralty.

Having fixed the Press, I then went and saw the Speaker of the House of Commons and told him what was going on, and begged him to stop any questions being put on the "paper," which I knew might very well happen. He agreed to see any member who



## Zeebrugge and the Censorship

wished to put any question on the commandeering of these two vessels and tell him the circumstances and ask him to refrain.

The months went by and the excitement was very intense among those few of us who knew what to expect when the tide and moon suited. We had two disappointments owing to the conditions proving unfavourable after the start had been made, and then the glorious news of the Zeebrugge attack came to hand at last.

That same afternoon at about 4 o'clock Perceval Gibbon, a brilliant war journalist, came to me with a letter of introduction from a Fleet Street editor asking me if I could get him a job. Lieutenant-Commander Beer was already overworked, so I jumped at the chance of getting Gibbon. I waited about in the passage till I could waylay the First Lord, and then told him that I wanted to take on Gibbon. The First Lord merely asked me if I were sure he was the best man for the job of writing up this epic story, and on my telling him there was none better he said, "All right, engage him." Not wanting to put the First Lord in the cart, I called his attention to what he had said in the House of Commons as to not employing anybody of military age who was fit. He closed me up by saying, "That was in the *past*; this is now; engage him." So off I went very pleased with myself. He was made a major in the Marines, and he left for Dover at 7 o'clock that night. He was shown everything next morning; he wrote

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his story down there at Dover; got Sir Roger Keyes to agree to it; and was back in London that night about 11 o'clock. He sat up all night typing it out, and then went down again to Dover to attend to some considerable alterations which Sir Roger Keyes required made, as more detailed information had come to hand. These he 'phoned up to me, and, as he had left me a typed copy, the alterations were embodied and handed out to the Press at 11 P.M. that same night, namely forty-eight hours after the actual landing had taken place.

It was a fine piece of work on the part of Gibbon. Lord! how I regretted we had not had him or someone like him before. What would not such a man have done with Jutland, and many another scrap which went practically unrecorded save for the official dispatches. However, the Navy would never have accepted a real war correspondent in the early days, no matter how much he might have been censored!

Having given out our official narrative (Gibbon's), the members of the newly-formed Press Panel—very elastic this time—were given a free run at Dover and got their own personal narratives into their journals on the same day as Gibbon's narrative, but I think every paper, almost without exception, recognised the value of the official narrative, for *all* printed it.

About a month or two after the Zeebrugge attack there was a curious sequel so far as I was concerned. Paymaster-Captain Share, who had been Sir John Jellicoe's secretary both in the Grand Fleet and

## Zeebrugge and the Censorship

during his period of office as First Sea Lord, came into my room one morning and showed me a letter from Sir Roger Keyes stating that he had written to Lord Jellicoe on private matters, and he said he had taken the opportunity of thanking him for the support that he had given him during the preparations of the plans, and that he felt he owed much of the success to that support, adding at the end : “ I should like this to be known.”

I merely remarked : “ Well, it’s very easy to make it known,” and asked him if he had any objection to my showing the letter to Beer, the Admiralty Press Officer. He having no objection, I rang for Beer to come down, when I showed him the letter, and we discussed how we should handle it. We agreed to paraphrase it and put it into the hands of the Press Association, as Beer said, “ It is extremely interesting and the public would like to know it.” This was done, and this is the paragraph as it appeared :

Vice-Admiral Sir Roger Keyes has received a message of congratulation on the success of the Zeebrugge-Ostend operation from Admiral Lord Jellicoe. It is interesting to note that the plans for the enterprise were laid before Lord Jellicoe while he was First Sea Lord. He approved of them, and this fact helped and encouraged Sir Roger Keyes through many difficulties.

I thought no more about it. I then went to my home in the country for the week-end, and on my return heard that detectives had been worrying the

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Press Association to find out where they had got this paragraph.

This was itself an absolutely unjustifiable proceeding and a gross abuse of power, since it could not be argued that the paragraph gave any information to the enemy, nor could it be said to be disheartening our own people, or whatever was the wording of D.O.R.A., under which only could such an act have any sanction. I rang up at once the Press Association and told them to tell the detectives that I had given them the paragraph, which indeed could have been found out by sending to my office, since it was my business to know what naval matter was in the Press. However, the inquisitorial method was preferred to the obvious and straightforward way; but whoever advised it gave bad advice. I had been in some twenty minutes—it would be about 10.20 A.M.—when I was told the First Lord wanted me, so I went along to his room, when the following remarks were exchanged:

*First Lord*: Why did you pass that article about Jellicoe?

*Chief Censor*: I didn't pass it; I circulated it.

*First Lord*: Why did you circulate it?

*Chief Censor*: Because I considered it was of interest to the public.

*First Lord*: You have no business to boost any Admiral.

*Chief Censor*: I am not boosting any Admiral.

## Zeebrugge and the Censorship

*First Lord*: You can go on leave immediately.

*Chief Censor*: Thank you!

I carefully refrained from telling him anything about the letter from Sir Roger Keyes. I at once informed the Naval Secretary to the First Lord and the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff that I was going away and my assistant would carry on in my place.

The chairman of the company with which I was working before the War happening to be in town, I asked him if he had any objection to my returning to work with the firm right away, and he agreed. I also went to the Air Board and put myself down for a job there if there should be one in which it was considered I could be of use. I then retired to my flat and lunched with my chairman. In the middle of lunch I was rung up by Edward Packe, one of the First Lord's private secretaries (and a particularly close friend of mine), who asked me not to go out of town. I replied that I badly needed a slight holiday and I was going down home that afternoon. There ensued *pourparlers*, and eventually I agreed not to go till I had seen him, and I went to his house and there yielded to the pressure he and his wife exerted on me on condition that the Secretary of the Admiralty (Sir Oswyn Murray) should come and dine with me that night, which he did. In the end letters were exchanged between myself, Sir Eric Geddes and Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, and I returned to work after only forty-two hours' holiday!

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The letters were as follows :

9, VICTORIA STREET,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.  
7th May, 1918.

FIRST LORD,—

I have had the privilege of a talk with Sir Oswyn Murray to-night, and he tells me that in his opinion you are satisfied that in circulating the paragraph in reference to the late First Sea Lord I had no ulterior object of advertising him at the expense of those now in power ; on the other hand, you consider I was guilty of an error of judgment in circulating the paragraph without reference to you or to the First Sea Lord. If this is the case I am prepared to express regret for this error in judgment, but at the same time I cannot help expressing still more regret that you should have thought me capable of disloyalty to the present Board, which *nothing* that I have done in the last three years and nine months has warranted.

(Signed) D. BROWNRIGG.

7, SAVILE ROW, W.

DEAR FIRST SEA LORD,—

I am enjoying a holiday peremptorily forced on me by the First Lord yesterday, and none the less welcome on that account ; I assume it is to be permanent, and therefore I write to you to say Good-bye.

The First Lord yesterday was courteous and kind enough to accuse me of "boosting an Admiral" when criticising my conduct in circulating the paragraph about J. R. J.

*You* know me much better than the other three 1st Sea Lords I have served under, and I feel quite confident that you will acquit me of intriguing in any shape or form—for or against anybody ; it is utterly foreign to my nature and repugnant to me.

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I cannot think either that the paragraph in question can have hurt *you* ; and I am rather at a loss to understand the 1st Lord's attitude of mind towards it, seeing that he was 1st Lord then—as now, and it was inconceivable to me that as head of the Navy he could object to a good word being said of *any* Admiral. However that may be, I wish to say that, if, as I fear may be the case from the 1st Lord's action, *you* have been in any way annoyed by my action, I pray you believe that *nothing* could hurt me more than to think that anything I have done—or left undone—had worried you.

I do not ask *you* to absolve me of ulterior motives, for I know that you are incapable of thinking that possible.

Yours ever,

(Signed) D. BROWNRIGG.

On the following day I received a reply from the First Lord in which he returned to the attack, telling me that with my experience of Press work I ought to have known how this paragraph would be used and interpreted, and that I was “in fact initiating a personal advertisement which, I am sure, Lord Jellicoe would be the last to wish.” He disclaimed having accused me of disloyalty to the new Admiralty administration. “This I do not do,” he added, “but I am glad to have and accept your assurance that you are incapable of it, and also the testimony of your friends to the same effect.” He added that he would be glad if I would resume my work as Chief Censor, being confident that he could rely upon “a more discriminating judgment” on my part in future. I received also a short and charming note

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from Sir Oswyn Murray, in which he said, "It has been a great happiness to-day to realise that the Chief Censor's office is doing 'business as usual.'"

I cannot understand now why objection was taken to the paragraph. It did not detract in any way from anybody then at the Admiralty, and I knew perfectly well that the facts must be known some day. But I never expected to be vindicated so speedily as I was by the statement in Lord Jellicoe's book, in which he tells how in September, 1917, he gave directions to the Plans Division, of which Sir Roger Keyes was the head, to prepare for blocking Zeebrugge.

Moreover, I was well aware that Admiral Bacon had, as he has since revealed with much detail, done a lot of preparation also, and was indeed going to carry out an attack in February if he had not in the meantime been superseded by Sir Roger Keyes. So I never imagined that there could be any objection to the truth being put out.



## CHAPTER IX

### AUTHORS, PUBLISHERS, AND SOME OTHERS

Mr. Alfred Noyes and the "Mystery Ships"—Publication stopped—Sir Henry Newbolt and "Christmas Sales"—Mr. W. L. Wyllie's patience—An enterprising Publisher—Fiction and Fact—A Censorship "Snag"—The "Q" Boats' Imaginary Baby—A Narrow Escape—Mr. Muirhead Bone and his Brother as Collaborators—"Sob-stories"—Lord Jellicoe as Author—The End of the Censorship.

I HAVE pleasant recollections of my dealings with each and all of the above classes of—what shall I call them?—intellectuals, but I ask myself what their feelings are towards the individual whose office seemed always to be to thwart them and certainly almost always to irritate them, and—would any admit it?—sometimes to help them.

The first who looms large in my memory, perhaps because he was, I think, the first author to be employed by Government to write naval matter into propaganda form, is Alfred Noyes. He was sent pretty well everywhere he wished to go in order to obtain material for writing up the Auxiliary Patrol Service, &c. I pointed out to him that Kipling had already done this in "The Fringes of the Fleet." He agreed, but said he would treat it from a different angle. I agreed to that, and off he went.

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He produced a lot of fine stuff, though perhaps we weren't trained to appreciate it at its real value at the time. His next effort on the Navy's behalf was a bit more risky (not *risqué*), so to speak. "Mystery Ships, or Trapping the U-Boats," I believe it was called. I fought the cause of that work, though I don't believe Mr. Noyes ever believed me when I assured him of this. I suppose that a poet *can* be sceptical as to the truth of a statement when it is made by a Chief Censor. Anyhow, I fought the cause of that book right up to two separate First Sea Lords, got it past one, and bumped it into another, had it, so to speak, thrown back at my head, and, still fighting, finally got an unwilling consent for its publication in a very expurgated form.

Presently it appeared on the bookstalls without my having seen it in final proof form, and (from the artists' and publishers' and bookstalls' point of view) with a beautifully illustrated cover showing in colour what the artist conceived to be a "mystery ship."

That tore it!

The first that I knew of it was when I was sent for and "put on the carpet" before various high and somewhat querulous, not to say peevish, officials who asked me—well, it may be guessed what the trend of the crisp questions were! All I could say was that it had been understood between Mr. Noyes and myself that I was to see the book in final proof form before it was let loose "in time for the Christmas sales." (That ghastly expression haunts me yet!)

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There were hurried and hectic interviews between Mr. Noyes and myself, and, I suppose, between the poet and the publisher. The net result was that the book was taken off sale and, I suppose, involved one or the other, or both of them, in considerable monetary loss, which I regret. I believe they will both admit, however, that it was due to a misunderstanding between *them* that this regrettable incident took place. But it cost me the regard of Mr. Noyes, and, as I have not many poets among my acquaintances, the case sticks in my mind and somewhat rankles.

With Sir Henry Newbolt, also, I had long and intimate and, to me at all events, very pleasant relations. He worked on and off for about a year in one of my rooms in the old building of the Admiralty, and he was given access to all necessary documents in the preparation of his book on our anti-submarine work. During the latter part of 1918 "Christmas sales" began to loom large on *his* horizon, and after a somewhat protracted discussion with me as to the wisdom or otherwise of publishing certain details that I maintained would be better omitted, I am glad to think that he got his book published in time to secure this coveted market. I hope and believe that it had a well-merited success, since I personally received three copies from kind friends for presentation to my son and one for my own Christmas delectation—as though I did not know it by heart backwards and forwards, from cover to cover!

With Mr. W. L. Wyllie, R.A., as an *author* I

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had much correspondence, and the book which he finally produced, beautifully illustrated—and which is, in my opinion, in its particular style, one of the best books produced during the War—lay in a little pigeon-hole, decently curtained off from curious gaze, for nearly three years with the legend over it, “R.I.P.” It was with real pleasure that I eventually released it, for though the delay must have been trying both to him and to his publishers there was never an acid nor an impatient word from this delightful gentleman—nothing but ready acquiescence in what was considered to be the best interests of the Navy and the country.

In noticeable contrast with this fine standpoint was that of a publisher who had secured publication of a translation of a story by a German U-boat captain of his cruises. The book was replete with lies, and told horrible stories of British duplicity and brutality, referred to the carrying of troops by our hospital ships, and contained other features entirely objectionable and undesirable for publication in this country or under our ægis. I submitted the book to half a dozen different authorities after I had reached my own decision on it, but without putting my views forward, so that each person gave entirely independent and unbiased views on it. They were each and all of opinion that it was a fine piece of German propaganda, and as such should not be given the benefit of circulation through British channels. This publisher returned to the charge over and over again, and

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I think felt he had been harshly and stupidly treated. At least that is what I was able to gather as the correspondence grew.

Another publisher, I remember, wrote to the First Lord (Sir Edward Carson) suggesting that he should produce a book on the Navy. His letter was sent to me to handle. I wrote to him asking him to come and see me, which he did. He then unfolded as much of his plan as he had outlined in his head. It was this: he had virtually secured Mr. —, one of our most popular writers. I daren't give his name for fear of getting mixed up in some sort of controversy, but he has written on the Navy, on animals, on history, has published most delightful verse, and he has frequently been named as *the* man for the Poet Laureateship during the War. He also mentioned Mr. —, a fine artist, who would illustrate the work and make it a very attractive proposition.

He then ingenuously set about asking me how I should propose to subdivide this work. I pleaded that that was not my *métier*, and that having but scant literary knowledge and less turn for book-making my opinion could not be worth much. However, he insisted, and in the course of a pleasant half-hour we got out the rough chapter headings for such a work as he proposed. I assured him that as soon as he had got out a schedule of dates with his two distinguished men he could rely upon my giving them every possible facility. After ten days or so he wrote

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and said that the author could not be got, nor could the artist. What did I suggest?

I proposed a further interview at which I endeavoured to hide my surprise at his brazen cheek, and suggested one or two other authors who knew the Navy from A to Z. One of them wrote to me and thanked me for having put the business his way and regretted that he was too busy, as he would much have liked the job. Finally I suggested to this persevering publisher another author whose books I had read and thoroughly enjoyed, and though he did not, so far as I was aware, know much of the Navy, he certainly knew all about the sea, and Mr. Publisher eventually secured him.

This author and I presently met in my office and we had a very pleasant series of interviews which, I believe, both interested and amused him as much as they did me. On one occasion he called, bringing me a letter from another artist or author (I forget which) saying that, in the opinion of the writer, the Admiralty were treating my author shamefully, as they should be paying him at least £5,000 for taking on this job. I opened my eyes a bit and asked him if he was under the impression he was writing the book by Admiralty request? Yes. He certainly thought it was something of that sort. "That being the case," I remarked, "you had better sit down and make yourself comfortable and read the contents of that dossier of correspondence from cover to cover," which he diligently did. He was amazed as he traced

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the developments of the book from the first suggestion onwards and realised for the first time that things are not always what they seem! I leave it at that!

What really matters, however, is that he produced a capital book, and, in sending me a copy, he inscribed it: "With the author's gratitude and in memory of the fascinating days spent in touch with the Navy," and enclosed a letter as follows: "Here is the book which I should not have had the opportunity of writing but for your intervention. Will you accept it and forget the various difficulties it entailed at a time when the War and its concomitant burdens occupied all our thoughts?" For my part I have nothing but gratitude to him for his acceptance of a difficult position and for his success in handling a task from which many would have shrunk.

Mr. Publisher never wrote to me any more, and he assuredly never will now (at least, I hardly think so).

Of the making of books there is no end. So many books passed through my hands during those whirlwind four and a-half years that to attempt to write even a scrap about all of them would fill a volume, yet each and all presented an interesting situation to be dealt with (usually in a hurry) with the author "and / or" (as we say on bills of lading) publisher waiting outside the door. But I will just touch on one or two that stand out in the long list for one reason or another.

Two books prepared by a gifted mother from

## Indiscretions of the Naval Censor

notes supplied by her son stand out as real chapters in a lad's life; the titles tell the whole story—and what a story! “From Dartmouth to the Dardanelles,” and the sequel, “From Snotty to Sub.” Fortunately I had had the privilege of rendering some slight service to the lady before the question of any authorship arose; and we finished up our literary relationship on good terms, although my views as to what could and could not properly be published did not at once appeal to her, and we had had at times some acid correspondence. She wrote in the front of the book she sent me: “With most grateful thanks for much kind sympathy and valuable help.”

I think one of the rocks we split upon was the fact that the lad had evidently kept a diary whilst in the Grand Fleet, which was against orders. This may sound strange, and no doubt history will be the poorer in consequence, but the order was given after the Jutland battle, when a chest of drawers from one of the sunken ships was found floating about; it contained a very complete officer's diary, which might have fallen into German hands.

The authors always produced the same plea: “But I am under contract with my publisher to produce by such and such a time.” I pray I may not find myself in a similar position in regard to this assortment of trifles! It was useless to point out that it was through no fault of mine that they had become involved in difficulties with publishers. They merely thought me a soulless blockhead.



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One naval author, whose work comes before my mental vision, had produced some really excellent stories—pure fiction. He was much incensed because I would not pass one of them in which one of our small craft was represented as having captured a German submarine, and hauled the captain into the ward-room where a mock court-martial had been held on him, by which he had been sentenced to death—a sentence duly carried out by the First Lieutenant!

This would most certainly have been twisted and distorted by the Germans into a semblance of fact and used as propaganda against us, as was indeed done in the case of the fantastic story (which I passed) written by the Naval correspondent of *The Times*, in which he said that one of the successful ruses employed against German submarines was that of having a man dressed up as a woman on board a "Q" boat, with a baby in her arms. When the German submarine came alongside, the baby—in reality a bomb—was flung down the open hatch of the submarine and finished her off with all hands. Whether this fable was seriously believed by the Germans I doubt, but they certainly quoted it as another instance of our unfair methods of fighting.

I suppose I may fairly be "strafed" for having passed it, but in those strenuous days one had to allow oneself a laugh now and again! Here I may mention that the caption "Passed by Censor" was *never any guarantee of truth*. It merely meant that in my judgment the statements *could not be of benefit to*

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*our enemies, or harmful to the interests of this country.* I frequently noticed that writers and others claimed, or assumed in advertisements of books, &c., that the official stamp "Passed by Censor" was a guarantee of official accuracy, which of course was not the case. It was not a censor's business to do more than prevent anything being published, fact or fiction, which might serve the ends of our enemies.

Of authors who are journalists also there are a goodly number I could pass in review. Their names are known in every household in the country which takes any interest in the Navy—Archibald Hurd, Cope Cornford, H. C. Ferraby, "Jackstaff," and many others.

Hurd I had known many years, since the days when Sir John Fisher was Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth and had ordered me to write him a report on the cooking arrangements of the Navy, which report Mr. Hurd, with my glad consent, purloined and published. He has done me many a good turn since, and he will cry quits with me over this, I hope!

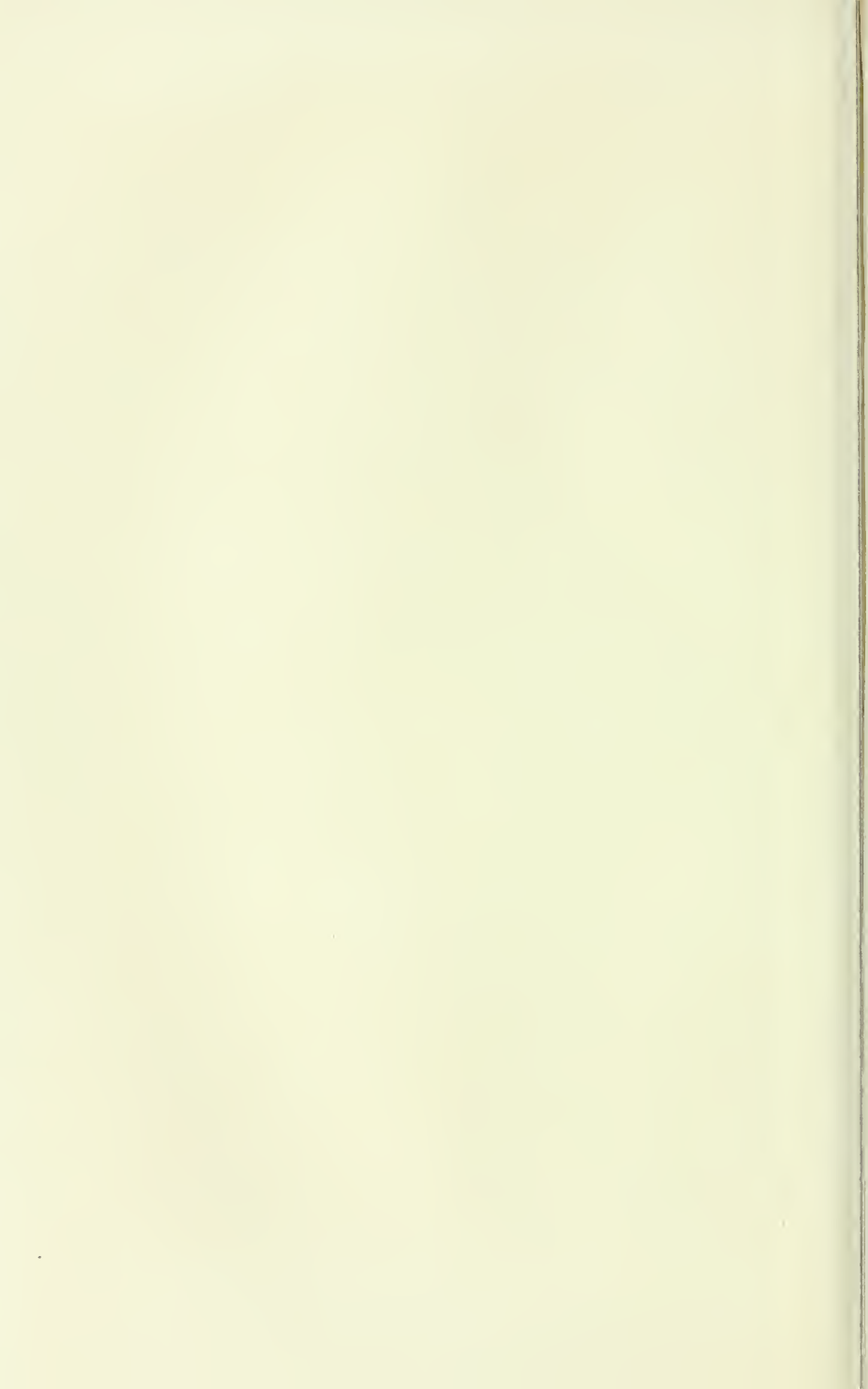
With regard to Mr. Ferraby, I remember that this enterprising young man was very anxious to go for a cruise in a submarine during the summer of 1918. I promised to fix it up for him and did so, with the utmost secrecy—one always had to be very particular not to let another man know what was being arranged for his friend and rival. In due course I was told by our Submarine Department that a boat would be leaving Harwich for an eight to ten



**NETS AND MINES TO STRAFE U-BOATS**

Women preparing mines for the nets

*The publication of this photograph was stopped by the Censor*



## Authors and Publishers

days' cruise, and arrangements would be made to accommodate Mr. Ferraby, for which I expressed my gratitude. Just as the officer was going out of my room I asked him what work the boat was going on, and was told she was going on patrol inside the German minefields. I gave the matter a moment's thought, and foresaw all the troubles that might happen (I naturally had not consulted my Chiefs, being pretty sure of my ground by this time), and I decided there and then not to send Mr. Ferraby on that trip. It turned out well for him that he did not go, for that submarine never returned.

I told him this one evening at a cheery little farewell dinner which was given at the "Cheshire Cheese" to Admiral Hall by the journalists who used to attend his weekly Press conferences, and to which I was also invited, perhaps on the principle of "bane and antidote"—I leave it to the reader to judge which was the antidote. In his speech Mr. Ferraby told his confrères this story, and toasted me as "our best-loved enemy."

I have told elsewhere of the disappointment I had suffered in connection with the writing of the story of the Mercantile Marine. But I had by no means given up the idea of getting this piece of work done, so when in the spring of 1918 Mr. Muirhead Bone (with whom I was very well acquainted, being a fervent admirer of his art) came to me and suggested that he and his brother, Captain David Bone, of the Anchor Line, should jointly write such a book, it

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need not be added that I literally jumped at the notion. I had read Captain David Bone's "The Brass Bounder," as thrilling a simple story of the sea as it is possible to read, and as he had been three times torpedoed during the War, and was at the moment on leave waiting for a new ship, it seemed to me an ideal arrangement.

Captain David Bone presently came along and saw me, and I arranged with the two brothers that they should go everywhere in this country where men and ships of the Merchant Service were to be found, whether working in conjunction with the Royal Navy or, as in many cases, on their own. I wrote at once to Messrs. Henderson Brothers, asking them to lend his services to us for three months definite, to which they readily agreed, and within a week the brothers set out on their travels. I saw but little of them, though I heard from them from time to time, and presently Captain Bone, finding he had got himself involved in a longer job than he had reckoned on, asked me to get him an extension of leave.

This was done and the work completed, and Captain Bone sailed away on his company's business; and this work will, I feel confident, repay me for any little trouble that I have taken. It forms a really worthy record of the magnificent tale of heroism and devotion of the officers and men of the Mercantile Marine.

Of "Jackstaff," otherwise J. J. Bennett, I have this much to say. He was out with me in destroyers

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in 1898 and 1899, and he was both persistent and pleasant in those days. He is no less so to-day.

When Sir John Jellicoe came down from the Grand Fleet to the Admiralty, he brought with him "Bartimeus," and told me that I was to use him for writing anything required for the Press. I had never met "Bartimeus," though I had of course read his books and enjoyed them. On seeing this frail young officer, and asking him what he had been doing in the Grand Fleet with Sir John, he said he had been in the "Foreword Department," so I trust that those who invited "Forewords" from the first Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet will duly note, and very well fitted he was for the business. I soon got busy on him, and I think he must have hated me when I had suddenly to blow in and tell him to fling himself into the train and go away and write up such and such an incident, giving him my view as to its treatment—e.g. "sob-story," "not too much 'slush'" (rather a weakness of his this latter), "subject to be handled with dignity—no slang."

Though his artistic soul may have resented these methods, savouring of hack-journalism, he remained cheery and always "delivered the goods." If we sometimes didn't see eye to eye as to the excursions into the realms of "slush," we have had (apart from the said jobs he has done for me) many a good laugh together. His "Navy that Flies" articles were really excellent, and nearly every paper in the country printed them *in extenso*. One notable exception was

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the paper belonging to one of our most caustic critics, who said that they hadn't been consulted as to how many words they could find room for, and that it wasn't the sort of stuff they desired. They wanted to get the matter for themselves and write it up in their own way, and a lot more to the same effect, which I already knew by heart. Our joy was great when some four or five weeks later this paper reprinted the articles word for word, copied from an American newspaper.

Whatever fault "Bartimeus" may have had to find with me for harshness or crudity in criticism, he very generously forgave me, I hope, as in sending me a copy of his novel (and I gave him some wholesome advice in regard to his attitude towards critics), he addressed me as "Chief Censor and Chief Critic." I am glad to have met him, and I hope his real literary ability will bubble up again presently. Incidentally he will probably prefer his "slush" to my "tripe"!

The last author to whom I will refer is Lord Jellicoe. I had known for six or more months (long before any criticisms by amateur and ill-informed writers of the Battle of Jutland had been published) that he was writing a book, describing the organisation and training of the Grand Fleet and so on during his arduous period as Commander-in-Chief, but it came as a bit of a shock to me when, somewhere about the middle of December, 1918 (after the Armistice), I received a bundle of proofs and a letter asking me



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if I would go through them and see if there was anything objectionable in them.

Before starting in on them, I wrote back and said that as there was now no question of censorship (this had been entirely removed since November 20), why was it necessary for *me* to go through the book? I thought that I had got clear of proofs, &c., for the rest of my natural life, having been satiated with them for the last four and a half years.

The reply I got was flattering and left me, as ex-Chief Naval Censor, no option but to get to work, which I did without delay, as, according to plan, the publishers were waiting for the proofs. There was not much with which I could find fault, but I pointed out to Lord Jellicoe certain technical passages that betrayed things not yet ripe for publicity, and I got a few statements deleted or altered. I worked all through my short Christmas holiday at that and sent the proofs back to him in good time.

Meanwhile I had been consulted as to the possibility or the advisability of attempting to stop the publication of the book, and my advice had been given as though I had been unaware of the fact that Lord Jellicoe had a book preparing for the press, and was to the effect that he could not be stopped publishing it, if he was determined to do so, and that therefore it was better to say nothing or to give a reluctant consent. In sending me a copy, Lord Jellicoe wrote in the cover: "With grateful thanks"—ample reward for whatever I had done in the matter.

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He has been much criticised for writing this book, but I do not see that it has done anything but good. The public has been told for the first time of the wonderful way in which he created the Grand Fleet out of the elements he took over on August 4, 1914, and has learnt the whole and complete facts of the Jutland battle. The book is so modest in tone and generous in awarding praise that it cannot raise a feeling of resentment in anybody. We live in days of such tremendous rapidity, what with the telephone, wireless, cables, fast traffic, &c., that our minds receive many thousands of impressions daily. Unless, therefore, contemporary facts are written down fairly quickly they will be wiped off the tablets of our memory and the rush of fast-moving world events will crowd them out. Posterity will then be robbed of the priceless benefit of records such as we have had handed down to us by the sailors of Nelson's day. The very fact of publication produces a crop of correspondence, all of which will help the historian of the future.

We may hope that all books written by the great men in this war will be characterised by the same modesty and generosity to others as that of Lord Jellicoe.

I cannot refrain from telling the following story as illustrating the peculiarly detached attitude of publishers from public events. About January of 1919 a friend of mine brought me the manuscript of a book intended for publication and asked me if I

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“thought it was all right.” I said that there was now no censorship and suggested offering it to a publisher. When the publisher read the book he said it was excellent, but of course the Censor must be consulted. So the would-be author informed the publisher that there was now no censorship. The publisher expressed extreme surprise and said he was unaware of that fact.

I append the notice which was cabled to all our colonies and dependencies on November 18, 1918, i.e. as soon as the German capital ships and submarines had commenced to surrender. When it was evident that the Germans were going to carry out the Naval terms of the Armistice I got authority from the First Lord and First Sea Lord to remove our Naval censorship entirely, and this was done without waiting for any Cabinet sanction, which solemnly came along some days afterwards. For some reason, best known to the Press, all the newspapers, with two or three exceptions, notably the *Daily Telegraph* and *Morning Post*, inserted the notice in small print, and most of them in that part of the paper in which it would be almost sure to escape notice! I really believe they resented losing their whipping-boy in the shape of the Naval Censor. They might at least have had the courtesy and decency to say: “Well, at all events this irritating restriction on our freedom is removed at the earliest possible moment,” but they did not do any such thing.

# Indiscretions of the Naval Censor

*Serial No.—C. 9557.*

PRESS BUREAU, 7.15 P.M.

18th *November*, 1918.

The Secretary of the Admiralty makes the following announcement :—

After 12 noon on Wednesday, 20th November, the censorship on all Naval articles, photographs, &c., will be removed. The Press, Authors, Artists, Photographers and Cinematographers need not submit anything to Naval Censorship, that is to say, they will revert to their pre-war practices.

The censorship on all Naval books, articles, &c., held up during the War will be taken off as from 12 noon on Wednesday 20th.

## CHAPTER X

### PRESSMEN OF ALLIED COUNTRIES

“ Bouquets ” for American Journalists—A Memory of Pekin—  
“ My dear Mr. Tuohy ”—The Fleet Press Message—  
“ Bright and French ”—Mr. Charles Grasty’s “ Discoveries ”—An Anglo-American Difficulty—The Problem of a Wife—An Omitted Invitation—A Ten-minute Interview with the First Sea Lord—Two French Journalists—  
“ What is the British Navy doing ? ”—An American Naval Commission—*Persona Grata* in the British Fleet—A Censor’s Error of Judgment.

THIS chapter deals almost entirely with American journalists, whose country, doubtless for good reason, never was an Ally of ours, but merely an “ Associated Power,” according to the decision of her Government. I can, however, say quite honestly that several of her journalists long before the United States came into the War were in effect Allies, and after she came in practically *all* became effective Allies of ours.

A long succession of them passes before my mind’s eye, and a few of them stand out very conspicuously, but what remains quite clear as the outstanding feature of my dealings with them was their absolute reliability, their honesty in preserving secret information which, for some reason or another, I had been compelled, or perhaps had thought wiser, to impart to them, and their loyalty in never making use of it until I gave them the word “ go.” Keen? Oh,

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yes! None were keener. They would go anywhere at any time and do anything, though they didn't differ in that respect from their British brothers of the craft. They were very persistent and persuasive, very hungry for "interviews" with the great ones of this (naval) earth, and I cannot help thinking that gracefully to concede ten minutes to an extremely intelligent writer, who after all submits his interview in typescript within twelve to twenty-four hours, is a little compliment that it would be wise to pay the foreign newspaper men more often and more gracefully and more ungrudgingly in the future than it has been done in the past.

Sir Rosslyn Wemyss,\* the First Sea Lord of the last year of the War, whilst hating personal publicity no less than his predecessors, was very kind and obliging about this, and never refused me, trusting that I had sufficient discrimination to bring along only the men of importance.

No doubt the representatives of the great American journals who were either resident here or were specially sent over during the War period are mainly among the "top notchers" of their profession, precisely as are our leading newspaper representatives in foreign capitals. The majority of these American men were University men of wide interests, and well able to take a broad and sane view of everyday events. Well, that's enough "bouquets" for American journalists!

\* Now, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Wester Wemyss.

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The first one I call to mind was a charming young man I spotted at one of Admiral Hall's little weekly informal talks that he had instituted as a rendezvous for the Press. I went up to him and asked him if he remembered me. No, he guessed not. "Well," I said, "seeing that I am fifty and you are perhaps thirty, perhaps you will remember a Sunday forenoon session and subsequent lunch party in the American Embassy 'compound' in Peking in the summer of 1911, when the Revolution was going on in China?"

Oh yes, Mr. Patchin (*Chicago Tribune*) was now able to remember that day; he had been in effect trying to beg, borrow, or pinch a set of films for a Kodak, and I reminded him of that too!

Perhaps I saw more of Mr. Ben Allen (*Associated Press*) during the early part of the War than of any of his colleagues. Shortly after the United States joined in, however, he deserted us here and went over, I was told, to join Mr. Hoover. I can only say that the *Associated Press* lost a good man, I lost a good friend, and Mr. Hoover won all the time.

Looking back through the records of visitors to the Fleet and bases (one of the few records which fortunately I have kept), I find such well-known names as Mr. James Tuohy (*New York World*), to whom Mr. Balfour gave an interview, in the shape of a letter, "My dear Mr. Tuohy," shortly after he reached the Admiralty, and it became a sort of

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household word among those of us who tried to keep things cheerful. Whenever we were in doubt as to how to make anything public, we suggested "My dear Mr. Tuohy." I hope this gentleman appreciates how useful he was to us, as I expect he was, and is, to his fine paper.

Mr. Marshall (*New York Times*) is another who figures often in my records. On one occasion when he visited the fleet he was got at by some young gentlemen who told him that the "Fleet Press Message" which I sent out daily at midnight was a "dud" show; and couldn't they have something more lively? or some complaint of that sort. I imagine things were a bit lively when the conversation took place. It reached the ears of the representative of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, who speedily handed it on to the First Lord, whereupon I had to wire to the Captain of the Fleet to ask what complaint there was as to the "Fleet Press Message"?

I should say that this message had been started during the Dardanelles business, and extended to the Grand Fleet, and the arrangement was that any news contained in the late evening papers should be condensed and forwarded. I invariably sent results of important races, boxing matches, &c., but never any divorce cases, or home political news, unless there was a change of Government. Well, the reply came back that the messages were all right, and who the — was complaining? I only mention this to show how work may be made for those who already have



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their fair share of it! Mr. Marshall meant nothing but good, and I believe that what his friends had complained about was the jumbled up form in which the matter was distributed in the Grand Fleet, which was no business of mine. I still believe the conversation took place about 1.30 A.M., and I told Mr. Marshall so!

With the heads of the Associated Press (Mr. Collins) and United Press (Mr. Keen) I was constantly in the closest touch, and when the U.S. destroyer flotillas came and took a hand in the game at Queenstown, it was decided between Admiral Sims and his staff and myself to get the Commander-in-Chief at Queenstown, Sir Lewis Bayly, who loathed *all* newspaper men and publicity in any form, to accept two American Press representatives. It would be obviously impossible to get any "bunch" of newspapers to nominate two of their own number, so we decided to get the two powerful agencies to detail one man each for duty at Queenstown—not to report news, but to let the folks at home in the U.S.A. know something of the intimate life of that squadron. We got two men and sent them off armed with every sort and kind of permit and sanction and blessing that I could think of, including a special recommendation to that magnificent officer, Commander Pringle, U.S.N., who commanded their destroyer mother-ship *Melville*. In the course of a few days the matter began to come in. One writer was short, crisp, truthful, and to the point, like a

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glass of rye; the other was voluminous and bright and bubbly, not unlike a glass of champagne.

In less than a fortnight the "champagne" man was back among us again. He was too "bright," I suppose, but all I could find out about him was that here he was again. The same thing happened to the same gentleman on the Western Front. After that we rubbed along with only one representative permanently among the flotillas. Presently, as U.S. writers of all sorts and kinds came along, like the words of the hymn, in "an ever-rolling stream," we gave up having a man in residence at all.

I noticed that the U.S. Naval Officers were not at all unlike our men, i.e. very averse from publicity, though I think they recognised perhaps more readily than ours the absolute necessity for it on the "Home Front," as we got to call it, and that people whose destroyer flotillas are two to three thousand miles away from home, and whose privilege it is to provide the ships, the men, and the money, are equally entitled to know something of what these ships and men are doing and how they are getting on, when such knowledge can be given without jeopardising their safety or the success of the operations they have in hand.

In the summer of 1917 there suddenly appeared on my horizon a genial and charming gentleman, Mr. Charles Grasty (*New York Tribune*). He had dropped in on us via the American Embassy, Paris; he had been in touch with General Pershing, and

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I gathered he had met Admiral Sims in London. The question of our tonnage losses was, of course, agitating us all pretty acutely, and whilst we did not want to hide material facts from the public, we certainly had no intention of making the Germans a present of any information by which they could check their submarine officers' reports and deduce any facts as to what trades or areas to concentrate on and so on. In fact, our object was to "keep them guessing."

Now along comes Mr. Grasty with every blessed fact and figure, and wants to cable them home; and I need hardly say that this happened on a Saturday afternoon, when, even in War, after three years of it, some of the "heads" tried to get out for a breath of air in the country. But my friend Mr. Grasty was like the deaf adder in the Psalms, which "refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." I tried him on golf, and told him I was "scratch" or "plus 2," I forget which (I have never played golf!), but only for a fraction of a second did he depart from his point—this being that he wanted to put these figures before the American public to remind them of the necessity for more destroyers over this side.

I asked him where he got his figures, it being obvious to me that he could only have got them from Lloyd's (who would not, I felt confident, disclose them), or from an official source. I suggested the necessity in which I might find myself of putting

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D.O.R.A. across him. With his comfortable smile he merely said he didn't think I would, and couldn't I guess where they had been got. I certainly *could*, and did guess. "Well, then," he said, "you see it's no use talking of D.O.R.A." He was clearly in the confidence of his own Army and Navy and Ambassador, and he had undoubtedly got the figures from the American Naval Headquarters, though he never actually owned up to it.

I coaxed permission out of the First Sea Lord to let him get away with the figures. Sir John Jellicoe naturally wanted the American people to know what we were "up against." But when I went to the First Lord's office it was not unnaturally a different story. Were our people to get these figures, which were rigidly kept from them, via an American paper? Were we to sanction such a message going over the cables? It was true, of course, that the American Government had the figures, so that we would not be telling *them* anything they did not know. The question was argued up and down and in every conceivable way. Eventually, after altering his figures a little and showing him where he was claiming a bit too much (but not where he was saying too little), I let him get away with his cable, and sat and waited for the storm to burst on my innocent head.

I believe Mr. Grasty would get away with the Rock of Gibraltar in his suit-case if he wanted it.

Another charming man and delightful writer who

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came over here in the late autumn of 1917 was Mr. Ralph Paine. Wherever he went he won friends. His first trip was to Queenstown to see the American destroyers. He went for ten days, and stayed with our Commander-in-Chief six weeks, and Sir Lewis Bayly in returning him to me, said: "If you have any more like him, send them along." That was a pretty good testimony as to his tact and popularity, combined with his discretion in the handling of facts. He saw every single thing there was to see in the life of that gallant flotilla, and never had a word censored or deleted from anything he wrote.

He subsequently went to Harwich, where he was equally appreciated, and presently went to the Grand Fleet, where unfortunately he was only able to spend two or three days with the American Battle Squadron under Admiral Hugh Rodman. He then began to wish to go home, and was actually on the point of getting off when I told him that, if he went without seeing the Western Front, he should never be forgiven, as he would miss one of the greatest educational sights of all time.

The time was short, but under the auspices of our Army men, who ran these Western Front trips so extraordinarily successfully and smoothly during the last three years of the War, I fixed him a five days' trip. He came back really grateful to me for having forced him to go. I hope that Peace will not keep him from returning here and renewing the many friendships he made whilst in this country.

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One American author insisted on travelling about with his wife, which was a rather tall order in war-time; however, he was so persistent in saying that the lady "collaborated" or "co-operated" with him (typewriting?) that for peace' sake I sent him and his lady to Queenstown to the horror of our Commander-in-Chief. On his return, and when he had got his manuscript through the U.S. Naval censorship and ours also, he demanded to go to the U.S. Naval Bases in France, of course accompanied by his partner. The U.S. Naval Headquarters Staff was as much upset as we were. We argued, however, that inasmuch as they would very likely get back to the States from France, their amazing demand should be complied with. And we were rewarded for our action by hearing that they had returned to the States. I merely mention this case to show what inconsiderate demands can be made in war-time, and as showing the contrast between men of this and the Ralph Paine type.

Amongst others who flit across the picture was a bright lad called Pat O'Flaherty. I believe the Grand Fleet will still remember his wild "whoops" at the end of a concert or "jamboree" he and other American journalists attended, when on a visit to Scapa. Also I do not imagine Mr. O'Flaherty will forget a trip in an airplane from Felixstowe, on which occasion he and his pilot got "fogged," and just missed the edge of a cliff by about six feet when flying at eighty miles an hour.

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Messrs. Draper (*New York Tribune*), Grigg (*New York World*), Morris (Associated Press), F. M. America (Associated Press), Clair Price (Curtis Brown News), are among those of the most important, and therefore successful, of the army of American pressmen. It was always a pleasure to try to meet their wishes, as they were so uniformly grateful for anything I could do for them. Many others—a host of them—there were, but I cannot pass them all in review at this distance of time.

One in particular I do remember who stalked into my room one day with about nine inches of cigar stuck in the side of his face, and on my remarking to him: "I don't *remember* inviting you to smoke here, Mr. —," he looked at me as if he felt seasick, and threw about 50 cents' worth of Corona Corona into the fireplace, when we proceeded amicably to business. I suspect that the char-woman who cleared up the fireplace had a supreme success with her man that evening on the strength of that cigar.

It will be remembered that comparatively early in the War—I think in 1915, or it may have been in 1916—the Hearst Press had transgressed certain accepted rules, and had, in consequence, been struck off the list of those to whom cable privileges were allowed. This was, I imagine, a serious handicap to them when the States came into the War. Finally, owing, I suppose, to pledges or assurances given on the other side, we got instructions that

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the representative of the Hearst Press was to be readmitted into the comity of American pressmen on terms of absolute equality.

As soon as that reached us, we started to give effect to it. One of the "International News" men, as the Hearst Press was rechristened, came along to me, and wanted an interview with the First Sea Lord. Acting on our new principles, I saw Sir Rosslyn and put the case to him. He put his usual question—was it for the good of the show that he should grant the interview?—and on my telling him that, in the altered circumstances, it could do nothing but good, he agreed to be interviewed, and in ten minutes he was, so to speak, "in the chair." The First Sea Lord opened by saying that he understood that there had been difficulties in the past, but that now these were removed, we should, as was the British custom, shake hands and be friends. There would be no reservations or hanging back on our part whilst his Agency for their part played the game.

Mr. ——— thanked the First Sea Lord, and started by saying that he was determined to put the War before the American people in all its brutality and horrors, and emphasised his intention of letting the American newspaper-reading public know that this was "No bloody Pink Tea." I watched Sir Rosslyn's face carefully, but there wasn't the twitter of an eyelid, and so the interview, which occupied but ten minutes, ran its course, and the Hearst



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Press representative was bowed out with satisfaction I think on both sides.

In a day or two I was rung up on the 'phone, and the head of the Agency told me that he was not getting freedom with his cabling. I could not understand this, as all my colleagues in the War Office, who controlled the cables, and also the Directors of the Press Bureau, had the same (Government) orders that I had. I made inquiries and found that he was not being hampered in any way *here*. Complaints and queries kept on coming in for some four to six weeks, I should say, and finally I cabled over to my opposite number in the Navy Department at Washington, and then found that whatever obstruction there was existed over there, and that is all I will say as to that. We carried out *our* part of the bargain, and no doubt there was good reason for the action taken over there.

Of French journalists the outstanding names are those of M. Coudurier de Chassigne (*L'igaro*) and M. de Marsillae (*Le Journal*). Both these gentlemen were resident here. The former only went on one or two trips under our auspices when some slight censoring of the manuscript disinclined him for further glimpses of our hospitality or activities. Also, no doubt, he was very fully occupied in London as President of the Foreign Journalists' Society, on whose behalf he busied himself unceasingly. M. de Marsillae, on the other hand, was very active, and having considerable enterprise and charm of manner

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I gave him very many facilities, of which he made good use, as I considered that he could benefit our cause in France.

The sequel came at a Press conference in 1917, when I was directly tackled as to why the Allied gentleman was being given more facilities than were being accorded to our own men? My answer was that we badly needed propaganda in the country districts of France, where it was reported that the people were asking: "What is the British Navy doing?"; whereas *here* our folks knew what we were doing to a far greater extent. Still, I was rather severely heckled, and in consequence I had with regret to shut down on some of his activities. He never caused me a moment's anxiety, though it is true that he was a little over anxious in his inquiries in the Dover district on one occasion. I assume that he "smelt" the preparations for the Zeebrugge business, and wanted to be on the spot when the time came. At all events, Admiral Bacon asked me to bring him back to London, which I did without hurting his feelings, I believe.

In a category apart from all the other writers it has been my pleasure to help, I place Lewis Freeman, and for the reason that he served as an Honorary Lieutenant R.N.V.R. for the last twelve months of the War in the Grand Fleet. This came about as follows. Freeman was one of many who came to me wanting this and that trip "squared" for him. He was not a journalist, but a magazine and

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book writer. The first record I have of him was his asking on May 31, 1916 (auspicious date) for an interview with Captain Gwatkin Williams, whose story of H.M.S. *Tara* and his captivity for some months in North Africa and his rescue by the Duke of Westminster, then with the armoured cars, will be remembered. I was struck by the delicacy and restraint shown in his handling of that story, and his scrupulous care not to interfere with Captain Williams's own publication of it.

I next arranged for him—on July 29, 1916—to pay a visit to Harwich, and obtained permission for him to go on board one of our submarines at the moment when she came alongside the jetty on return from a week's patrol. Fortunately, there was a thick fog well out to sea off Harwich, so Mr. Freeman had to kick his heels about in the depressing little town of Harwich for a day and half. There he entered into conversation with the people, and got on to the subject of Captain Fryatt and his murder by the Germans.

Eventually, after some twenty-four to thirty hours' delay, the submarine arrived alongside, and Mr. Freeman prepared and submitted his article on what he saw and heard there; but it was not that article which decided his British Naval career for him, but another which he wrote for *Land and Water*, entitled "To British Merchant Captains," which marked him out in my mind as apart from all other overseas war writers I had met up to then. I was

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immensely struck by his sympathy with and knowledge of the British Merchant Navy the wide world over.

When I wanted an American writer to go to the Grand Fleet to live there, and to record for the benefit of the American people the life and doings of that Fleet, I at once decided on Freeman, if he would take the job. I looked about for him for some weeks, and heard that he was on the Italian Front, and then on the Serbian Front, and knocking about generally "out there."

However, one evening early in December, 1917, I ran into him just outside our old Admiralty entrance in Whitehall, and told him I had been wanting him. I took him into the office, and set my plan before him. He said he wanted twenty-four hours in which to think it over, but long before the time was up he had accepted, and all I then had to do was to get approval from my Chiefs, and make sure that the U.S. Embassy had no sort of objection.

We made him a Lieutenant R.N.V.R. Messrs. Gieve fitted him out in uniform, and on December 22 he joined the Grand Fleet in H.M.S. *Erin*. During his stay in that Fleet—i.e. till after the return of the Allied cruise for the inspection of the German bases, air stations, &c. (which he well described in the *Cornhill Magazine*), he lived on board all sorts of craft from battleships to destroyers, met everybody there was to meet and know, and, though a very quiet, reserved man, was welcomed everywhere. He

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made none but friends in every ship he served in, and he very amply fulfilled every expectation I had formed of him. His judgment was good, and his taste in handling the mass of matter with which his well-stored head was full was above criticism.

I see that in a publication of his called "Many Fronts," which he sent me at this New Year, 1919, he inscribes it: "To the only Censor whose head I never wanted to punch." Well, I am glad of that, as—well, the advice I would give to anybody who is about to shake hands with Freeman is to get hold *first*, for if he catches your hand his paw will squash it into pulp, and give you cause to remember it all your life!

I will finish up by quoting the remark of an American correspondent to me when the States had been in the War about six to nine months: "Our chaps let us see a hell of a lot and pass nothing, whereas you fellers don't let us see anything but pass a lot more than our men." It was certainly true that the U.S. Naval censorship was vastly more strict than ours, and I think naturally so, for they were new-comers and inexperienced at the game.

I have one bright recollection in this connection. I sent my tame photographer over to Queenstown to get a series of interesting and intimate pictures of the U.S. destroyer flotilla. I sent the result, some ninety-six pictures (among which were many groups of officers and men) across to my opposite number at Washington for issue to the Press, and we

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arranged by cable for simultaneous publication there and here, and he was to cable if, in his judgment, any need be stopped. To my amazement he stopped all the groups, but went out of his way to pass one—a “close up,” showing in detail the fittings for releasing depth charges!—one that I, of course, had marked “stopped.” Fortunately there was time to correct this ruling, and all was well.

Bless their hearts! I mention this to show how easy it is to get off the rails in matters of censorship.

## CHAPTER XI

### VISITORS TO THE GRAND FLEET

Visit by the Archbishop of York—The "Mystery" Port—Mrs. Humphry Ward's "England's Effort"—Journalists on Tour—Some Russian Sightseers—The American Ambassador and his Son—Organising a Visit—An evening "Breeze" in an Hotel—"Chaperon" Officers and their Tact—The King's Visit—Photographers Official and Unofficial—A Misunderstanding.

No doubt a considerable number of people thought that the Grand Fleet was kept hidden away from them and that nobody was allowed to see it or visit it out of sheer malice or cussedness on the part of the Admiralty, or some other amorphous body of idiots who didn't appreciate what the public felt about its ships and sailors.

Fortunately I have kept a record of all visitors sent up to the fleet, commencing from July, 1915, when the Archbishop of York paid a visit to Sir John Jellicoe and the Grand Fleet. He was an old friend of the Navy, and it was well known what he had gone up for, as we issued photographs of him holding a service for thousands of men in one of the newly completed huge dry docks at Rosyth.

By the way, in those days, and for long after we had to refer to Rosyth only as "a northern port," or a few bolder ones would refer to it as "a Scottish

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port," whilst those who were reckless and wished to jeopardise the safety of the country and its fleet boldly and brazenly dragged in a reference to "the Scottish capital." Drat them! I can afford to laugh now, and I do; but every such reference brought me a crop of wires of protest, and in my heart I cursed the over-bold ones.

It is easy enough after reading Sir John Jellicoe's book to realise the anxiety and necessity for absolute secrecy, and it is also quite simple to appreciate the fact that, living away in the remote north as did the officers of the fleet, they never could take a broad view of what was risky and what was in effect absolutely innocuous in the publicity line as we in London were able to do owing to our having a bird's-eye view of the whole War in relation to both Allied and neutral countries.

The next party that went up was a group of French journalists in September, 1915, and with the exception of a few isolated visitors there were no more raids on the Navy until January 7, 1916, when we sent a huge party of British, Colonial, American, French, Italian, Scandinavian and Dutch journalists to Harwich. No doubt Tyrwhitt's squadron was the attraction, though I have no record. I only hope my friend didn't take the opportunity to flit to sea. Some of my friends did play me that trick once or twice, so it became clear that I must handle them gently to keep the right side of them.

This trip showed us that it was useless to mix up



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British and Colonial visitors even with our Allies like the French and Italians, and it was of course foolish to introduce them into the same party as Americans and Dutch and Scandinavian, all of whom were then neutrals. What a guiding or piloting officer would wish to say to one lot he could not of course say to another. We tried to avoid that in the subsequent trips arranged, though not always with complete success.

In February, 1916, Mrs. Humphry Ward went up to Rosyth. She was then writing her letters to Mr. Roosevelt, which were subsequently (1917) published under the title "England's Effort," the receipt of a copy of which I gratefully acknowledged. I fixed the trip for Mrs. Humphry Ward, and in making out her permit I was foolish enough to style her "journalist." I was not exactly surprised to hear that she was, so to speak, "looking for me," and I took care that she didn't find me. However, the trip came off all right except that the ship to which she had been invited was not in the Firth of Forth when she reached Hawes Pier. I mention that she had really been invited, as it was a bit of an innovation for a woman, however gifted, to go on board any of the ships in war-time. However, she was entertained farther north, as you may see in her fine book, in which she delightfully describes her experiences.

A week later a party of about twenty American journalists went to see the battle-cruisers. Next

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came Major the Reverend Gordon, of the Canadian Army, who writes under the name of "Ralph Connor," a charming gentleman who stayed a fortnight in the fleet and whom they would have kept if they could. I can't say more.

In March a party of seven Russian literary gentlemen went north, amongst whom the following names appear: Danchenko, Habokoff, Egoroff, Tolstoy, Dukouretsky, Bashmakoff, Chukowsky. I wonder how many of them have been "Bolshevised" off the face of the earth! Then in April we sent a party of American and Scandinavian journalists to Leith to see the working of the ships sent in by the Blockade. In the same month also a large party of French Senators and Deputies, accompanied by members of our Lords and Commons, visited the fleet at Rosyth, and all shipbuilding and armament works on the Tyne, Clyde, and at Sheffield. Among our party appeared the names of Messrs. Clemenceau, Doumer, d'Estournelles de Constant, Pichon, Chaumet, Leygues and eighteen others.

In May we dispatched a party of Russian visitors consisting of five members of the Council of the Empire and nine members of the Duma. Mr. Protopoff stands out among the latter, or he *did* stand out, as he has since been beheaded together with some others of his fellow visitors.

Between May 22 and 27 a party of twenty-two British journalists visited the Grand Fleet at Scapa, and subsequently went the round of the Clyde ship-

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building establishments. It was fortunate that these gentlemen had seen the Grand Fleet and its Commander-in-Chief so shortly before the Jutland battle, as they were able to form a sound opinion of the spirit which actuated and was vibrant in both officers and men, and the efficiency of the ships themselves.

Early in July some Italian and French journalists were sent up, so that they might see for themselves, repaired and in their place in the line again, the ships which the Germans boastfully and persistently claimed as being sunk. On July 20 and 21 a mixed party of journalists of all countries, including representatives of many technical papers, visited Rosyth and the Clyde, and at the close of the month our Overseas Dominions Parliamentary Representatives also paid the fleet a visit.

During the two years that the War had been in progress I had been fortunate in becoming acquainted with the U.S. Ambassador and his charming wife. They were kind enough to extend to me a friendship which I deeply appreciated, and visits to their house in Grosvenor Square were the nearest approach to visits to my own home that I could imagine.

In the autumn of 1916 the Ambassador's son, Mr. Arthur Page, came over on a visit, and in due course we met. He expressed a desire to visit the fleet, and I started out to arrange a trip for him. I was well aware of the difficult task the Ambassador had in "keeping the American end up" whilst at the same time maintaining correct and smooth

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diplomatic relations, and I had been keen that he (Mr. Page) should spare us the time for a holiday visit to the Grand Fleet. As he was too busy to get away, however, I was determined that we would do what we could for his son and so show the Ambassador vicariously what we thought of him and how greatly we appreciated his broad-minded and friendly attitude.

I put the matter before my chiefs and Sir John Jellicoe, and got nothing but help from all of them. I sent my assistant (Paymaster-Commander E. H. Shearme) and the Director of Naval Intelligence sent his personal assistant (Lieutenant C. P. Serocold, R.N.V.R.) up with Mr. Arthur Page, and he was given as good a trip as we could arrange and a really interesting one. He stayed two nights with Sir John Jellicoe, and I believe I am right in saying that no other visitor had ever done so before. At all events, the little party came back well satisfied with their trip, and I don't suppose it did Great Britain any harm.

I could go on right through each month of the year with lists of Overseas Prime Ministers, Agents-General, and, at very rare intervals, here and there a British Cabinet Minister, but it would be wearisome to do so. I only want to make it clear that the Grand Fleet, and especially those ships which happened to be at Rosyth, usually the battle-cruisers, were fairly—or as they would say, *unfairly*—frequently visited. It must be realised that every visit necessitated



H.M. THE KING VISITING THE GRAND FLEET: LEAVING A  
SUBMARINE

*This photograph shows the Censor's markings before publication was allowed*



The above photograph as published



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considerable work in the fleet. For instance, arrangements had to be made for the following :

(1) An officer to meet the visitors at the hotel in Edinburgh.

(2) Motors to transport them to Hawes Pier, Rosyth.

(3) Boats to bring them off.

(4) Distribution of the party amongst various ships.

(5) A detailed programme to be worked out, moving the party from ship to ship.

(6) A detailed programme on board each ship.

(7) Officers to be told off to pilot the guests round the ships.

(8) Luncheon parties to be arranged and suitable hosts provided, according to the rank and importance of the guests, and

(9) Similar arrangements for their transport on the return journey.

That was only the fleet end of the business. At our end all railway and hotel arrangements had to be carefully worked out and elaborated, towns and shipyards fitted in, and every sort and kind of official, including the local police, advised, since aliens were not allowed to sleep in prohibited areas, and all visitors seemed to hanker after these forbidden spots. Then arrangements had to be made for rapid censorship of written matter, and frequently in many different languages. Oh, no! It was no picnic for the hosts; but, like visiting the dentist, it had to

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be faced. It is not surprising that my friends in the fleet became fewer and beautifully less with each fresh incursion of what they sweetly described as "another of Brownrigg's circus parties!"

I may conclude the record for the year 1916 by adding that—apart from single visitors and parties consisting of only one or two—British, Canadian and Australian journalists visited the fleet on September 21. A large party of Overseas journalists followed on October 14, British journalists on October 27, a party of ten Brazilian Naval officers in November, and on December 29 sixteen Canadian M.P.s completed the business—not a bad record for a fleet which was trying to keep itself tuned up to the moment.

All, or most of, the foregoing had been arranged for between the Foreign Office Department of Information and my office, and official "chaperons" were provided, these being either special officers attached to the Foreign Office for the purpose, or certain officers on the staff of the Director of Naval Intelligence with whom, during the whole War, and on every possible subject, I worked in very close contact.

Comparatively full as had been the programme of visitors to the fleet during 1916, it soon became evident that there was to be a considerable increase in this branch of our business. In the spring of 1917 Commander C. C. Walcott, R.N., was appointed liaison officer between the Foreign Office, Depart-



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ment of Information, and the Admiralty. He worked under the joint control of the Director of Naval Intelligence and myself, as it was decided that the visits to the fleet could not be divorced from my office if I was to retain control over what was written and published.

For the purpose of regulating my position I was made a "Competent Naval Authority" under the Defence of the Realm Act, and, as such, permits to enter prohibited areas issued by me were valid anywhere, and these permits remained in force till the Armistice. I issued many hundreds of them, and only in very exceptional cases did any holder of them ever meet with any difficulty, though, of course, here and there an artist or a journalist, if he had been accompanied or guided by St. Peter himself, would not get by some over-zealous—I refrain from saying stupid—policeman or sentry who was unacquainted with the rules in force, other than those of his own immediate superiors.

Commander Walcott had to surround himself with officers to act as pilots or chaperons, but, like Oliver Twist, he always wanted more. Eventually we got together a very good lot of fellows, officers of the R.N.V.R., who were either invalided, or were too old to serve at sea, or had served on the Western Front for two and a half years or so. This was the case with Lieutenant Gordon Robinson, of the Royal Marines, who had been in France with the heavy howitzers since they first went out. I got

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him home because we wanted a man to counter nasty articles in the Foreign Press on shipping matters, and as he was the owner and editor of our leading shipping paper, *Fairplay*, I thought he would be a round peg in a round hole, which he proved to be.

When not employed in writing he was switched on to the piloting business, and very well he did it. He had some pleasant trips, and he made many friends, amongst whom, I am afraid, he cannot number one lady, a member of an American Mission of War Workers, who visited the fleet, the Clyde, and the vast explosive factory at Gretna Green. It was a very serious party, as may be judged from the following. It consisted of thirteen American men and six American women. We sent two journalists from London, in addition to giving a free run to the Glasgow Press, two photographers, Sir Campbell Stuart, Mr. (now Sir) Harry Brittain, and two other officers from the Ministry of Information; and to ensure success, so far as we could possibly do so, we sent Commander Walcott, two other Commanders, Lieutenant-Commander Beer (the Admiralty Press Officer), Lieutenant Gordon Robinson, and my assistant, Paymaster-Commander Shearme—a formidable but very capable and cheery array of talent!

It was of no avail. The ladies were disappointed at not being permitted to address any of the ships' companies at Rosyth, though they had their say at

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some of the Clyde shipyards. The first real breeze took place in the hotel in Glasgow, where some of the ladies thought they were not being properly treated, since the rooms which were allotted to them lacked some fitments which are to be found attached to most bedrooms in any self-respecting hotel in the States. It was in vain that it was explained that plumbers were at a premium and architectural alterations could not then be made so as to make the hotel conform to their wishes and enable them to feel "homelike." Such as we were, we had to remain.

That breeze never quite assumed the dimensions of a gale such as occurred the next night at Carlisle, where they stopped preparatory to visiting the works at Gretna. Whether it was the fatigue of the day, or the proximity of Gretna with its romantic history, I do not know, but at about 11 P.M., when the party were being shepherded to their respective rooms, shrieks were heard, and one lady came down again in hysterics, because it seems a lady junior to her in position had been given a bigger room than hers! Here was a nice position. Gordon Robinson looked about for his colleagues. They had quietly disappeared, and they hadn't even the excuse of going to get drinks, as the war-time restrictions put that out of the question! He had lingering hopes that one of the male guests, named Lovejoy, might happen along to help him out. Not a soul came to the rescue, and I have always enjoyed picturing to myself this fortunate officer calming the hysterical lady and arguing

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her into sweet reasonableness—an attractive thought for me, but Robinson declines to discuss it. On the return of the party, he asked for and obtained three days' leave!

Thus *all* the trips were not joy rides. On the other hand, he was so much of a success with a French Parliamentary party, headed by M. Paul Bignon, for whom we had arranged a really "star turn" ten days' tour, that they insisted on carrying him off back to Paris with them to let him see what they could do in the "showman" department.

All through 1918, with the development of the Ministry of Information, visits became more and more frequent and the numbers grew. Many a time I had to set my face against parties being sent up whose personnel really did not justify the expense and trouble or the disturbance of the fleet. In such cases I used Harwich or the Home Ports, and these "stand-by" places enabled me just to keep within the limits barely tolerated by the fleet. It will easily be seen that to pilot parties round the fleet, under these circumstances, men with a knowledge of the world and of the Navy, tact, and a considerable capacity for absorption of fluids (on occasion) were essential.

Well, in Commander Walcott, Lieutenant Gordon Robinson, and Lieutenant-Commander Bertie Sullivan we had such men. An unfortunate word, a misunderstanding as to the settling of hotel accounts, a mistake in the time of meeting trains or motors—

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any one of these was sufficient to nullify in a moment the good effect of any trip, however carefully planned and no matter how elaborate it might be. The country and the Ministry of Information has much for which to thank our "chaperon" or "pilot" officers in keeping things smooth and sweet, and in making their visitors' trips to the fleet the success they undoubtedly were.

I wonder if any of that Ministry ever gave a grateful thought to the officers of the fleet who organised *their* part of the business, looked after their guests, answered innumerable questions, and finally entertained them at various meals? I don't doubt that Lord Beaverbrook appreciated it, but I question whether the Government which he represented did.

Last, but important, were the visits of His Majesty the King to the fleet, both at Scapa and at Rosyth. On these occasions, by His Majesty's kindness translated into a wish, a large party of journalists, photographers and our official cinematographer accompanied him on the whole tour, with the result that the public saw a bit of what he was doing on behalf of the Navy. All we had to do was to keep the story back until he had returned to London, so that the whereabouts of the fleet could not be deduced at the moment of reading.

We had one or two breezes with the chairman of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association as to this, he taking the attitude that the story would be "dead" by the time it was published, and I taking

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the view that, provided the public didn't know when the King started and when he came back, the actual calendar date of the story was immaterial, and so it proved. Every paper published its representative's story in extenso, and I think the public enjoyed these accounts of the King's visits. We did a good business with the photographs and films too.

The attitude of the fleet towards photographers, both "still" and "moving," was curious. It invariably tried to prevent them being sent up, saying that there were plenty of men in the fleet capable of doing all that was required. Every artifice and stratagem down to downright lying and misuse of high officials' names had to be put in use to succeed in planting my professional photographers and cinematographers on the fleet on these occasions. I hope by now I have been forgiven by my confrères of the fleet!

I tried hard to explain to them that, however good an amateur may be at ordinary photography, he could not, in the ordinary nature of things, ever expect or hope to be able to compete with the professional for journalistic work, which has to be done in a hurry and which cannot be repeated. The amateur is too shy and retiring. The professional has to be a "thruster" to be at the right spot at the right time. He has his chance, and if he doesn't take it, or if he doesn't get a suitably good result, it is gone for ever. The amateur would merely curse himself and say, "Better luck next time," but the professional would be out

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of a job. Failures don't make bread and butter for professional journalistic photographers and still less for moving-picture men.

I remember one case to which I did not attach a great deal of importance and so did not plant my cinematographer with the fleet and agreed to the local man taking the film. When the pictures came down and I saw them run off I remarked what a pity there was such a bad light, as the result was indistinguishable—when all of a sudden I saw a blazing figure on the film and a great deep shadow, thus showing that there was in effect a fine strong light, but—something had gone wrong. I think it is fair to say that of all the films sent down to me from the fleet taken by its own men not more than twenty per cent. were fit for exhibition, and that is being liberal!

On the occasion of the King's visit to the fleet in the summer of 1918 the Press was taken charge of by two "pilot" officers told off from the fleet itself, in addition to our own Admiralty Press Officer (Lieutenant-Commander Beer). They were very well taken care of and had a really fine show, which included seeing an aeroplane fly off the turret of one of the battleships, and all this they duly wrote about. Seeing this stuff come through, I naturally imagined that the people in the fleet had given them a free run as to what they could say. There was, however, a tremendous row about this particular fact being published and I was put "on the carpet."

I said then, and I said subsequently in the fleet,

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that I naturally assumed that if those who were responsible for the arrangements in the fleet went out of their way to show the Press something extremely secret, which they specially did not wish to be mentioned, they would have had the gumption to warn the Press that, though they were given this special privilege of seeing the wonderful new development in flying, on no account should it be written about; and they could have relied on the pressmen all right enough. Even if they had told Lieutenant-Commander Beer or sent me a wire, the incident would have been safely tucked away until such time as the fleet chose to say that it could be released. Not a word was said! It seemed to be thought up in the fleet that it would be all right—that the Press and the censorship would know by instinct what was in its mind!

When it was made public all that remained to do was to indulge in the gentle pastime of “strafting the Censor.” Fortunately I have a tough hide and some facility of expression, so my friends in the fleet got as good as they gave, whilst really I was extremely distressed that a secret should have been made public by an oversight on their part.



## CHAPTER XII

### ARTISTS AND THE NAVAL WAR

Proposal of the Imperial War Museum Committee for a Pictorial Record—Selection of the Artists—Mr. Muirhead Bone's Ordeal—"Blinker Hall"—Painting Sir David Beatty's Portrait—Mr. Francis Dodd's Sea Experience—Sir John Lavery and the Surrender of the German Fleet—Present at the Conference as a "Post Captain"—The Vicissitudes of Mr. Philip Connard—A Zeppelin Raid and an Incident in the Channel—Mr. Charles Pears' fine Naval Work—A Difference of Opinion in the Battle-cruiser Fleet—Lieutenant Arnold Forster's experience as an Artist in the Air.

EARLY in 1917 Commander Walcott, who had been appointed Admiralty representative on the Committee of the Imperial War Museum, told me that the committee wanted to have the Naval side of the War recorded by artists, so I said that I would get a report from serious and responsible people in the art world ready for him in a little time. I met Mr. Clifford Smith, and talked the matter over with him, and asked him if he could obtain for me such a report as I had promised.

I made it clear to him that my object was to obtain a report from men in the art world, whose judgment of contemporary art was recognised as the best procurable, and that the work of the selected artists should be judged, so far as such a thing is possible,

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with a view to its standing the test of time. I wanted the Royal Navy in the years to come to have the very best pictorial representation of the Great War, and I wanted it to be impossible for anybody now or hereafter to say of the work of this or that artist that he was chosen because he was a friend of this man or that. Letters then passed, and I have to thank Mr. Clifford Smith, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Mr. Charles J. Holmes, Director of the National Gallery, for their valuable and helpful report. It is only right and fair to the public and to the artists and to the Navy that these facts should be known.

The selection of artists was made after further consultation by these two gentlemen with Mr. Charles Aitken, Director of the Tate Gallery, Mr. D. S. MacColl, Keeper and Secretary of the Wallace Collection, Sir Claude Phillips, and Mr. Martin Wood; and the following gentlemen were suggested: Sir John Lavery, A.R.A.; Mr. Glyn Philpot, A.R.A.; Captain Philip Connard, who was engaged upon camouflage work for the Army; Mr. Ambrose McEvoy; and Mr. Charles Pears.

Great care was taken in considering the various fields in which each artist was to be invited to work, and it was recognised that in the sea-pieces by Van de Velde, who was chosen by Charles II. (and provided with a small vessel) to depict the English naval engagement with the Dutch, a high standard had been set.

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Later it was tentatively arranged that Sir John Lavery should deal with Naval bases by landscape and incident; that Messrs. Glyn Philpot and Ambrose McEvoy should paint the portraits of Sir John Jellicoe, Sir David Beatty, Sir Charles Madden, Sir F. Sturdee, Sir John de Robeck and Sir R. Tyrwhitt, and that Mr. McEvoy should paint the portraits of all the officers and men of the Royal Navy who had gained the Victoria Cross, including Captain Nasmyth, Captain Unwin, Commander Boyle, Commander Campbell, Commander Robinson, Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook, the late Commander Loftus Jones, the late Lieutenant Warneford, and the boy Jack Cornwell. It was agreed that Mr. Charles Pears and Mr. Nelson Dawson should paint certain seascape subjects, fleets and ships, and obtain material for painting certain actions of the past and future, and that Captain Philip Connard should paint pictures of life on board various classes of ships.

In addition Lieutenant G. S. Alfree, R.N.V.R., was invited to furnish sketches and paintings dealing with the patrol work of motor launches, patrol boats, drifters and mine-sweepers.

Through the earlier activities of Mr. Masterman's branch of the Department of Information, I had already been brought in contact with Messrs. Muirhead Bone and Dodd. Mr. Bone was engaged in doing his well-known drawings out in France, which were published under the title of "The Western Front." Mr. Masterman suggested that Mr. Bone

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should be given facilities for depicting some Grand Fleet and shipyard scenes, the arrangement being that his originals were to be the property of the Print Section of the British Museum, and we struck a bargain that, in return for the necessary facilities, we should be entitled to a "first state" of any reproductions which might be made of his naval and shipyard scenes.

This was agreed to, and in due course, owing to the broad and generous view taken of the bargain by Mr. Campbell Dodgson, the Keeper of the Print Section of the British Museum, we ultimately became possessed of ten of Mr. Bone's splendid original drawings of the Grand Fleet at Rosyth, which will presently find a home in one of our Naval buildings. The shipyard scenes, being in black and white, were reproduced in lithograph form, and we have a complete signed set of these also, so the Navy has done well out of Mr. Muirhead Bone.

This artist has a passion for work surpassed by few people I have met. When he was staying at Admiralty House, Rosyth, with the late Admiral Sir Frederick Hamilton, he would disappear out of the house immediately after breakfast, and not infrequently before that meal, and reappear when the light failed him. That was during the summer. But those who remember the magnificent black-and-white drawing of H.M.S. *Lion*—"Surveying Cables"—in dry dock at Rosyth can imagine what the artist endured, standing for hours in the bottom of a dry

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dock (which really had about six inches of water on its floor) in the depth of winter and in almost incessant snowstorms. His fingers at times were so numbed that he could not feel them. The materials with which he worked frequently froze, so that he had to get near a stove to thaw himself and them.

He returned from each of these trips to the fleet, having made hosts of friends and bringing back with him literally scores of drawings. He has a heart big enough for ten men, and when he wished to give an officer or man, to whom he considered he was specially indebted for some little act of kindness, a sketch as a memento, he would work on Sundays, "in his own time." For he was so scrupulously honest that he would not part with any work he had brought down, since all that was the property of the British Museum.

Eventually, and as might be expected of such a worker, he broke down and was off work for some nine months, fretting away all the time at doing nothing, and thus retarding his complete recovery. However, we got him back presently, and I think his first work was a very large black-and-white drawing of the *Vindictive* on her return from Zeebrugge. That drawing—in my judgment one of the finest of its sort that he has ever executed—was sent over to the United States, and toured the country in company with other war pictures. I am glad to say that this picture is also the property of the Navy.

He followed up this job by the tour he made with

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his brother, Captain David Bone, for the preparation of the book on the Mercantile Marine, of which I have written in a previous chapter. I pumped good advice into him, and especially did I charge his brother to see to it that he didn't allow him to over-work again, else the whole scheme would be wrecked. I am glad to say that he returned "all correct" and with an enormous mass of sketches, from which the two brothers must have had trouble in selecting what was necessary for their book.

Bone was one of the artists who went up to the Grand Fleet to see the surrender of the German Fleet, and he was accommodated on board the Fleet flagship *Queen Elizabeth*. Once more he got lost. At breakfast time inquiries were put about as to whether anybody had seen Bone? Nobody could find him. He turned up about 7 P.M., having been in the foretop since 7 A.M. without a scrap of food. What an enthusiast, and what an artist!

I call to mind some pleasant evenings spent in company with yet another brother, Mr. "Jimmy" Bone of the *Manchester Guardian*, at the latter's room. I will not give the address, because if it were known it is possible that he might be raided for his fifteen-year-old whisky. Also he may have other poems similar to the following which the *Manchester Guardian* reading public should be permitted to see! Its subject, needless to say, is Captain, now Admiral Sir, W. R. Hall, then Director of Naval Intelligence :

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My name is Captain Hall,  
    Damn your eyes ;  
They call me "Blinker Hall,"  
    Damn their eyes ;  
My name is Captain Hall,  
I adore you, one and all,  
    Damn your eyes,  
    Damn your eyes—  
        Have some bacey !

I know each new U-boat,  
    Damn your eyes ;  
And every mine afloat,  
    Damn its eyes ;  
And I almost get a blink on  
Your old friend Tribitsch Lincoln,  
    Damn his eyes,  
    Damn his eyes—  
        Happy days !

They say I stuffed the Press,  
    Damn their eyes ;  
'T'was the gospel, more or less,  
    Damn their eyes ;  
S'truth I hardly said a word  
It was Wilson\* that you heard,  
    Damn his eyes,  
    Damn his eyes—  
        Have a submarine !

And Sir Douglas he did come,  
    Damn his eyes ;  
Sir Douglas he *would* come,  
    Damn his eyes ;

\* Mr. H. W. Wilson, of *Daily Mail*.

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And he looked so very glum  
As he censored out each plum,  
    Damn his eyes,  
    Damn his eyes—  
        Have a blue pencil!

And now in peace I dwell,  
    Damn your eyes ;  
Tho' there isn't much to tell,  
    Damn your eyes ;  
There's a lot of things to mind  
In the time we've left behind,  
    Damn your eyes,  
    Damn your eyes—  
        For the duration of Peace !

Mr. Francis Dodd was another artist who was engaged to make drawings of all the principal generals for the National Portrait Gallery. When he had fairly well combed out the Western Front, we were invited to give him facilities for making portraits of all admirals and other officers in important commands. I have before referred to the dislike of newspaper publicity inherent in all Naval officers. Well—all I can say is that, considering their attitude towards having their portraits done, it is surprising that they didn't wear *yashmaks*!

However, by persistent coaxing, and I hope some tact, and helped by Mr. Dodd's personality, I succeeded in getting thirty-six portraits done. He was liked wherever he went—a quiet, unassuming little man, but with a fund of humour and a good supply



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of stories. When it came to doing Sir David Beatty we bumped into difficulties. However, owing to the always ready help of the Captain of the Fleet (Commodore the Honourable Hubert Brand), it was managed all right. He suggested that Lady Beatty's help ought to be invoked, and somehow it was engineered that Dodd should be at Lady Beatty's home on some occasion when a lawyer was going to read over some lengthy document to the Admiral.

Thanks to Lady Beatty's kindness, this priceless opportunity was taken advantage of; the Admiral sat stock still for some twenty-five minutes or so while occupied with the lawyer, and Dodd worked at the portrait at the same time. The result was one of the best of Dodd's Naval portraits, and it was an unconventional picture of the Admiral sitting in a cane chair, resting his chin in his hand.

Presently it was no wonder that Dodd felt that he was getting stale. He lived in the train, going from place to place, getting his victims in half an hour here and half an hour there, waiting about while his prospective subjects were giving interviews to officers or attending conferences, and, when they were finally secured, finding that some secretary would appear with a bundle of papers for consideration and signature, when the victim would ask in a gruff or a plaintive voice (according to his temper and temperament) if it would be all right for him to go on with his work, to which, of course, Dodd had to reply that it was "quite all right." The result was that his model was

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never, or very rarely, in the same attitude for more than five minutes or so. No wonder the little man finally got "fed up."

Then a happy thought struck us. Why not send him down to the submarines and trawlers to live on board them and do "interiors," &c. Dodd very diffidently (and probably with his tongue in his cheek) said that he knew nothing about ships. All the sympathy he got from me was that he couldn't know whether he could do the work till he had tried. So off he went fairly cheerful. His first job was, if I remember right, a ten-days' trip in a mine-sweeping trawler—enough to turn an ordinary man inside out unless he is brought up to it. He produced a splendid series of drawings of every sort and kind—some fine scenes taken down in the fore-castle head, on the mess decks, as well as on the bridge, and pictures of every form of upper deck life.

He then did the same in submarines, and secured a lot of fine results, including many detailed drawings of engine sets, torpedo tubes, periscope and navigating appliances, and what passes for mess deck and living accommodation. He is a most versatile and excellent artist, to whom we owe a deep debt of gratitude.

The team of artists finally secured, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, was brought together by Commander Walcott at a lunch party he gave at the Sports Club in the summer of 1917, and a very pleasant and simple little function it was. It was

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there and then decided how to split up the work. Sir John Lavery was to do scenes at Scapa Flow and Rosyth and other Naval bases; Mr. Charles Pears was to do ships up in those waters; Mr. Philip Connard was to work from Harwich; Mr. McEvoy was to do portraits of all Naval V.C.'s, and Mr. Glyn Philpot was to do portraits of those admirals whose fighting record in the War stood out apart from all others. No sooner was this settled than the "Fleet Orders" were drafted and sent up to the fleet (the ground having been carefully prepared beforehand, of course, and I am not sure that the beautiful wife of one of the artists had not done some spade work on her own account up in the North). Very shortly, at any rate, our team was distributed about all over the fleets, so far as their numbers made it possible.

Sir John Lavery started at Scapa Flow in the depth of winter in conditions which are clearly seen in his paintings which were exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in November, 1918. Since he has been knighted "Who's Who" gives us his age, so I can say without fear of losing a friend that it was no mean effort for a man of his years, and a very spirited performance, to go and sit on the top of Flotta and other exposed points to get the pictures which really represent the bitter weather conditions and sombre surroundings in which the Grand Fleet spent so many long, dreary months. I can only hope that he feels satisfied with the result of those expeditions; certainly the nation will appreciate it.

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The Rosyth scenes were done subsequently and in better climatic conditions, and they gave an idea of a kinder climate and country. The beauties of the Firth of Forth are known to millions; the drear, treeless, harsh and uncompromising nature of Scapa Flow during all but three months of the year are fortunately known to few besides those 100,000 officers and men of the Grand Fleet.

My last and most successful piece of work with, and for, Sir John Lavery was done somewhere about November, 1918. I saw him that afternoon and suggested that, if he was ready to catch a train at a moment's notice, I thought he ought to be up in the fleet to see the actual arrival on board the *Queen Elizabeth* of the German Admiral (von Meurer) who was to come aboard and arrange with Sir David Beatty details of the great surrender. Sir John was, of course, enthusiastic, so I tore down to the Private Office, my other or "spiritual home" (though since the departure of Mr. Eddie Marsh\* it had long been "bone dry!"), told Gerald Steel, the private secretary, what I wanted and that he must go and put it before Sir Eric Geddes *at once*, as I wanted my man to catch the train there and then.

He got me in to the First Lord's room (more credit to him, as I do not suppose this was either a genial or an easy task if I may judge by the rarity of his success in this direction), who readily gave his

\* Mr. Edward H. Marsh, C.B., C.M.G., Private Secretary to Mr. Winston Churchill.

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consent and signed a drafted wire to the Commander-in-Chief setting forth the necessity for having this historical event recorded for the nation, and off went my friend Lavery that night! I subsequently went through all the tortures of the damned as I first thought that he would arrive too late, and then, as I saw the wireless messages saying that von Meurer was in a fog and would be late getting into Rosyth, I feared the whole scheme would crumble to the ground for want of light and so on. However, it turned out splendidly. I had underrated the abilities of my man; and the picture showing the German representatives being received in the dark on the quarter deck of the *Queen Elizabeth* is a magnificent record of this historic event and a priceless possession for the nation. All arrangements were as usual made for Sir John by the Captain of the Fleet, Commodore the Hon. Hubert Brand, who stowed the artist away right aft so that he could not possibly be seen, as the large electric group lights were between him and the reception scene.

On subsequent days he was also wisely and properly permitted to paint the scene of the actual conference. Here he was camouflaged as a Post-Captain and placed at a table in the corner of Sir David's fore cabin, and with a pile of books in front of him looked as if he were merely taking notes of what was going on. So he was, but very permanent ones. The small sketch he made on that occasion has been shown to the public, and the finished work

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in the shape of a large picture will form a fitting coping stone to Sir John Lavery's contribution in the way of War work, which is represented by some fifty-seven pictures, presented by him to the Imperial War Museum for the nation.

The next on the list is Philip Connard, who was then serving in the Army. He had been in France for two years or so and was employed at a school of camouflage somewhere in Kensington when I wanted him. I had the good fortune to be well acquainted and friendly with some soldiers in high places, so I was able to get Connard out of this work, and he was installed at Harwich inside of about a fortnight. The papers, stating that the Army Council agreed to lend him temporarily, followed on in some three months' time—better late than never—and I am grateful to them for parting with this artist, who produced some fine work. I beg Mr. Connard not to think I am venturing to give only my own opinion. I am supported by the judgments of the great ones of the War Museum and of the artistic world.

I believe Connard had never tried his hand at sea painting, but he very soon fell into his niche in the Harwich cruiser force. He was still a captain in the artillery, and dressed accordingly, and so doubtless there were murmurs among the ships as to "why the Admiralty had planted this soldier on to them when they were constantly out strafing," &c., &c. That would be the natural "grouse" any self-respecting sailor would permit himself before settling down to

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that which he prefers before anything, namely—looking after a soldier. You can't rob either of them of the brotherhood there is between them, though no doubt each thinks the other is slightly mad or half-witted because he does his own job his own way.

I will illustrate this by just telling a little story of a talk I had with the Embarkation Officer at Folkestone in September, 1917. I was on my way back from one of those officially conducted and wonderful tours of our Western Front, where I had been amazed and filled with immense pride at what I had seen of our army, and I had just missed the London air-raid in which a bomb was dropped outside the Ritz Hotel, while at the same time there had been a very heavy air-raid on Dover.

It seems that on that occasion the Vice-Admiral at Dover had stopped the homeward leave-boat from berthing alongside the pier at Folkestone. This, of course, upset all the military officers' arrangements for getting their trains away and for embarking the men whose leave was up and who were "for the Front." Incidentally and quite naturally, too, it raised the ire of the Embarkation Officer. When we met the following afternoon he had some crisp remarks to offer as to the action of that Vice-Admiral at Dover. I presently got my word in and asked him "how many men of the millions who had been carried to and fro in the three years just closed had been lost?" Not one could

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he mention, except those on the mined hospital ship *Anglia*. "Well, then," I said, "isn't it fair to admit that the man is doing his business all right and that he doesn't give orders to the transports with any other single object in mind but that of the safety of the soldiers? It isn't done merely to annoy you. A transport alongside a pier offers a good target to a bombing aeroplane, whereas if she is drifting about apparently without object she is not easy to hit." "Ah, well," he said, "there *may* be something in what you say. It hadn't struck me before." So we parted on good terms, each seeing, I hope, the other man's point of view a little better.

When Connard became at home on board he was admired for the plucky way in which he stuck to his work in all weathers, and he was not an ideal sailor! He made frequent journeys to the ship's side to "discharge cargo," but always went back to his work, and that accounts, I think, a good deal for the real life and movement there is in his pictures of the Harwich force. He was liked, too, in all the ward-room messes of that squadron—no mean accomplishment! He was out in all sorts of "stunts," including the Zeebrugge business and the destruction of the Zepp off the German coast on August 11, 1918.

Presently he left the squadron, and I urged him to go up to the Grand Fleet and get accustomed to the heavy ships. They are so utterly different to the eye, and their movements are so ponderous compared with the swift turning and rolling light cruisers. I



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felt that he *must* go and get some of these things into his head and on to canvas, and after the missing of a few trains (not an uncommon trait, this, of the artistic temperament) which caused many wires to be sent and cancelled and re-sent and so on, off he went, and so far as I was concerned, with high hopes. I specially recommended him, through the good offices of a friend known as "The Brown Mouse" (who was confidential secretary to the Director of Naval Intelligence), to her brother, Lieut. Skrine, who was Torpedo Lieutenant of the ship to which he was appointed, and I thought no more of him until somebody asked me how Connard was getting on and what he was doing. Very light-heartedly I said that he was up with the Battle-Cruiser Fleet, and I knew he was getting on all right as I hadn't heard anything from or of him for about a month, and I *thought* that with artists, as with others, no news was good news. I presently learned that he was at his studio in London and had been there a month. He had the grace to admit that he *couldn't* come and see me and tell me his troubles, though I got them out of him in time. He had been two or three days with the fleet, but something had upset him, and he was not happy in his new surroundings, and the necessary atmosphere being lacking, he just cleared out and that was all!

It is perfectly certain that artists cannot work unless the spirit moves them and the atmosphere is congenial, and so, regret it as one may, it is no use

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being upset about it. That chance was gone for Connard and for all of us, so it was no use lamenting.

As soon as the Turkish Armistice began to take shape it was arranged that Connard should go out to the Levant, and I very much hoped that he would be able to go up the Dardanelles with Admiral Calthorpe when he took the ships to Constantinople. It did not work out that way, however. Owing to some misunderstandings on the way out, notably at Taranto, and, I think, to some lack of sympathy displayed by some junior officers who happened to be in a position to help or to hinder, Connard did not get out in time to witness the passage up the Straits. He got hung up in Salonica for some weeks, fuming and fretting, and, when finally he got to Constantinople, he wasn't very happy, but dismal and unsettled, though I fancy and hope that he brought back some surprises for all of us. He recovered his buoyancy when he found his way to the Crimea, and again got on board one of his beloved Harwich force cruisers! Then all was well, and he has some good yarns to tell of Captain Royds arbitrating between Bolshies and Reds or Blues or Blacks, and many kinds of odd negotiations that he witnessed. I am sure he does not regret his connection with the Royal Navy any more than the Navy regrets having had him with them, and his work speaks for itself.

Very early in the War I became acquainted with Mr. Charles Pears, as he had to bring his drawings

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to me to be passed before he could place them with those illustrated papers for which he principally worked at that time. I was already well acquainted with his work as a black-and-white artist in the weeklies, and also with his posters; I was familiar too with his delightful book, both the letterpress and the sketches showing as plainly as possible that they were the work of men who knew and loved the sea. I was interested, therefore, in meeting him, and one of the early interviews we had led to somewhat prolonged negotiations in connection with the bridge of boats which was established across the lower Thames between Tilbury and Gravesend. It was passed by everybody in the Admiralty on the ground that as neutral steamers (which were presumably crammed full of spies) passed through the bridge both inward and outward when working the Port of London, no harm could be done by letting the general public see what was already known to hundreds of thousands of the Kent and Essex folk, and no doubt to our enemies also!

Unfortunately for Mr. Pears and the drawing, I was unable definitely to fix who, in the Admiralty, was responsible for this bridge, and though I marked the picture "Passed," I suggested to Mr. Pears that he might try the War Office, and see if anybody there had any objection to its publication. That tore it! Several highly placed gentlemen were for putting Mr. Pears in the Tower, and all were for destroying his tell-tale drawing! However, we managed to save

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him from being interned, and he got off with the loss of the picture and the corresponding guineas it should have brought him. We have had many a laugh over that adventure into the realms of D.O.R.A., but since that time Mr. Pears never got involved in "proceedings" again. I saw to that.

I next employed Mr. Pears in making a series of four pictures showing the action between H.M.S. *Prize*, one of the "Q" boats, and a German U-boat. One set of these is now the property of the Navy, whilst a replica set has been sent to New Zealand to the father (Mr. Sanders) of the R.N.R. officer who commanded her. It was well I got this set of pictures done, as on her next cruise this gallant little ship was sunk in action with another submarine, and her captain, then a V.C., was killed.

This officer came home from New Zealand when the War broke out, and early in 1917 obtained his desire to command a "Q" boat. He exhibited great daring, coolness and skill in an action with a German submarine off the south-west corner of Ireland, and there was at the time what was regarded as ample evidence to show that the enemy vessel had been destroyed. Several of the crew of the *Prize* were badly wounded, and they could not receive medical attention until their vessel returned to her base. It was little short of a miracle that the *Prize* herself reached port, for when the action ended her sides had been holed and she was in a sinking condition, with the nearest land 120 miles away. Her crew, however,

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refusing to abandon hope, worked with courage and resource until within five miles from the shore, when assistance was obtained. Shortly after Lieutenant-Commander Sanders had so worthily earned his V.C. he was lost with all hands. The *Prize* had been unsuccessfully attacked during the day. The enemy submarine hung round until night time, following the track of her antagonist, which was at last torpedoed presumably at short range, sinking with all on board. No one except the Germans witnessed the end. Her disappearance would have remained a mystery but for the report subsequently received from the British submarine which was working with her. When morning came the submarine searched for the *Prize*, but could find no trace either of the ship or her crew.

The former action gave us one of the greatest disappointments of the whole War, as the *Prize* brought into harbour the captain of the submarine, who had jumped overboard from the boat when she was sinking, so naturally we all thought that here was an absolute certainty. Within about four days we got an inquiry via Sweden through the Red Cross, asking the whereabouts of —, the captain of the German submarine. After much argument we were forced to the conclusion that the boat had got back home. This incident taught everybody the necessity for caution in deciding whether Boche boats were sunk or not, and accounted for the disinclination to publish figures of sinkings. I thought the Director of Naval

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Intelligence and his submarine tracker, who prepared pretty "graphs" of enemy losses, would relapse into melancholia over this disappointment!

I subsequently tried to get Pears to do a series of somewhat similar pictures of Captain Gordon Campbell's actions, which are real epics; but by this time Pears belonged body and soul to the Imperial War Museum, and for some reason or another, best known to itself, it did not want such a set, though I cannot think of any deeds on the Naval side more worthy of pictorial record in a National Museum. Tenacity and long sustained gallantry, heroism and endurance of punishment are all exemplified in Captain Campbell's actions with his three different "Q" boats, and they ought to form part of the national records of the country in picture as well as in print. I hope and believe that presently someone will be inspired to have the incidents immortalised. But then, alas! where will be the ships? Those which have survived will all be back in their trades, the special fittings will all be gone, and the artist will have to reconstruct and imagine instead of seeing it all vividly before him.

When he joined our team of Naval artists I knew with whom I was dealing, and I sent Mr. Pears off to Rosyth with a light heart. He worked away up there and produced some thirty pictures, the finest of them all being, I think, a large one of the *Courageous* in dry dock, with the whole dockyard under snow. It is a bold picture and a cold one, for

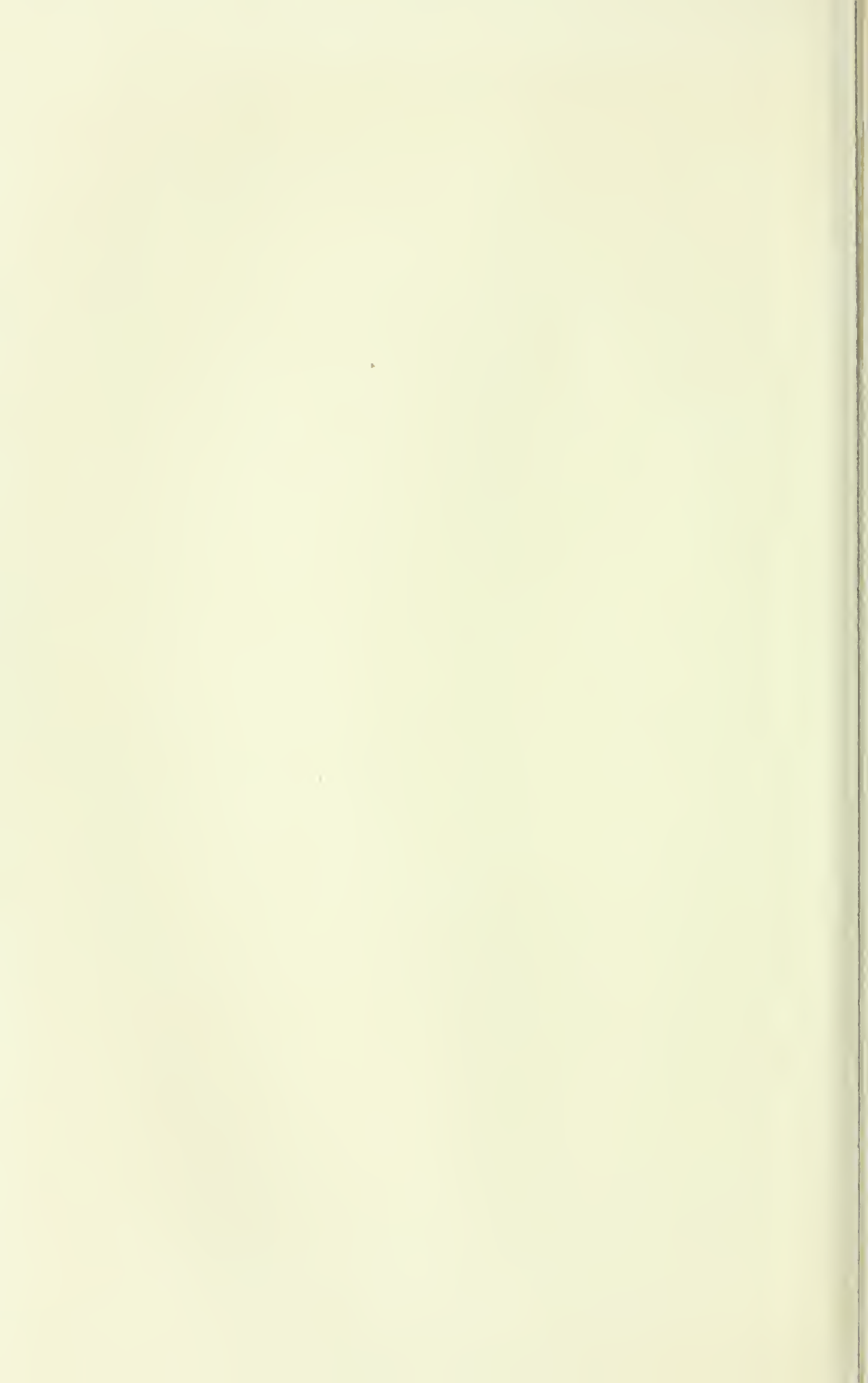


H.M. THE KING ON BOARD A SUPER-DREADNOUGHT

*The Centre marked for erosion the tampions of the guns, which bear the figure of Queen Elizabeth, as well as the sighting hoods*



The above photograph after the alterations had been made





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it makes one shiver to look at it. I was very glad that it was painted, as it shows the ship fitted as a gigantic minelayer, which was not her first, or her last, stage of evolution.

In his other pictures he gives the sea from an entirely novel point of view, using the boldness of the moderns in his colours. It is attractive, and I think that even the most *conventional* must admit that it is a fresh aspect of seascapes. Perhaps his most interesting pictures are a set of four illustrating the expedition which ended in the bringing down of the Zeppelin off the Dutch Coast, before referred to. For in these we see the fast motor-boats (C.M.B.'s) being released and sent off on their hair-raising work, star shells bursting and bombs dropping all round the cruisers, and the destruction of the Zeppelin. The first picture gives us the star shell bursting high up in that cold half-hour just before dawn. The artist admitted that this star shell, bursting without a sound having been heard or anything seen, fairly "put the wind up" him. I am not surprised, though I dare say the case-hardened Harwich flotilla paid but slight attention to it.

The second picture shows the squadron at dawn and the C.M.B.'s just off. The third shows what the star shell meant, for huge bombs are dropping on each side of the *Danae* (Pears was on board her) from a Boche aeroplane, invisible by reason of its great height, whilst the fourth picture shows, by a little thin white trace of smoke in the shape of cigar smoke

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upside down, the flaming Zeppelin falling into the North Sea, having been "done in" by one of the machines flown off the lighters specially built for fast towing which were attached to the squadron.

Other artists there were, many of them, across whom I came in my work. To mention a few only, here is a selection taken at random from my memory : W. Ranken, who made some fine drawings of the old Admiralty Board Room ; Bernard Gribble, whose acquaintance I made at a Savage Club dinner when Admiral Sims was made a Savage, and who subsequently, as a result of that dinner, did some fine work for the American Navy, as well as much work which has been seen at the Academy and elsewhere ; Nelson Dawson, who did much good work at Dover ; and Norman Wilkinson, the first one of all to be up and doing, for he went out to Gallipoli as an Assistant Paymaster, R.N.V.R., and a fine business it was to "wangle" that appointment in those early days.

It was long after his return from there that he started and developed the Naval Camouflage School in the Academy Schools underneath the Royal Academy, and I am glad he capped all his work by the magnificent picture he showed at the Royal Academy in 1919, putting on canvas with dignity and truth and with true artistry the horror and cruelty of a Boche submarine shelling an open boat with survivors from one of the victims of unrestricted submarine warfare. I hope the picture will

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find a home among our national possessions “*Lest we forget.*”

As showing that it was not very easy sailing for artists who wished to join the fleet, or for those who wished to “plant” artists on the fleet for the purpose of recording certain specific sides of naval activities, I will cite one case.

A young artist was sent by me, at the request of one of the Government departments, to join the Battle-Cruiser Fleet. I had of course taken all the usual steps, such as the obtaining of permission from the Commander-in-Chief, &c. He remained up there about three weeks, when I got a wire from Rosyth, asking me to recall him immediately, which of course was done, and he came south the same night.

I at once wrote off to the fleet to ascertain what had gone wrong, and found that as the ship in which he had been serving was going to sea, he had been landed and presently sent to another battle-cruiser, and it was this ship which had asked for his removal. On hearing this I wrote a letter to the Captain of the first ship in which the artist had lived, and another to the second Captain. The first Captain said that the artist was a very quiet, particularly nice fellow, and all the officers would be glad to have him back; and the second Captain, on board whose ship he was only forty-eight hours, said he was insufferable, and on no account would he have him on board again! And though I pleaded hard, I could never again get him up to that fleet. Such were

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the trials of artists, to say nothing of those of the Chief Censor.

In the summer of 1918 there came to me with much trepidation Lieutenant Arnold Forster, R.N.V.R., one of the remains of the brilliant crew who worked with, and under, and were inspired by Leverton Harris in the Trade Division of the Admiralty. He was literally "worked out." He was always of the "forty horse-power in a dinghy" type, meaning that his energy and zeal were in inverse ratio to his physical strength. He very diffidently asked if I could possibly get him permission to go in an airship during his forthcoming leave. Fortunately nothing was easier. General Cayley, R.A.F. (late Admiral R.N.) was in the building, so I tackled him at once, and he readily agreed, and as he was commanding the Scottish Air District the whole business was fixed up, and Arnold Forster was in the seventh heaven.

In due course he took his fortnight's leave and, armed with permits, disappeared into Scotland, and I heard no more of him until he turned up, looking as bright and brown as his mother could have wished, with a bundle of drawings under his arm. It appears that day after day he had gone up in one of the "Blimps" patrolling between Scotland and Ireland, and whilst up there had made many charming pictures, one of which at all events is unique, for it shows the arrival of the convoy with the largest number of American troops that ever crossed the Atlantic.

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These pictures of his, painted midway between sky and sea (a bit of licence this), are truly wonderful. He paints skies of extraordinary beauty, and unlike any that I have seen produced by any other artist, though they are true enough to nature, as any sailor will admit. I am glad to say that he offered us two of these pictures for the Imperial War Museum, which were gladly accepted. I am only sorry he was not employed as an artist instead of assisting to restrict the enemy's trade.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CENSORING NAVAL LETTERS

Establishment of the Censorship of Letters—Its Value to the Blockade—Resentment of Censoring in the Navy—Establishment of "Privilege" Letters—Abuse of a Good Scheme—A Temporary Officer's Lapse—A Flight into the Realms of Imagination.

THE censorship of Naval letters was done throughout the War by officers on board each ship especially told off for the work, usually the chaplain or the doctor and one or two others. Thus letters from the fleet only rarely came my way, and yet, for one reason or another, many thousands have passed through my hands.

For instance, when a sudden and secret censorship was imposed on this or that port or area the letters were automatically diverted to the "Chief Postal Censor, London," of whom more anon. The results of that "comb out" used to come to my office for disciplinary measures, i.e. they were submitted to a further and purely Naval opinion before being sent back to the captain of the ship to which the writer belonged. A great number of men also posted their letters ashore, against the very strict regulations on that point, and pretty well *all* such letters found their way to the censor.

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Many hundreds of letters from abroad, from ships that did not understand their censorship duty, or were too short of officers to carry it out properly, as well as letters in unknown languages, were sent direct to my office, so that, one way and another, a pretty large selection reached me, and of course some stand out in my memory very vividly.

Here I would refer to the "Chief Postal Censor," Colonel H. S. Pearson, and his department. I had intimate relations with his office during the whole time that the censorship was in operation. I remember the early days of the struggle to get the postal censorship imposed first on this country and then on that. The fights were long and numerous. The idea of censorship was repugnant, I suppose, to many, and it was feared that it would involve us in trouble with neutrals. Well, bit by bit, those who fought the good fight for censorship, and there can be no harm in mentioning them—the Director of Special Intelligence, War Office, and the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiralty, and one or two others—won the day, and finally the postal censorship was strictly enforced on all mail matter coming into or going out of this country.

I much doubt if any more powerful weapon in enforcing the blockade and ruining the enemy's overseas trade ever existed, and I am confident that no office set up for war purposes was more efficiently and quietly run than the postal censorship. The Americans were shown everything before they came

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into the War, and, I believe, copied the organisation and were wholehearted supporters of the work being done.

I have but one regret arising out of all the many dealings I had with Colonel Pearson, and that is that I never found time to inspect his museum of curiosities, though he invited me to do so many times.

The attitude of the public and of Naval people generally towards the censorship of letters was very curious. Of course they resented it, but they were also a little unreasonable about it. For instance, if a letter coming from abroad and addressed to any captain or admiral serving at the Admiralty or in any Government office was opened and bore the label "Opened by Censor," an infuriated officer would come along and say he was going to do all sorts of things. It was almost waste of time to point out to him that it was really extremely difficult to avoid now and again a letter being opened which should be exempt. Nobody stopped to think of what was entailed by the "Exempt List"; and the great difficulty, when sorting hundreds of thousands of letters, of avoiding slitting an envelope before the censor had realised that the addressee was on the "Exempt List."

Then, although the letter had probably not been looked at, the hated label, "Opened by Censor," would be stuck on in order to close it up, followed by fireworks from the injured officer! Ministers and admirals were especially tender about this. Person-



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ally I never could look on censors as anything else but automata, and they were welcome to read any of my effusions and always will be—bless them! For I know my own feelings after wading through a couple of hundred letters right off the reel. All one longs for is an end of it, or a possible gleam of sunshine in the shape of humour.

About half-way through 1918 the Navy followed the Army practice and instituted the use of “privilege” envelopes. They were intended specially for family men, and were free of *ship* censorship. Each sender had to sign a certificate on the front of the envelope to the effect that the letter only referred to family affairs and had nothing to do with the Navy. The men were told that the ship censorship would not be exercised on these “privilege” envelopes, but that they would be made up in a separate bag and sent to London for censorship. That removed the *personal* element, which was a good deal resented, especially in very small ships, where the men thought the officer carrying out censorship duties on board learned too much about their private and home life. At the same time we arranged with the Chief Postal Censor to tackle ten per cent. of these letters to see how the men understood the meaning of the undertaking given in signing the certificate.

I should say that at least half of the writers at once said: “Well, thank God, the censorship is off, and I can now tell everything,” and, amongst many other items of news, were conveyed such bits of information

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as these : the times and dates of departure of ships from one port and of their arrival at another ; the losses of other ships ; intention to desert at a given time and place ; proposals to send serge, flannel, &c. (against the regulations) ; the brutality of the treatment being endured, and the chronic drunkenness of everybody in authority—truly a strange assortment !

However, that phase soon passed, as these letters were returned to the ships concerned and the writers were, I presume, made to realise that they were jeopardising the success of a really good scheme ; and within three months “ privilege ” letters were normal and were being honestly used for what they were intended.

Little bits of humorous reading stick in my memory, of which the two following are outstanding examples of epistolatory excellence, each in its own particular style and subject.

The first came from a temporary officer in the North, where he had charge of some local defence guns and the crews to man them, and so on. In due course came to him a Zeppelin. This and solitude, I suppose, fired his brain, so he sat down and wrote *sheets*—many of them—to a lady with whom he must have been on friendly terms residing in a neutral country. He gave her a true and faithful account of the number of guns under his charge and every sort and kind of detail for which the enemy would have paid much money. Among all this priceless in-

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formation there were interlarded particulars of the Zeppelin raid and other details suggesting what might have happened if the lady had been sharing his lonely vigil with him. Here he allowed his imagination and descriptive powers free rein. In fact, he must have been a close and careful student of Byron and Swinburne, but he had them both "left at the post" or among the "also rans."

This letter was a bit of a puzzler to deal with. However, with the aid of some scissors and at the expenditure of a good deal of patience, I managed to excise every bit of information and stuck the pieces carefully on to other sheets of paper, and allowed the imaginative and descriptive parts of the letter to proceed to their destination, having carefully surrounded every excision with my little "Chief Censor" "chop" or stamp, so that there could be no doubt as to who had had to wade through this inflammatory epistle. The officer was presently confronted with his indiscretions, or rather stupidities, in the way of communicating information, and was officially and severely "strafed." So much for that letter.

The next was of a totally different sort. It came from an N.C.O., and I don't quite remember how or why it fell into my hands, but it was a real masterpiece. It was addressed to the fiancée of the writer, she being in South Wales, and it was as fine a piece of fiction as I have ever read. If only the writer of it would come out into the world of literature Jeffrey

## Indiscretions of the Naval Censor

Farnol would have to look to his laurels. Here there were no journeys or flights into the realms of love. It was a case of sheer service doings, without ornamentation, but without a shadow of foundation of truth!

The writer described how he had been on a long and hazardous enterprise, for which he had been specially selected by his captain on account of his knowledge of and enterprise in handling boats and explosives. He proceeded to give a good account of his journey across the North Sea in a dinghy, with the captain, to Heligoland. He described in detail the difficulties and dangers they had encountered in climbing up the glacis of the gun emplacements on that island; how they had overpowered and killed, of course without a sound, each sentry who was unwise enough to obstruct their path; how they had blown up all the guns one after the other, and the wild excitement of the chase, which culminated in their launching their dinghy and finally escaping. It was a beautiful yarn, and one felt happy to think how much lighter the dinghy must have pulled on the return journey, all their explosives having been landed and expended, and how uplifted their hearts must have been, knowing the gallant work had been successfully accomplished.

All this was given as the reason for the long interval that had elapsed since the last letter to his lady love. Let us hope she believed it all. It was really quite convincing, and must have been read with pride

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to all the family. The writer said that he was in hospital owing to "exposure." This was partly true. The fact, however, was that the writer was laid by in a military hospital in Chatham under treatment for a disease which I am credibly informed could not have been contracted on his Majesty's Service, in the strict acceptation of that phrase.

## CHAPTER XIV

### WIRELESS AND WAR NEWS

Censors at the Marconi Company's Stations—The Wireless Press, Ltd.—Early Russian News—Protest by Reuter's—Sir Edward Carson's Position—Intervention by the Home Secretary—A fine War Record.

FROM the beginning of the War by reason of my position, which was then "Chief Censor of Radio Telegraphy," I was necessarily brought into the closest possible working relations with the Marconi Company. I installed censors at their stations at Clifden (Co. Galway) and Poldhu (Cornwall) two days before War was declared. At first these officers had to sleep in tents, one room being given over to them as an office, in which they kept watch day and night without intermission until August 4, 1917, when the transatlantic commercial wireless traffic ceased altogether. Clifden was closed down completely,\* though it was kept in readiness to restart at twenty-four hours' notice. Poldhu was taken over by the Navy and used for Naval work only, one of my censors remaining in charge. Very soon it was found that in two such exposed places as Clifden and Poldhu it was not possible for the officers, who were all elderly

\* The only reason for closing it was the very remote possibility of a leakage of intelligence regarding movements of United States troops by means of faked commercial messages.

## Wireless and War News

retired men, to continue living in tents, and the Marconi Company had to provide living accommodation for them.

At Glace Bay (Nova Scotia), the receiving and transmitting station on the other side of the Atlantic, there were also censors, provided from Canada and working under my colleague, the Chief Censor of the War Office. This arrangement might be thought cumbersome, and might have led to difficulties but for the work of Captain J. H. Trye, R.N. (Naval Adviser to the Chief Censor of the War Office), and the latter's cordial co-operation.

From the beginning, therefore, I had almost daily meetings with Mr. W. W. Bradfield, the Manager of the Marconi Company. At no time during the whole of the War was there ever a hitch in our working with the company, and when difficulties cropped up it was sufficient for Mr. Bradfield to be freely and openly informed of them by me to have the matter settled by a little give and take between us. If his staff had complaints to make against the members of my staff (which was quite unavoidable since these people were cooped up together in uncomfortable surroundings and working at high pressure far from civilisation), he put the case to me, and we managed to arrange things amicably all round.

He had a sort of a "wing three quarter" whom he could dispatch at a moment's notice, and I made similar use of Captain Harold Christian, R.N., who dropped in for a month's stay wherever any trouble

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was brewing, and between them things were quieted down.

Unfortunately on November 1, 1917, Captain Christian was knocked down outside the North Door of the Admiralty by a taxicab one evening when going out to dinner, and died in Charing Cross Hospital the next day. He was a great loss to me, and as we had joined the Navy together, I felt his death very keenly.

Early in 1914, i.e. before the War, the Marconi Company had hatched out, or rechristened, one of its subsidiary companies which was called the "Wireless Press, Limited." From August, 1916, onwards the earliest news of all military and most political events in Russia was always received in this country by wireless.

In 1916, owing to the fact that the Russian and Roumanian communiqués received by cable arrived many hours later than the German wireless reports dealing with the same events, and were frequently twenty-four hours behind the Germans in their publication in British, French and Dutch newspapers, the Wireless Press sent representatives to Petrograd and Bucharest to persuade the Russian and Roumanian Governments to radiate immediately their communiqués by wireless. The result was that communiqués during the great Russian offensive were printed in the British evening papers actually on the day of their issue and alongside the German version of the same event. This business was beginning to



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thrive when, in the autumn of 1916, objection was taken to it by Reuter's and other organisations, who took the matter up with the Postmaster-General, the Press Bureau and finally with me.

I received from Reuter's a long and very strongly-worded letter protesting against the existence and activities of this new press agency. Other letters followed, also interviews with Mr. Godfrey Charles Isaacs supported by Messrs. Bradfield and Allen. One of these interviews lasted an hour and a half, and those who know Mr. Isaacs' eloquence and cogency in argument will realise that so far as *talking* was concerned I had a comparatively light task, whilst on the other hand my ears and brains had to work overtime! We parted on good terms, I having induced him to agree to issue his "Wireless Press" matter *free* not only to his subscribers but to the whole Press of the country, the only stipulation being that the messages used should bear the caption "British Admiralty Interecepts collected by the Wireless Press," thus showing that the messages were being received at stations under Admiralty control and were being translated and *edited* and so on by the "Wireless Press."

This did not satisfy Reuter's, who returned to the attack. Some of the papers also complained that the caption was too long and that they could not afford the necessary space. Eventually the question was taken to the First Lord, Sir Edward Carson. Sir Edward was always accessible to me, as he was

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to all heads of departments, and his subsequent departure was keenly regretted throughout the Admiralty. As he had been counsel for the Marconi Company in some former case, he wisely declined to touch this matter, and asked his colleague, the Home Secretary (Sir George Cave\*), to go into the question and come to a settlement. This Sir George Cave agreed to do, since he was the Cabinet Minister responsible for the Press Bureau and, therefore, for the distribution of these messages. Meetings were held in his rooms at the Home Office, the existing arrangements were upheld, and on December 18, 1916, the caption "Admiralty per Wireless Press" was settled upon. The Press soon fell into the way of using these messages when they were of use to them, and matters went along quietly for a time.

When the Department of Information of the Foreign Office got into its swing I found that flank attacks were being made on this Wireless Press matter, and I was approached by one official in that building as to getting details of the cost to the Wireless Press of collecting, typing, translating, editing and distributing the messages. For reasons which I thought adequate, I did not propose to pump one company for information which *might* reach one of its rivals, so I declined to take any action in the matter.

As the War went on and Russia went "Bolshy,"

\* Afterwards raised to the Peerage as Lord Cave.

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the Wireless Press received about the only news of much value from that country, and in the later stages of the War from Germany too; and I suppose its position is now pretty well established. In any case I was not concerned with the rights or wrongs of the question as to whether the Marconi Company should be permitted to sell news received through the air, that being a matter, as I understand it, for the General Post Office. All my interest was to see that the Government did not pay for work done in collecting these messages, except in so far as translating them went, and that the messages should pass without fail through the Directors of the Press Bureau to be censored and rendered innocuous before issue to the public.

This brief account of what was in fact a very long and somewhat bitter quarrel between two rival trade organisations may seem superfluous, but the participants must forgive me for letting the public see into this little known chapter in the news distributing side of the War.

In conclusion, I can say that whilst many firms undoubtedly served the country well during the War, certainly none did finer work than the Marconi Company, and without exception I found that, whether dealing with it as a company or through its individual officers from the chairman downwards, their word was their bond, and it was a pleasure and a satisfaction to have dealings with them.

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(N.B. You may search the share register since the inception of the company down to the present time and you will not find my name or that of any member of my family in it! This is for the benefit of those who think that when they hear the name "Marconi Company" they smell a share deal!)

## CHAPTER XV

### ODDS AND ENDS

Lord Fisher and the Chief Censor—"Take off your hat, or stop outside"—My Office Decorations—The Search for Cinema Operators—How the War Office scored—The "M" branch of the Admiralty—Films for Murmansk at Short Notice—How we obtained a New Gas—Newspaper men in Convoys—Sir John Bland-Sutton's Novel Holiday—A Visit from Mr. Charles Schwab—Provision of Lecturers and Entertainers for the Grand Fleet—Mr. Maynard Keynes' Lectures at the Admiralty—A Method of Dealing with Bores—Advantage of Personal Interviews—Danger of an Official Publicity Department.

RUMMAGING about in my memory I come across little odds and ends of occurrences, points of view, and so on, which may appropriately enough, I think, be grouped together under this heading. They do not come along in chronological order. They "outcrop," so to say, from the mass of reminiscences which lie about in frightful disorder in my brain, due, I suppose, to my having had no time to comb out that brain, or to let the fermenting and boiling inside it settle down.

A kind shipowner, Mr. Frank Houlder, with whom I had frequently come into contact during the War, invited me to join a tour he had organised to go to South America and back. I accepted, of course, and this would have given me an ideal holiday

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on demobilisation and the opportunity of a rest, during which I purposed writing these recollections. The trip, however, fell through, owing, as Mr. Houlder said, to all the *respectable* members having dropped out!

The cry for bread from my belongings being loud and insistent, I therefore returned immediately to the office of the shipbuilding company where I had been working before the War, and I found that, in the rush of that new life with its complete break from all the tragic happenings of the last four and a half years, all my memory was absorbed, so for three months I put this book into the background.

When I was urged to get on with it I took to writing in the early mornings, and during a visit to Glasgow, where, having no friends, I stayed in my dismal hotel during the week-ends, I was able to write in peace. If you know Glasgow on a Sunday you will not wonder at this.

As to writing in the early mornings, I learnt that habit from my old master, Lord Fisher, when I was on his staff at Portsmouth. This reminds me that I met him in St. James's Square soon after I had left the Admiralty. The cheery old gentleman (*then* cheery, mark you—not always so in the past!) tackled me and, walking along with his arm rove through mine, asked me if, as he was informed, it was true that I had stopped a cable from Lord Northcliffe to America which had cost £1,000 (*some* message it must have been, supposing that such a one

Dear Mr. [unclear]

Kindly see to it  
that some d-d  
Scandal amongst  
the Censors don't  
gobble enclosed.  
Respectfully  
Yours to the United  
Press Association of America  
179 Temple Chambers EC  
via special messenger -  
John Fisher 21.12.14

To

Dec. 20  
1914

The United Press Association  
of America - 179 Temple Chambers  
London <sup>immediate</sup> E.C.  
has this reply to  
your telegram this moment  
received at midnight!

Yes. He has <sup>very</sup> close bonds with  
the United States in his  
domestic relations and <sup>his</sup> friendships.  
He happily possesses an  
American daughter in law  
and she is now the wife  
for her name at birth being Morgan  
and Philadelphia her home.



Lord Fisher has to say (he is  
~~compelled to say~~) that  
the hope and good cheer

that Christmas spirit may  
bring humanity about  
she depends upon a  
hundred million of Christian  
men and women in ~~the~~

America realizing

that "neutrality" means

kind a  
(at least!)  
please

"(neutrality)"

~~is a~~! "That word  
comes frozen on the frozen spray!"

So ask <sup>ask</sup> them these hundred millions  
in ~~the~~ <sup>the United States</sup>  
to read William Watson's poem  
sent to America concerning England!

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had ever been sent) on the sole grounds that his (Lord Fisher's) name was mentioned in it? I laughingly assured him that there was, to the best of my recollection, no truth whatever in the story. "That is just as well," remarked the old champion, "as all those who get in my way come to a nasty end. They all die of worms in the stomach or some other horrible complaint," to which he added that he had walked eleven miles the day before and would outlive a good many of his old enemies—which I don't doubt.

It was in December, 1914, when I received a letter from Lord Fisher, and on p. 199 I give a facsimile copy of it, from which may be divined his personal attitude to censors.

The enclosure is reproduced on pp. 200-1.

Early in the War I found that through being of a somewhat too facile disposition, perhaps, or possibly owing to the "toughness" of those with whom I had principally to do, my office was considered a place in which it was quite in order to behave as you were accustomed to behave from wherever you came. The ordinary courtesies of life, as I understood them, were not handed around so that you could notice them, so I found it necessary to pin a notice on the outside of my door: "TAKE YOUR HAT OFF—OR STOP OUTSIDE." This seemed to amuse the young clerks in our end of the building, for they removed the notice a good few times until we took such steps that they could not remove it without taking the door too, and it became a recognised landmark. Also some of

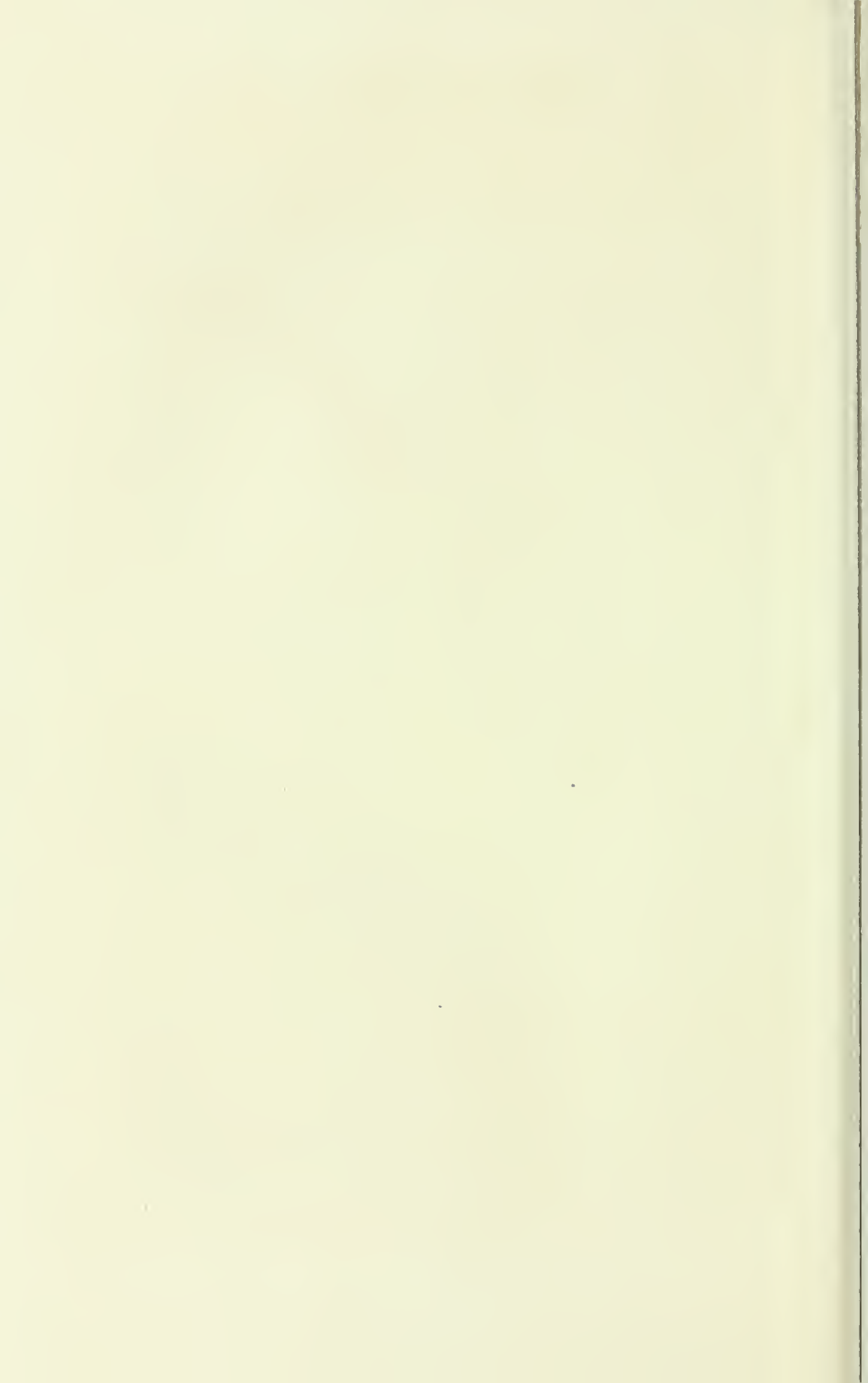


Paymaster-Commander  
E. H. Slocum

Rear-Admiral Sir Douglas  
Brownrigg, Lt.

Commauder Hon.  
Gerald Piggot

## THE NAVAL CENSOR AT WORK



## Odds and Ends

my visitors, though in certain cases it almost needed an operation, came to recognise the fact that even though we were censors we were entitled to ordinary civility.

My room had only three decorations, as I thought austerity was the proper note (which, I suppose, accounts also for my having no "peaches" or other charming damsels allotted to work under me). These decorations were :

- (a) The beautiful poster issued early in the war called "A Scrap of Paper."
- (b) An *Evening News* poster, "Are We Ready for the Fokkers?" (So far as our office was concerned, *we were*.)
- (c) "No Change Given."

Subsequently, owing to the kindness of some of my American colleagues, I was able to decorate the wall opposite to me with one of their recruiting posters. My particular one represented a sweetly pretty American girl dressed as a sailor and pointing to anybody who passed, but always to me: "Gee! but I want *you!*" That was because there was 3,000 miles of water between us and we hadn't been introduced, I expect. Had she come earlier in the War—well, I will not speculate as to what would have happened. But even after three years her charming face was very disturbing. I only hope it did not make me either careless or over-lenient in going through proof sheets!

I have written elsewhere of our cinema business,

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and I feel that I must add to that the story of my search for operators. Several first-class men were offered to me by my friends in the cinema trade, and the men were willing enough to come. But the Admiralty is an honest place, quixotically so, as no doubt the trade thought, for as each man came along my first question was what was his "category," "grade," or whatever the term happened to be at the moment. If the reply came "A" or "B," I simply had to refuse him, and I lost half a dozen excellent men that way, and had the satisfaction of seeing them within a week in khaki and flat boots still turning the handle of the cinema machine, while I continued to starve for operators.

Well, I believe I finally got the pick of the bunch, and only because he had been in the Navy and the War Office *couldn't* gobble him up! The War Office had *no* conscience, or perhaps I should say the military had none—or was it Lord Beaverbrook?

All sorts of odd jobs gradually drifted to me. For instance, it came to be generally accepted that if anybody wanted any sort of information he had better ask the Chief Censor's Office; "they were sure to know." I suppose this was arrived at, because, as I have already said, we had every sort and kind of secret information (obviously not for distribution), and we kept as fairly complete files as we could with our small staff. But the value of a chronological diary of events during the War, for general use, and in the hands of somebody who could be wisely reticent,

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would have been priceless, though I dare say it would have been difficult to arrange.

Many of my friends in the Navy, and possibly some people outside of it, have heard of that mysterious branch of the Admiralty called "M" Branch, the "M" standing for "Military." I have heard many Naval officers abuse it, probably because it was composed of civilians. Well, my own experience was that "M" Branch, which, so far as I could judge, represented the best brains in the Admiralty combined with *good sense* and an almost infinite capacity for work, was the best friend of the Naval officer employed at the Admiralty.

When I had a huge dossier from which to extract one sheet of *précis* or facts, or whenever a particularly nasty question had to be answered, or statements rebutted or countered, and there was a stream of people waiting for decisions in my office, my motto was: "Go to the head of 'M'," and I was never disappointed. Anderson, Flint or Nicholson\* were always ready to help, and I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to them. Oh, the questions that had to be tackled! There was the *Baralong*, the hospital ships, Jutland, some reply to a German wireless, or a question in the House of Commons—any number of big thorny subjects. I would dart along the passage, "blow in" with a huge file of papers, dump them on the table, and say: "Here, for goodness sake, get me out a decent reply to this as

\* Mr. J. W. S. Anderson, C.B., Mr. A. Flint, and Mr. W. F. Nicholson, C.B.

## Indiscretions of the Naval Censor

quick as you can," and bolt before the victim had time to look round. They never failed, however, to deliver the goods.

I do not think that their position is in doubt in the estimation of all officers who have ever served at the Admiralty, and when it is known that practically every head of a department is recruited from men who have been in "M" Branch, the justice of the outcry against the civil element may be questioned.

Amongst the "odd jobs" I referred to was the following :

At about 7 P.M. one day the First Sea Lord, Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, sent for me and told me to send off a cinema outfit to Murmansk at once as our fellows up there were not having a good time. It was no use cross-questioning him; he was away down the passage on some other business, so I went back to my work. I knew the cinema trade pretty well, and I knew also that, at 7.15 P.M. they were not sitting in their offices. More probably they would be preparing to "blow" some of their fabulous wealth! However, at 10 A.M. the next day I was sitting in Sir William Jury's office, and he will have to admit that I beat him by about half an hour.

When he did arrive he sorted out my vague requirements, told me what, in his judgment, would be likely to keep a ship's company happy, and, to make a long story short, we shipped away by the Naval train that same afternoon at 4 o'clock £1,600 worth of cinema stuff, including a complete projecting out-



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fit and some 60,000 feet of film—not a bad performance without a written word exchanged between any of the parties to the deal. If the ordinary official methods had been followed of asking for tenders and so on, we should not have got the outfit in a month or more, and would quite likely have had more to pay for it. I should like to add that I invariably found the cinema trade reasonable and generous where the Navy (whether American or British) was concerned.

Another odd job came my way through the late American Ambassador. I was at luncheon with him one day and he introduced me to a Major Owens, who had come over from the Bureau of Mines in the States to lay before our people a proposal for utilising some non-flammable natural gas which had been found in an inland district of that vast and wonderful continent.

The major did not appear to know to whom to apply, and the Ambassador asked me if I could put him in the right path. I thought I could, and I arranged for him to call on me the next day, a Thursday, at my office. The value of the gas, which, I believe, was known as "helium gas," or "gas X," and was non-flammable, was undoubted, if it proved to be what was claimed for it. Its use for lighter-than-air ships was obvious, so I took Major Owens down to the Hotel Cecil to see my old friend Commodore Paine, then head of the Naval Air Service (he has since become a General or a Chaplain-General, I know not what—probably the latter).

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Commodore Paine had a room in the Admiralty as well as at the Hotel Cecil, as the "lighter-than-air" staff worked in the Admiralty. He lost no time, and called a meeting of his experts at 4 o'clock that afternoon at which Major Owens was invited to be present. The whole business was settled at that meeting, and three of our Naval Air people left for the States on the Saturday boat. This struck the major as pretty "slick" work. The result of this enterprise coincided with the signing of the Armistice, for the first shipment of the gas left the States for this country in mid-November, 1918.

Major Owens, who was in reality a professor at Yale or Harvard and who had spent six years at Cambridge University, came many times into contact with me after this, for he was made head of the Photographic Department (both still and moving) of General Biddle's headquarters in this country. In that capacity he made many applications to me for permits for his men to take photographs and films of ships disembarking U.S. troops at various ports, &c. The Headquarters of the U.S. Army in France wanted all these photographs and films developed in Paris, where they had fine premises equipped for the purpose, but to this I would not agree. I insisted that nothing which showed any of our ships in docks should go out of the country till I had seen it developed and had passed it. In this I was helping Major Owens, who wished to have his developing done here under his own control.

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He was sent to me two or three times to see if I would alter my attitude, and my reply every time was the same : " I stand pat."

I had good reason for doing so too. For on one occasion the French Naval authorities, to whom we had supplied hundreds of miles of anti-submarine nets, and whom we had shown how to load the net-laying vessels and so on as the outcome of our very great experience at this business, had a film taken of the whole proceedings, which was passed by their censors in Paris. The first thing I knew of it was that I was being " strafed " for having allowed its exhibition in the halls of this country, whilst we were treating the whole matter of nets with the greatest possible secrecy.

No, if Naval matter was to be photographed or filmed *here*, even by our good friends the Americans, I claimed the right to see the pictures before they went to join their very capable army of propaganda merchants !

Major Owens and I parted on the very best of terms, and I look forward to renewing my acquaintance with him in his own country presently ; still, helium gas, non-flammable, is an odd substance for me to have been mixed up in !

As the outcome of one of our Press conferences it was decided to let journalists go on board convoy ships, and many availed themselves of the opportunities thus offered and wrote some informative articles. That being in their ordinary line of business,

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I do not propose to enlarge on it, but the following case is in a different category. As soon as it was decided to permit, and indeed to encourage, newspaper men to venture on these trips in convoys, my friend, Mr. H. A. Gwynne, of the *Morning Post*, wrote to me and said he wished to arrange for Sir John Bland-Sutton, the well-known surgeon, to do one of these journeys on behalf of the *Morning Post*, and he rather took my breath away when he suggested a transatlantic convoy for Sir John. However, I told him it could be arranged, and he asked me to meet Sir John at lunch at the Bath Club. Sir John, as a result of this meeting, promised to come and see me at my office the following day.

When he came and was seated at one side of my table I really felt rather uncomfortable. My father warned me in my youth that if I drank much water I should have a "pendulous abdomen." Owing to a wise discretion in the consumption of water I had not achieved the predicted development, but there was, and is, a slight protuberance on which it seemed to me that the great surgeon's eyes were fixed like gimlets. I tried to slip farther and farther down into my chair so that the table might be interposed between his gaze and its object, and we carried on our strictly technical conversation in regard to convoy ships, cruisers, dates, trains, permits, notices to be given to transport officers at Liverpool and St. John's, New Brunswick, &c.—I with a growing fear that Sir John would have me on a table some day if

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I drank water, and he probably coming to the conclusion that there was nothing wrong with me, except that I was the Chief Naval Censor.

Well, off he went, and I must say I admired him, for he selected a slow convoy, i.e. one that crossed the Atlantic at about seven or eight knots! However, he was on his holiday and did not mind. It was his way of taking a long holiday in the most restful and health-giving surroundings, always provided that "Fritz" did not make any offensive overtures.

Sir John had about two days on the other side of the Atlantic and returned in another slow convoy, and I am safe in saying he enjoyed every minute of his adventure, and came back well rested and refreshed; he wrote a series of articles for the *Morning Post* which were excellent reading. I dined with him subsequently at his house in Brook Street, when I met the late Sir Samuel Evans and Mr. Gwynne—old friends these three—and Sir John certainly did not try to ruin my figure by forcing much *water* on me.

Early in the War I had a strange meeting with the great Mr. Charles Schwab, head of the Bethlehem Steel Works. He was brought to my evilly-lighted office one evening just before 6 o'clock in November, 1914, by Mr. Albany Petch, his agent in this country.

I was writing hard to catch the country post out at 6 P.M., and without looking up I said rather

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shortly : " I don't care who you are, take a seat until the mail goes out." When the mail was finished and gone I said : " Now I am ready for you, whoever you are." Whereupon Mr. Petch introduced me to Mr. Schwab, and I was naturally very apologetic for having kept him waiting in such an unceremonious way. However, I reminded him that the last time we had been in the same town together was during the revolution in Peking when he had been trying to sell battleships drawing thirty-one feet of water to the Chinese, presumably to fight their wars up the inland creeks with eight feet of water, &c. We had a cheery talk and fixed up the method of handling his cables. Every one of his messages in or out was coded or decoded, as the case may be, in my office and its contents forwarded to their destination. This method was followed throughout the War.

Among other jobs which fell to my lot was the provision of lecturers for the Grand Fleet, and I am afraid this business was not sufficiently worked up, whether owing to real or imaginary difficulties or to lack of desire for lectures I do not know. The fact remains that but few lecturers visited the fleet. Amongst the few were Sir Filippo de Filippi, K.C.M.G., the well-known traveller and head of the Italian Propaganda Mission in this country, and Mr. Hilaire Belloc, and I am pretty sure that if the latter had been made to feel that his lecture was appreciated he would have offered to repeat it, or give others. I happen to know how bitter was the disappointment of

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some officers who were present in the port when he delivered his lecture, but who never even knew he was up in those parts, let alone being notified that he was going to lecture.

American gentlemen, professors, bankers and others were all keen to go up, also Sir Harry Brittain, Sir Graham Bower and many more, but with one or two exceptions the tours never came off, and I am sure that if there had been any real keenness in the Commander-in-Chief's staff to have them the lecture business would have gone with a snap.

Again, another form of my activities was to try to provide some entertainment for the fleet, and specially for those who were stationed at that God-forsaken place, Scapa Flow. Miss Lena Ashwell urged me again and again to get permission for her concert parties to go up to the North, for, coming as she does of an old naval family, she was particularly anxious to do something for the fleet, and, as she pointed out, her concert parties had been on all our fighting fronts for three years, and never a word of complaint had been registered against them. On the contrary, they had been uniformly and increasingly successful, the class of "show" improving in quality and the attendance growing month by month.

I was well aware that being with the fleet at Scapa was not quite the same thing as being ashore, where, no matter how close up to the front the party might

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be, a motor lorry could take them ten or fifteen miles back to billets in an hour or so ; still, if the party were on board a ship suddenly ordered to sea a motor-launch or drifter could remove them and dump them on board the depot-ship *Imperieuse* until the daily passenger steamer arrived first thing in the morning ; and this was a contingency which Miss Ashwell's parties were quite prepared and willing to face, but I failed to get that permission.

Early in 1918 Mr.—now Sir—Harry Lauder offered to go and spend three weeks in the fleet at Scapa. I urged the acceptance of this offer as strongly as I could, but was told that “the men were all right,” “we are too busy”; and he was “choked off.” It was in vain that I tried to put the case to the fleet from the purely financial side. What would any of the big music-hall proprietors put such an offer at in cash? That argument left the fleet cold. They weren't being asked to give or forgo cash. I tried to picture the wild delight half an hour of Harry Lauder would give on the upper deck of a battleship, no scenery, no “props,” nothing being required, except perhaps a piano.

It was useless. The offer had to be turned down, and even now I cannot help thinking that the appalling boredom of the lower-deck life was not really appreciated. Football and boxing matches are no doubt keenly interesting to the men of every ship. So are their own theatricals, and they are excellently done too. But it is all like taking in one another's



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washing, whereas my contention was that the fleet needed a breath of life from *outside*.

About Whitsun in 1918 I arranged with Mr. Harry Tate to take up a small party to Rosyth, and to show what sort of a job that is I will briefly set out the arrangements which had to be made to enable such a tour to be carried out. To start with it was necessary to recognise the generosity of such a party in giving up their week-end, for goodness knows there is no harder worked body of people than those engaged in the "two shows a day" houses, such as the Hippodrome. The party included Mr. E. V. Lucas, who was going, I think, to talk to them on the way up on English and foreign letters and to pave the way for a lecture on this subject later on. Mr. Harry Tate had a new cardboard motor-car made, such as the one that he uses for his famous "show," to pack in a very small space.

We arranged with the Hippodrome management that he should come off at 10.20 P.M. on the Saturday instead of staying on till the curtain at 10.30. We were to have cars ready at the stage door, and rush the party to St. Pancras for the 10.30 north-bound train which was due at Glasgow about 8 o'clock the following morning. There we gave them about two hours for bath and breakfast, and I had arranged or wangled two cars to take them from Glasgow to Hawes Pier, Rosyth, arriving there at noon on Whit Sunday. They were then to go on board to lunch, and Mr.

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Tate undertook to give five half-hour shows during the afternoon on board five different ships between 2 P.M. and 6 P.M. They were to land at 7.30 and catch the 9.30 P.M. south-bound train and play again at the Hippodrome at 2 P.M. on Monday—no mean effort!

Well, this was accepted, and we were all very keen on the business when, during Saturday afternoon, I received a wire saying it was regretted, &c., and that the fleet had gone, or was going, to sea—I forget which. Whether they had got “cold feet” at the idea of the shrieks of “Pa—Pa” which would have resounded all over the Firth of Forth as Mr. Tate moved from ship to ship, or what was the real cause, I don't know; but as to the “fleet going or gone to sea,” I had used the same formula too often myself when “booming off” undesirables to be much impressed by that very threadbare excuse.

Down at our end of the business—at the Admiralty, I mean—we, of course, could not arrange for entertainers of that sort, but we did manage to coax Mr. Maynard Keynes to come from the Treasury and give us a couple of enthralling lectures on War Finance. It says much for the interest taken in the subject that, though the lectures were given, I think, from 8.50 to 10 P.M., and most of us had to forgo our dinners in consequence, the room was packed, and one could have heard a pin drop as Mr. Keynes tripped merrily along among his fugitive millions.

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We could have done with more of his lectures, but the last time I started the ball, through Sir Oswyn Murray, for a further evening I think we as a country were rather "hard up against it," and Mr. Keynes said the moment was "not opportune" for another lecture.

Life was not *all* drab at the Admiralty. Tragic though the times were, we had to have a laugh now and again in order to keep going, and what with my internal propaganda, which drifted in from all sources, I think we kept as cheerful as most people could in those stressful times. One trifling example of a laugh was a translation from a French communiqué which stated: "Au large Gargantua sous-marin Allemande," &c., the translation being: "A large gargantuan German submarine," &c. For the benefit of those who cannot see anything funny in it I mention that "*au large*" means "in the offing," and Gargantua was the name of a port.

One good laugh against me came about this way: The cheap 37s. 6d. Government (Works Department) clock on the mantelpiece of my room had stopped for want of winding, and the Works Department, being very solicitous for the welfare of this type of clock, would not grant me a key all to myself. So we had to wait for a winder to come round once a week. On this occasion he had passed our room by, and so the voice of my clock was stilled and silent. As such it was useless to *me*, and so, remembering my many years in the Navy,

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where I was known as a successful borrower of needful stores without the formality of signing vouchers, &c., I waited till about 11.30 at night, when nobody was about, and sallied forth literally as a thief in the night. I made for a room in which I knew there was no great pressure of work, substituted my silent clock for the one which was ticking merrily, purloined the latter, and, covering it with my rain-coat, got back to my room and went on with my work with a pleasant feeling of a good deed done. About 12 noon the next day Mr. Harnett, the extremely capable and obliging man who looks after rooms and furniture, &c., at the Admiralty, inserted his head into my room and said solemnly that Mr. So-and-so wanted to know if I required my clock back and would I mind returning his clock? I was so taken aback that I quietly said: "How the devil did he know?" to which Harnett smiled and answered: "Your clock is marked 'Chief Naval Censor' on the back of it"; and we all roared at my being bowled out!

Other smiles we got with the assistance of the First Sea Lord's messenger, a highly respectable official, Humber by name. Whenever a "bore" or a "sticker" had to be seen by appointment I used to arrange with Humber that after ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour at most, he should put his head in at my door and say in his most serious voice: "First Sea Lord wants you, sir, at once, please," and so, with profuse apologies, farewells were said, and the

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interview terminated, and I fled to the First Sea Lord's Naval Assistant, and from his room I asked by 'phone if the coast was clear, and so back to work!

On some occasions if I was caught by some too argumentative party, I had a prearranged signal with one of my clerks, who went out and told Humber to work the oracle, and, after a decent interval, he came and played his part to perfection; and I was never found out! If you think such a stratagem not quite the thing, I may add that I have been told that Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple, had a bell-push neatly concealed under the carpet beneath the table at which he sat. When he thought he had had enough of a visitor he put his foot on the concealed bell-push; in came the secretary with some excuse, the visitor accepted the hint, and all was well.

I was frequently asked by American journalists and others how we managed to get through our work with such a small staff, and in reply to that I could only say that I thought it was due to cutting out as much as possible the writing of "minutes" to anybody in or connected with the Admiralty. Personal interview, whenever possible, was our method of handling all questions. Naturally one had to write to people outside, but even then the 'phone or a taxicab would frequently save a protracted and possibly acrimonious correspondence which invariably led nowhere.

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On one occasion a bad "bloomer" had been made in stopping an interesting and important cable for the *Daily Express*. As soon as I arrived in the morning and found this "stopped" message I knew it was useless to ask why it had been stopped, because

(a) The man who had done it was off duty, and

(b) His reason must have been such a rotten one that it wasn't worth having.

So I jumped into a taxi and drove off to beard the Editor, Mr. Blumenfeld, in his palatial office—a vivid contrast to my poor room!

He was a bit surprised at seeing me so early, but when I told him what brought me, and gave him the cable, he merely said, "Never mind; whatever is amiss, you can rely on my not letting you down," and, having read the message carefully, he said it didn't matter anyway, and so we shook hands, and I bolted back to my work.

I was extremely grateful for his attitude in this matter, as indeed in any other question that ever arose over censorship, and I quote it as an instance of how trouble was avoided, which would assuredly have arisen if this matter had been allowed to develop into a long and bitter wrangle on paper.

The other reason why we were able to do with a small staff was because of their diligence and reliability. I have said before that they worked twelve-hour shifts, what is popularly called a "belly-

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full," and it was always at high pressure. A word of recognition is here due to all of them, and especially to one who was with me longer than all—R. W. Belgrove, well known to all visitors to our room as "Lightning," and we soon came to realise that if he lacked some of the speed which his nickname seemed to imply, he had other attributes worth far more to us in our special business than mere rapidity or smartness. He possessed sticking power in an unusual degree, though he was far from strong, and he was never in a hurry to stop work. He kept our files, and card-indexed everything and everybody, and had an encyclopædic memory. Any of us would have trusted him with our last farthing or our most precious secrets (if we had had any). So here's a "bouquet" for "Lightning."

I have written of the formation of the "Publicity Department" of the Admiralty, and many of my newspaper friends protested at its virtual abolition, though its resuscitation will, I hope, be only temporary.

My strong conviction is that no executive Government office should have a Publicity Department. Let there be fixed up by the Press as a whole and the agencies some central place in which Government departments may post bald statements such as "H.M.S. — sank to-day in Lat. — Long. —; so many men saved, and so many lost," or "The —th Regiment sailed from Bombay homeward." But a Publicity Department is too dangerous a

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weapon, to my thinking, in the hands of any unscrupulous or indiscreet person. It can be used for all sorts of purposes which should be outside the purview of anyone connected with the Government, whether Naval or Military Officer, Civil Servant, or Cabinet Minister.



## CHAPTER XVI

### A CENSOR'S "HOLIDAYS"

I visit the Wireless Stations in Ireland—A Night in Sligo—Incidents at Clifden and Valentia—A Trip to the Western Front—The Guest Château—In the Track of the War—Mr. A. G. Gardiner on "Capitalism"—Mount Kemmel—Visit to the U.S. Destroyer Base at Queenstown with the First Sea Lord—Home-Sick Americans—Hospitality of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly—Inspection of American Destroyers—Invitation to the American Front in France—An Excursion into Germany—Taking the Wrong Turning and the Consequences.

I IMAGINE that the title of this chapter will suggest a return to childhood, but having once more resumed civil life I feel entitled to refer to breaks in my strenuous life during the War as "holidays" instead of "leave." There is no trouble about remembering them, for there were not so many. The head of a well-known American "Dry Goods Store" in London told a friend of mine that a holiday to him was merely "a change of activities," and the definition aptly applies to my spells off duty.

In the spring of 1916, exactly a fortnight after the Dublin rebellion, I considered that it was about time to visit the Radio Stations in Ireland, which were under my charge. Having armed myself, therefore, with passes of every description, including permits to obtain petrol from the Military Control, I

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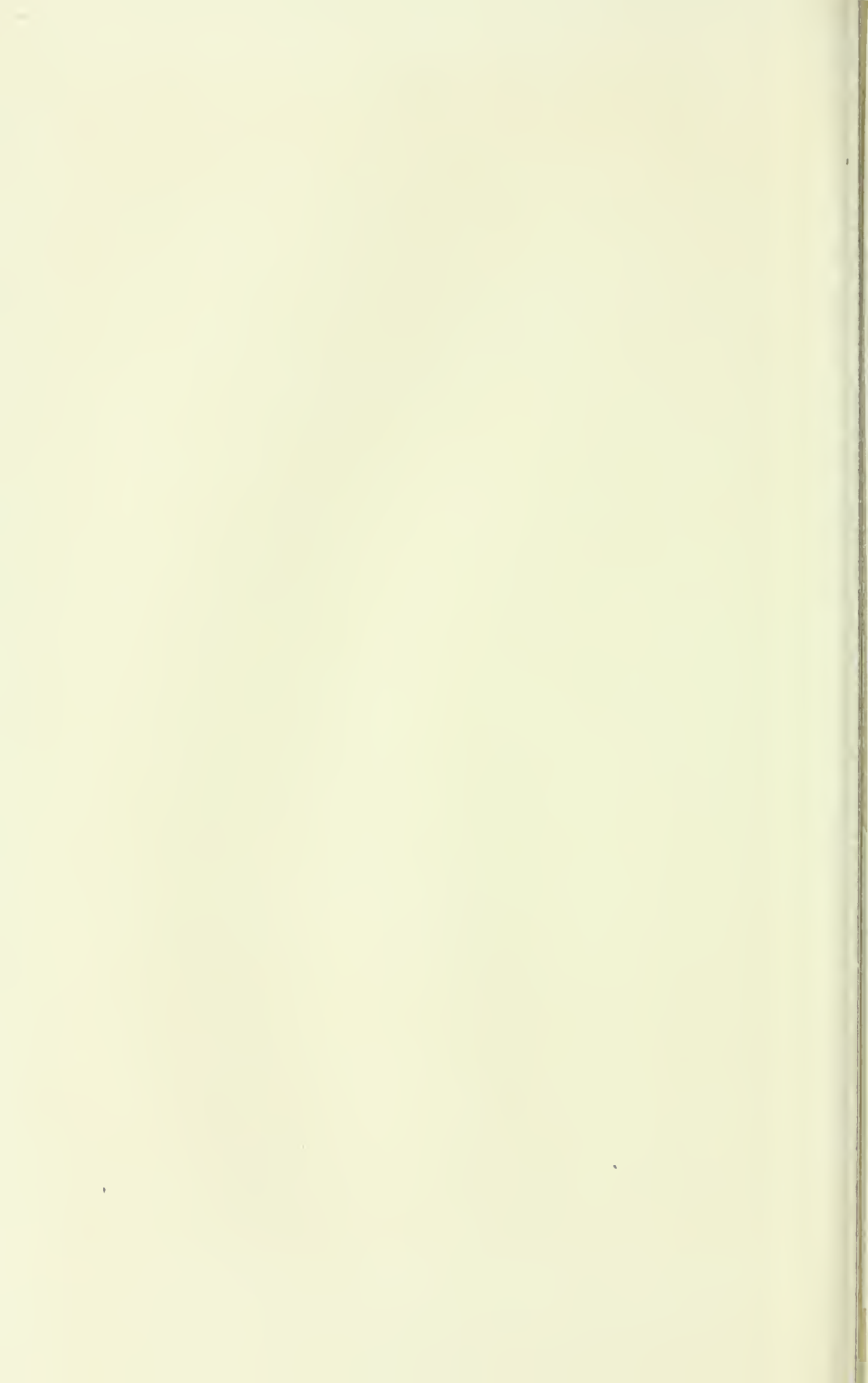
left London on a Monday evening, and arrived at Larne the next morning, where I fell into the kindly hands of a former captain of mine, Sir Alfred Paget, who on the outbreak of War had with fine patriotism stepped down from his rank as an Admiral and become a Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve in order to get command of a Patrol Yacht, in which he nearly found his way to Kingdom Come through the cold waters of the North Sea. Having endured about one and a half years of that rough work, this rugged, great-hearted man had been appointed Senior Naval Officer at Larne. He gave me breakfast and lent me a fur rug and sent me off in a 40-h.p. Lanchester car on my journey.

The first place to which I had to go was the Radio Station at Malin Head (Co. Donegal), a God-forsaken hole, which I reached about 3.30 P.M. I found the censor there doing his work thoroughly well and living in most uncomfortable surroundings. He was a retired Captain R.N. of about sixty-two years of age, acting as *locum tenens* for the proper officer, who had been away for three months as his health had broken down. I went through all his grievances, as well as those of the Post Office officer in charge, and promised redress as far as possible; and, having tried to cheer them up a bit, I left there about 5 o'clock, and got into Londonderry in time to have a meal and go to bed, after having heard the opinions of, and been given much advice by, as many of the inhabitants as I could get hold of.



MOTOR LAUNCHES IN HARBOUR AWAITING THEIR HOUR TO GO ON PATROL

*The publication of this photograph was stopped by the Censor*



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So far as I could make out, the Home Rulers and Unionists were at the time fairly evenly divided, which is what one might expect in that town, but it was equally clear that a goodly proportion of the former were prepared to become Sinn Feiners if this party became sufficiently active and numerous.

That finished Tuesday.

On Wednesday morning I left at 8 o'clock and made for Galway, but when about three miles out of Sligo one of the tyres burst. We replaced this with the only spare tyre, and ran into Sligo about 2 o'clock, where we decided it was not good enough to risk going the rest of my longish journey without a spare tyre; and though Ford tyres were to be found anywhere, no tyres as large as I needed could be got in the whole of Ireland, not even in Dublin.

I therefore wired to the Admiralty garage in St. Martin's Lane to dispatch me two spare tyres by the evening mail train ex London, and I resigned myself to spend a night in Sligo, and had no cause to regret it.

For one thing, the constabulary officer to whom I had to report myself knew my name perfectly well, and wanted to know if I was a relative of Inspector Brownrigg of Mitchelstown fame. Having admitted that I was at all events of the same stock, this at once placed matters on a comfortable footing. After dinner, spurred by ennui, my companion and I went to the local cinema house, or barn, and, climbing up many stairs, we arrived among the local

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“ knuts ” and enjoyed a remarkably fine show. There were excellent films of the French infantry and cavalry training, followed by a full-blooded American business, “ featuring ” a lady on horseback being pursued headlong down a ravine by picturesque ruffians. I didn't, however, see the pursuers follow her “ over the top. ” I suspect the merchant turning the handle had his dinner-hour then.

Somehow, and why I never understood, the next chapter of the story showed bandits taking the tyres off a motor (I don't *think* it was a Ford) and putting the car on the railway lines, and—puff, puff, off they went in pursuit of the “ Twentieth Century, Limited, ” “ operating ” between Chicago and New York. They overtook the train, and climbed in through the corridor window, and “ did in ” a gentleman sitting in the restaurant car, who can hardly have had time to compare his country unfavourably with this old place, where even on our South Eastern lines I think one of our expresses could have given the slip to a motor-car such as was shown on the screen.

And then came the climax, the ab-so-lute limit. I confess that my heart was thumping with excitement. Whether that denotes senility or childishness I don't know, but it is the plain fact, and I believe everybody in the hall was likewise quivering with excitement, when on the screen was thrown the horrible and almost unbelievable words: “ Final Chapter of this story—NEXT WEEK ”!

That may be all right for the residents of Sligo,

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but what about two miserable devils from London? I could have torn the house down willingly. Even with the knowledge that "next week" would bring them the *dénouement* of this hair-raising story, I was surprised that the young bloods of Sligo could stand it. Maybe they are inured to cinema shocks, as they were the only sort of shocks to which Ireland was exposed during the war!

On Thursday the tyres arrived about 4.30 A.M. By 5 o'clock we were on the road and, making fine time, reached Clifden (Co. Galway) at about 10 A.M. This being a big station with a big staff, we had allowed ourselves a long day there in which to deal with all the grievances and see how to remove them and to improve conditions generally. So far as my staff of four Marine officers was concerned, they were fairly contented. Not having given notice of my coming visit, only the Senior Officer, Major Byne, was actually in the station, the others being outside in the village.

Major Byne could not leave his work to come into the Engineers' mess to lunch with me, so I went in with the rest of them and had a good meal of cold mutton and bread and butter and cheese.

When I rejoined Byne he said: "Well, you see how we live," and in all innocence I agreed that it was pretty well all right. "Yes, but you see the margarine we have to use." "No," I said, "I didn't use it; I suppose they kept a bit of butter for me, for which I am duly grateful." "No fear,"

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he said; "there hasn't been a pat of butter in the place for months!" Well, all I could say was that I could have sworn it was butter, and that, if it *wasn't*, there was not much to grouse about!

Incidentally I am told by clever friends that this substance takes its name from being made with the assistance of margaric acid, the "g" being pronounced hard, as in go. That may be so, but it will never be called anything but marjarine. How would the familiar household contraction "marje" be got out of margaric?

Having finished all our business, we left Clifden about 5 P.M., and made a fine run through to Galway, where we lay the Thursday night, after hearing all about the landing of the party from a German submarine in Galway Bay a few weeks earlier. The local point of view of this incident was expressed in curses loud and general against all the hot-heads who had raised the trouble, since they had killed the tourist trade, which had been booming since the bombing raids on the East Coast of England had begun.

We intended to leave Galway at 8 A.M. punctually the next morning (Friday), but Irish hotels do not appreciate providing early breakfast; so they saw to it that we got our meal in time to leave about 9, near enough to 8 o'clock for any couple of "black Protestants."

We ran through lovely country, and reached Valentia about 3 o'clock, where we garaged the car and crossed over to the island of that name. As I



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drove the three miles out to the Radio Station I thought to myself what luck anybody had to be stationed in this quiet and beautiful spot! However, at dinner that night the conversation led me to suppose that the censor there would gladly have changed this comparatively peaceful routine for mine, which was quite the reverse of peaceful. We spent Friday night in the charming hotel at Valentia, and left at 8 o'clock on Saturday morning. Having rescued our car from an entirely different garage from that in which we had left it—for reasons best known to the driver—we struck the road about 10 A.M.

This driver—Bowles, R.N.A.S.—was the finest I have ever seen. He never smiled, but he certainly made me smile with his explanations about the search for petrol before he could garage his car, whereas, it being springtime, it was obvious that the spirit that had moved him or caused him to move was *not* motor spirit!

Having finished my inspection of Radio Stations, I felt justified in shaping my return journey through Killarney, where we lunched on the Saturday, and then ran on to Killaloe, where we spent the night of Saturday. We had an interesting talk with one of the town councillors on the Home Rule question and the Revolution, &c. He was, of course, a Home Ruler, for reasons which to him were sufficient and ample. The British governed Ireland for profit, if not in money, then in patronage, i.e. they kept all

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the best Government positions for English folks. Having spent most of my life abroad, this was news to me, but I did not argue about it, merely remarking that in my few visits to this wonderful island I had never met a man, woman or child, official or otherwise, who didn't speak with an accent which labelled them "Irish" as clear "as a barrel of pork marked 'Limerick.'"

We spent a very pleasant hour high up on the bank of the lovely river, hearing all about the grievances of one of the most beautiful and, to judge by appearances, one of the most prosperous parts of the British Isles.

We left Killaloe on the Sunday morning at 5.30, the hotel manager having been as good as his word to feed us early. Bless him for an upright man, when I suppose he would have preferred to be a recumbent one in a warm bed. So we left with eggs and bacon and much knowledge inside us, and had been running along fine for about two or three miles, the car just getting warmed up to her work, when—whether because it was Sunday or no, and it was wrong to be travelling, I know not—but we met a herd of cattle on a narrow road. We got past all but one, a heifer, a maddening heifer, which I hoped might be turned into beef, roast beef, *instantly*. But it was not to be. For half an hour she turned and ambled along in front of us for five weary miles! Not a gate was open, not a by-road turned off ours. But at last a lane mercifully joined our road, and the

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heifer disappeared out of sight with our curses ringing in its ears!

From there we ran on without a stop into Dublin, having done our journey of 105 miles in three hours and twenty-four minutes, a really magnificent run. Having got a permit from the military to embark the car and made my peace with a very kind Railway Transport Officer, we went out to Kingstown, and spent a lazy Sunday afternoon waiting for the evening Holyhead boat. We reached London the next (Monday) morning at 7 o'clock, having had an interesting and instructive tour and travelled 924 miles in the car.

During the whole of this journey, which I had done in plain clothes, though cautioned that it was wiser to wear uniform, I had never met with anything but courtesy, even though the country had just had a rebellion; and we had not hurt a living thing, not even a chicken, and so here's a "bouquet" for our driver Bowles.

All I can say to readers, if I still have any, is this: Ireland cannot be beaten for beauty and variety of scenery in the month of May, and nothing could be more enjoyable than such a tour as I had, provided, of course, that proper time can be given to it. My tour was a bit too strenuous, as the short rests were occupied in making out a report on each station visited.

My next VA-CA-TION was a four-and-a-half-days' trip to the Western Front, in company with

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Admiral Leveson, in September, 1917. Those Western Front tours run by the Army are pretty well known, and I do not propose to dwell on this one.

One or two things stick in my memory. The first thing was my admiration for the way in which a young military officer on board the cross-Channel packet tackled everybody and got them all to put on lifebelts. He did it quite gently, and his persuasiveness was irresistible—rather like a dentist who coaxes you to “open widely, please.” You know you’ve got to do it to get the job done, and there’s an end to it. I was rather shocked, however, to find two Admirals among the few recalcitrant passengers who declined to put on lifebelts! Being an Admiral doesn’t make one swim any better than a Subaltern—rather worse, probably! And it was a very bad example to the vast crowd of military officers returning from leave.

Personally, being an amenable sort of cuss, I put my belt on, but on each subsequent journey I took refuge with the captain on the bridge, and so was immune from the belt habit, which was foolish of me, no doubt, but more comfortable!

The order and comfort at the guest château at Francourt struck us both. The way our official host, Captain Roberts, handled his large and queerly assorted bunch of guests was beyond praise. As an early start had to be made in the morning, it was early to bed, of which I was very glad, as I was now

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disguised as a soldier in khaki, and the queer clothes and gaiters and belt, etc., irked me. Long before the trip was over I was glad I *was* in khaki and thoroughly appreciated the comfort and sense of the kit.

We surrendered ourselves unreservedly into the hands of the good fellows who were on the staff of "Visitors' Château" to act as cicerones to bores like our two selves. I hope that by making it perfectly clear that we were there to see what these gentlemen were prepared to show us, and that we had no suggestions or criticisms to make, we smoothed their task for them. Certainly nothing could have been more kind and considerate than the way in which these officers handled us, and I think we saw an enormous amount in the time.

On the first day we went to the Butte de Warlencourt, passing through hundreds of thousands of men camped in the back areas. We inspected the ruins of Grandville and a score of other places where every vestige of human habitation had disappeared. At one place, Grandcourt, on a river, we found thousands and thousands of Mills bombs in boxes. Admiral Leveson, having been a gunnery expert, and fancying that he knew a bit about explosives, wanted to see if they would go off and also what sort of an explosion they made. Captain Shiach, who was our pilot that day, took out the pin of one and threw it as far as he could—I suppose twenty to thirty yards—and sure enough it went off all right!

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Seeing this, I expressed a lively wish to possess a couple of these, but my expert friend forbade me. "Not while you and I travel together."

We subsequently spent four days more together without any explosions taking place. I managed to secure two Mills bombs which I have since had emptied by experts, and added to my collection of "souvenirs."

The first night we spent at Albert, and dined with Sir Julian Byng and his Staff. They took endless trouble to explain to us their Intelligence and mapping system, and everything we could possibly want to know. It is impossible to thank him and them sufficiently. I only hope they realised that we felt much more than we said when we expressed our gratitude to them the next day on leaving. I am glad to have slept under the shadow of the cathedral at Albert while the Virgin was still clinging precariously to the tower—a strange sight which I shall never forget.

The next morning, after breakfast with the General, we drove to Bapaume and then to Arras, and spent the day with the Naval Division, who were "in" just north of Arras. It was an inspiring sight seeing the White Ensign and the Naval routine just as if it were Portsmouth Naval Barracks. It was also refreshing to see the keenness and *esprit de corps* of all hands, from General Laurie right down through all ranks. Here we were permitted to go to a forward observation post, commonly

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known as "George's O. Pip," because His Majesty had recently visited it. We fired 6-inch guns at the Boches, and altogether had an instructive and extraordinarily interesting day, and got back to the guest château about 11.30 P.M.

The third day we made straight for Cassel, where we were shown all the maps and positions by General Plumer's Staff. Here again the patience and kindness of these Staff officers was very much appreciated. From there we went up to Messines and the Vimy Ridge, and lunched in one of the officers' clubs just at the back of the front, so to speak. The lunch is memorable on account of a somewhat heated argument which arose between Mr. A. G. Gardiner, who was then the editor of the *Daily News*, and the rest of the party on a subject which he had made his own—namely, the conscription of capital. Having none of the latter, I entered into the argument with zest and amusement. Presently Mr. Gardiner said that nobody had any right to work for himself, that he should be working for the State, and everything should belong to the State, for the good of all. "Newspapers also?" I asked. "Oh, no, not newspapers," was Mr. Gardiner's reply. Well, it was a hot day anyhow!

We started on our journey again, and sat for two hours in the sun on the top of Mount Kemmel, watching the "Sausages," the "Archies," and all the wonders of the fighting machines which were flung into the attack on the very next day. Won-

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derful! Magnificent! That was our feeling, and we were proud indeed to have been so fortunate as to have had this glimpse of the actualities of war.

The next morning we had to return to Boulogne and London, and work! Before we left the guest château more tourists had arrived, a hefty party of Trade Union leaders, from whom we heard that there had been a pretty serious air raid in London. We asked one of these gentlemen if they had brought an evening paper with them, and one of them produced *The Star*. On seeing this I remarked that it would gladden the heart of the editor of the *Daily News* (who was in the next room) to know that this gentleman indulged in *The Star*. "Editor of t' *Daily News*, didst tha say?" "Where is the ——? He's one of them Cocoa ——" After which I thought it about time to get into our car, so I bade my friend a hearty good-bye and fled from the prospects of bloodshed.

On getting back to London we found that we had indeed missed a bad raid. It was the occasion when a bomb was dropped in the Green Park outside the Ritz Hotel. This was one of the only two air raids I missed. What a wonderful four and half days, and well described as a "Change of Activities"!

When the events of March, 1918, took place, and we at home watched the retreat of our army with anxious hearts, I felt it as almost a personal loss when, one by one, all the places which we had



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visited under the care of our wonderful army were wrested from them. I thought of the elaborate organisation we had seen, and hated to think of it all passing into the possession of the Boche.

My next VAY-CAY-TION was not even supposed to be a holiday in any sense of the word, nor indeed was it, though it was as instructive and enjoyable as the two breaks in office work which I have already described.

The First Sea Lord had for long been wanting to visit the American Destroyer Base at Queenstown, and after many delays it was eventually arranged during May, 1918. We left London on a Friday night, the party consisting of the First Sea Lord, his Naval Assistant, Captain John Marriott, myself, and Lieutenants Engholm and Neal, who were my cinematographer and photographer respectively, and of course the First Sea Lord's priceless personal messenger, Humber.

We reached Queenstown without trouble at noon on Saturday. Although I had been thirty-five years in the Navy, I had never met the Commander-in-Chief at Queenstown, Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, though of course I had heard a good deal about him. However, I was told by his Chief of Staff, Commodore Martin Leake, D.S.O., that it was the Admiral's wish that I should stay at Admiralty House, so there I went with the First Sea Lord and Captain Marriott, and we sat down to lunch which, so far as food was concerned, was a revelation to

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us after coming from the closely rationed city of London.

The establishment was a teetotal one, and had been so all through the War. Nothing could have exceeded the kindness of Sir Lewis Bayly and his niece, Miss Voysey, who was known as the "Queen of Queenstown," and they soon made me feel at home.

I had heard from various American Naval officers something of the attitude of Sir Lewis towards them, and of the hospitality of Admiralty House, but one had to see it and feel it to appreciate what this "home" atmosphere must have meant to these young American officers who were engaged on the common task of beating the Hun.

It is notorious that Americans are vastly more homesick than British officers, presumably because they leave home much older than we do; but whatever the cause, they *do* get homesick to an extent which is almost inexplicable to us. The Commander-in-Chief and Miss Voysey had made it their business to understand it, to sympathise with it, to combat it, and in so far as lay in their power to alleviate it, and to make them feel that they had a "home" on the hill at Queenstown, overlooking the flotillas.

The grounds consisted of two gardens, one of which contained lawn tennis courts and was entirely given up to the American officers. The Commander-in-Chief saw every Commanding Officer personally on his return from sea and before going out again on

## A Censor's "Holidays"

patrol, and gave him what is more to men than words can express, namely, sympathy.

The life of the American seaman has been fully described by many able writers, yet it may bear repeating that their routine was five days out on patrol and three days in harbour; and in the Atlantic, off the south-west coast of Ireland, that can by no stretch of imagination be called a rest cure. It says volumes for the build of their boats, for the work of their mother ship, *Melville*, and for the determination of their officers and men that the three days in harbour were always sufficient to tune the boats up for their next turn of duty of five days on patrol.

I had had some correspondence with the Commander-in-Chief from time to time concerning writers whom I had sent over to him. He was not enamoured of publicity and his letters to me were not three-volume novels. They were on the crisp side. He hated publicity and did not love the man who was slowly bombing him out of that hatred. So I felt a bit curious to see what would come of this visit.

On the Saturday afternoon we went up to the baseball field and saw a good "ball" game, and had the niceties of the game and its technicalities explained to us by Captain Pringle, of the *Melville*. It was a lovely afternoon, and as we sat and baked in the sun it was hard to realise that twenty-four hours before we had been at work in the stuffy old Admiralty, and we told our American friends how

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lucky they were to live and work under a blue sky with a glorious sun to warm and dry them. That produced a genuine outburst from Pringle, who said that neither he nor anybody else in Queenstown had seen the sun since the previous September, and it was a positive fact that this was the very first time for nine months that anybody had been able to sit out of doors without an overcoat on. There must have been a mascot in the party, and I am inclined to think I was it!

The Commander-in-Chief had twelve American officers to dinner that night, and after dinner we went to the Sailors' Club and saw their first-class entertainment. I was specially interested in this, as I had provided all their films for them. It was exhilarating to hear the crowd of about 2,500 shouting "Over there," to the accompaniment of their excellent band, the words being thrown on the screen so that we could also join in the chorus.

On the Sunday morning Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss inspected the *Melville* and some of the U.S. destroyers. Their cleanliness was very remarkable. I had found the same conditions on board Admiral Rodman's Sixth Battle Squadron in the Grand Fleet when I went to Scapa. American sailors undoubtedly believe that cleanliness is next to godliness and that straight shooting and general efficiency go hand in hand with scrupulous cleanliness, which is, after all, only a form of discipline.

In the sick bay on board the *Melville* were some



H.M.S. *BENBOW* IN TOW



The above photograph as censored. The paravane has been eliminated



## A Censor's "Holidays"

terribly burnt men from the U.S. destroyer *Manly*. This vessel, from some more or less unexplained cause, had had an explosion on board her of thirty-five depth charges, which had blown the after part of her clean away; and the poor charred and suffering men were the gallant remnants of her crew, thirty-five men having disappeared. I talked with one of them who was just able to speak, and I remember saying that he must make up his mind to get well so as to get back home across the Atlantic. "That's all right," he managed to say, "I'm not going to leave the boys," which, I think, admirably expressed the spirit of all of them. They intended to see it out.

In the afternoon we went across the harbour to see the large seaplane stations under construction and met several of the flying officers and men—all modest and quiet and *getting on with their business* and very anxious to be able to help the patrols from the air.

On Sunday night there was another dinner to many more U.S. destroyer captains and much "shop" talk. On Monday morning we paid a visit to Haulbowline Dockyard, where we went over the *Manly* and also Lieutenant Auten's "Q" boat, then fitting out. Then we returned to luncheon and caught the train out at 3.30, and the next (Tuesday) morning saw us back at work at the Admiralty. It was a full forty-eight hours, and I believe it did good all round.

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So far as I was concerned it had a curious sequel. Owing to the generosity of the captain of the *Melville*, I was the happy possessor of a long stick of white bread, also some sugar and cheese. As I dared not trust them to any outside agency, I telegraphed to my wife to come and meet me at Savile Row. She, of course, thought I had something the matter with me, that I had lost my job—anything, in fact, but the real cause. So when she appeared and I triumphantly produced my bread and cheese and sugar, my gifts were rather scornfully received. “Oh! is that why you sent for me?” However, after having narrowly escaped causing a riot in Paddington Station when she dropped the bread out of its fragile paper wrappings, she was received with enthusiasm by my children, who had not seen white bread or cheese for months!

Towards the latter end of November, 1918, I had a very pleasant surprise in the shape of a visit from an official from the American Embassy who told me that their Headquarters in Paris had instructions to arrange a tour for me of the American Front in France. When would it be convenient for me to go? I was delighted at the prospect, and perhaps still more so at the kind thought which had prompted the offer. I fancy I can trace it back to my kind friend the late American Ambassador, Dr. Walter Hines Page.

There was no time to lose, so I made all my arrangements to get away as early as possible, and



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on December 6 I made my way to Dover, spent the night under the wing of Rear-Admiral the Honourable Algernon Boyle, and was lucky enough to cross the next morning (December 7) in a patrol boat. I reached Paris about five o'clock, and found two very nice young American military officers, Lieutenant Georgeson and another, awaiting me, and I was taken charge of and deposited in the Chatham Hotel.

Having had late tea, and my cicerones having other fish to fry, they asked me if I would care to go to any play or "show" that night, as I was going to be alone. It struck me as a good notion, and a ticket was got for some theatre whose name I have forgotten, and in the morning I naturally paid the hall porter for my stall. Some nights after, when discussing with my friends the expense of things in Paris, I mentioned that I thought the price of a stall was about enough. They both sat up and said: "Why, we paid for that stall. You don't mean to say you paid again." I replied that of course I had paid for my theatre ticket and couldn't think of anyone else doing so for me. Well, they said, they would get the money refunded when we got back to Paris. But they didn't. The hall porter was a Napoleon of Finance. He merely stated that he had got two stalls, and when asked what he had done with the second one, he shrugged his shoulders and remarked, "Je m'en f——e," which put an end to the pleasant little chat. Net profit to hall porter—17.50 francs.

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We left Paris in a new eight-cylinder Cadillac at about ten o'clock on Sunday, December 8, and about two miles from the hotel, i.e. in some sort of outskirts of the town, we stopped and bought a yard of bread and a bottle of Graves, the latter for Frs. 3.50—no profiteering there—and off we went with our provisions for the day.

We visited Belleu Wood and Château-Thierry, where the U.S. troops had had their first big fighting. What struck me was the enormous difference between these places and those on our own front which I had visited fifteen months before—Bapaume, Péronne and the rest. These places were hardly shot about at all, which showed that, comparatively speaking, the fighting had been of brief duration. We took our lunch, share and share alike, in blazing sunshine on the road, having stopped on a summit overlooking a great valley.

One of my officer guides asked the driver what his name was. "Bahb" (Bob) was the reply, and then he corrected himself quickly, realising his slip, and gave his surname. But the incident served to show me how near the surface was the civilian inside the khaki coat. He was a first-class driver, and I must say he was tried pretty far during the week in which I travelled with him.

In the afternoon we visited Rheims, a true object lesson of the march of civilisation (?) as understood in the year of our Lord 1918. It was a heart-breaking picture. The French people were just being re-

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admitted to the town, and groups of them, sightseers like ourselves, were sadly making a tour of their magnificent cathedral, now only a splendid ruin, though the mass of the structure stands there still.

From there we went to Châlons-sur-Marne, where we visited the "gas" station to refill our petrol tank. This is the only instance of which *I* know where an American uses a shorter word than we do for the same thing, and the only reason *I* can suggest is that the "juice" we use in cars is not "gas," but petrol. Anyway, *I* am no chemist.

Thence we drove to Bar-le-Duc, where we dined at "La Popotte," a sort of officers' club or dining-room, primitive, but good and very cheap, and so on again to the guest house at Neufchâteau, which we reached at 10 p.m.

The driver had had an awful "doing" for the last hour—a bad road, bad lights, and *I* should say he was pretty nearly dead beat. But he stuck on, and after one or two narrow squeaks brought us "to the haven where we would be" all safe and sound. *I* suspect that "Babb" slept well. *I* know *I* did.

The following morning, Monday, December 9, we left at about 9.30 and took the route Toul, Pont-à-Mousson, Arnaville, Metz, Thionville and Luxembourg, arriving at this last place about 4.30. That is to say we had had an easy day's run. All the way up we had been passing French regiments making their way to the front to go in to Germany as one of the armies of occupation. *I* was very much struck

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by the size of the men. They were uniformly fine, big, well-set-up men, looking, I suppose, older than they really were, and I dare say feeling sad that, now the war was over, they were marching away from home instead of towards it. At Metz we made a halt, and examined the place fairly carefully. We saw all the shops which had been smashed up the previous day by students (so it was said) because the owners of the shops had not decorated their houses on the occasion of the visit of M.M. Poincaré and Clemenceau and Generals Foch, Haig and Pershing.

Also we noted, and bought picture postcards of, the statue of the Kaiser in a niche on the right-hand side of the main entrance to Metz Cathedral, with a label hanging round his neck large enough for us to read from the ground, "*sic transit gloria mundi*," and round his clasped hands a pair of handcuffs—a strange sight!

We found the town of Luxembourg rather a pleasant little place, and we spent the night at the Hôtel de la Grand Brasserie, where there were no very apparent signs of war. Meat and sugar were served without being asked for, and the hotel itself was as clean as a new pin.

On Tuesday, Dec. 10, we left Luxembourg, and steering north-west through dense forest and fog we made for the frontier at Echternach, where we crossed over the little bridge into Germany in company with an American 6-inch gun. It was interesting this day to watch large numbers of the

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American Army going up to join the Army of Occupation, fine young fellows full of the spirit of the great adventure.

We ran a considerable way along the German frontier, passing through Bottendorf, Wallendorf, Diekierch, and then back into Luxembourg, and steered south-west to Alon, south to Longwy, through all the iron and steel works country, Longuyon, and so to Etain and Fresnes.

Although it rained heavily during the afternoon, we went very completely over the St. Mihiel ground. Here there was very clear evidence of the severity of the shelling of roads and cross roads; indeed it was difficult to negotiate them even at that interval of time after the fighting, exactly three months. All day long we passed large squads of American road repair parties, mostly black troops, and I could not help feeling sorry for them, working away in deep mud, bitter cold, blinding rain, and yet, so far as one could judge, they were all cheerful enough, and always anxious and ready to salute a white American officer. Indeed in this they seemed to take a special pride and pleasure.

After seeing the St. Mihiel area, we steered south-east to Vigneulles, and so to Toul and back to the guest house at Neufchâteau. Here we lay for the night, and ran into a party of American newspaper men, whom I had met in the course of my business in London, and had a cheery and pleasant evening of it.

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Somewhere in the battlefields we had during the day picked up four Boche helmets which we were going to divide amongst us, and we brought them back in triumph to the guest house, but in the rush of the morning, aided perhaps by some outside agency, the helmets were completely forgotten! Perhaps it was as well, as our motto was "Travel light."

On Wednesday the 11th, we started to retrace our steps, and very unfortunately we had heavy rain all day. We reached Verdun about 2 P.M., and went over as much of its ground as we could in the time that Lieutenant Georgeson could grant us, and very wonderful and impressive it was. The whole place from the point on which we finally stood—Fort Thionville—was one vast graveyard. The rain prevented my being able to see the lie of the terrain more than a mile and a half off, but the severity of the fighting and its terrible cost could be appreciated when one saw the nearest point to the fort to which the Boches had been able to approach in many and repeated attacks. There are 350,000 Germans and 300,000 French buried in Verdun and on the slopes which surround and defend the wonderful city. I am deeply grateful to the American Military Forces for the opportunity they gave me of seeing this solemn and awe-inspiring scene.

We ran back into Paris about 10 P.M., and stayed again at the Hôtel Chatham, where I had a job to *debarbouiller* myself of the mud in which I

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was encased. I was indeed glad to have been in khaki.

We left Paris again the next morning, Thursday the 12th, and made for Tours, where I was to report to the U.S. General in charge of their Supply Base. All through the trip we had been travelling light and never took more than a yard of bread with us, and not always that, trusting to buy on the road. On this occasion, thinking that we were going to get into Tours in time for lunch, Lieutenant Georgeson and I were enjoying a luncheon in advance in our imagination, when we had a slight mishap which, as we said, served us right, and put the lunch off for good and all that day.

We were running along the road on the top of the banks of the Loire, and making as good speed as complete absence of traffic combined with the enormous potholes in the road would allow, when, like the young lady in the cinema, we "took the wrong turning"—that is to say, we failed to branch off away from the embankment where the road bifurcated about four miles out of Tours. We continued on the embankment road naturally enough, as there was nothing to suggest our going off it, and we had come some forty miles along it. This was what led to our undoing, and, as I said, put lunch out of the question.

No sooner had we noticed (we were moving at forty miles an hour) that there was only just width enough for the wheels of our car than we saw one of

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those enormous French wine carts about seventy to eighty yards ahead of us, and it was quite clear that neither of us could turn or pass one another. The next thing that happened took place in about ten seconds. We jammed our brakes on and tried to pull to one side; we climbed the kerb, one wheel went over the edge of the embankment, the radiator kindly removed some inch-thick iron railings, and the huge shaft of the wine cart came between Lieutenant Georgeson and myself, and narrowly escaped "spitting" him. It pierced the back of our car; the old French mare lay down on the ground, and her driver burst into a queer mixture of tears and curses. "Tableau-vivant, there's a picture for you!" as the late R. G. Knowles used to say! In the twinkling of an eye the usual crowd appeared from nowhere, and after looking at us all as we climbed out of our car, and after examining the old man and his mare, they came to the conclusion that there was no great harm done, the old man and the mare being absolutely uninjured, and we as merry as grigs (only resenting our lost lunch). The whole party started to help us out of our mess.

They first had to coax the old man to cease crying out "Oh! La pauvre bête! Oh! La pauvre bête! Oh! La! La! Oh! La! La!" And, after pointing out to him that neither he nor the mare was damaged, they induced him to unharness and get the animal on to her feet, and they soon wheeled the wine cart back clear of us. We then dragged our



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car into the straight and narrow path, which in this case had nearly led us to destruction, and in half an hour or so we were able to "go astern" with the car, amidst the plaudits of the crowd (the plaudits were largely due to a wise distribution of largesse among those who had so kindly and willingly helped us), and presently we ran into Tours, after having exchanged one or two compliments on the folly of counting our chickens before they were hatched.

We got fixed up at the Officers' Y.M.C.A. Hostel somewhere in the square by the station, and then procured some food in the station restaurant, though it was already 3.30.

Later in the day we called on the General in charge of the Supply Headquarters. He very courteously showed me the whole system of supply from the French seaboard right up to the U.S. fighting line in the Argonne, and very interesting it was.

I was then taken over a huge salvage plant in which the United States employed five thousand women at 9 francs 50 per day, so the good ladies of Tours were doing fairly well! Here I saw clothes of every description being cleaned and remade, also gum boots and all sorts of "hiking" shoes. That is one of the differences between the English language and the variety used in the States, viz., a *shoe* on the other side of the Atlantic means any kind of boot except half Wellingtons or boots that go right up to the knee like jack-boots.

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This salvage plant was in charge of a very smart officer who had, I gathered, been in the boot industry before the war. There was no doubt that he had built and equipped this fine plant in an incredibly short space of time, and *it was already paying its way* to the tune of about £90,000 per month net profit. I give *his* figures, of course, because I believe them.

I am not quite clear that I rounded off my success with this gentleman by asking him if the U.S. Army was still wedded to the boot which has a billiard ball in the toe of it? He looked at me as though he would convey the impression that he didn't really understand what I was after, but I made it quite clear, and so he admitted that they had bidden good-bye to that particular freak type of shoe. That's *one* good thing that has come to America out of the war! As a matter of fact, you couldn't tell their military boot from ours, though I understand there is some trifling technical difference.

We finished up the evening at the biggest local hotel and saw life such as it was in Tours in war time, and retired to the very comfortable, spotlessly clean Y.M.C.A. hostel in good time, ready for another early start.

On Friday morning we left Tours betimes and made for Romorantin, the Headquarters of the U.S. Army Aviation Service. We spent a most interesting period seeing their enormous accumulation of machines all ready to fly away, and I must say my heart bled for the officers and pilots, as well as ground

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officers, who had just got the output as well as the machines really satisfactory, and then—Armistice, and nothing doing! I was informed that just at the end of the fighting they were sending away about forty-eight machines per day, flying them off (or taxi-ing them, as they would say) to their fighting front. No wonder there was a general air of despondency about all those splendid young fellows. The heart had gone out of their work. They had just reached the top of their effort. Well, I sympathised with them with all my heart, and that was all I could do.

From the Aviation Depot we went on to Gêvres, about twenty miles north of Tours, the actual Q.M.C.'s Supply Depot for the whole U.S. Army, a wonderful place, seven miles long by about two wide. The depot was started and completed by Colonel Kelly, an American cavalry officer of a fine, quiet, rugged type, a native of Texas, I believe. I had the privilege of spending some three hours with him, when, with the aid of maps and plans and a motor-car, he showed me with reasonable pride the result of his energy and organising power. No wonder he loved it and was proud of it. Sad to say, he had lost his only son, who was in his own cavalry regiment, two days before the Armistice was signed.

We bade good-bye to Colonel Kelly about 4 P.M., and, after a fast but uneventful run, got back to the Hôtel Chatham, Paris, at about 10 P.M. The next morning I had to return to Boulogne and

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England and thus to my great regret had to miss seeing President Wilson's entry into Paris, which took place an hour or so after I had left. This would finely have rounded off a most wonderful trip in charge of the American Army, a trip which I shall always remember and for which no words can adequately express my gratitude. I hope that the wheel of fortune may in its turning bring Lieutenant Georgeson into my life again, as he was a *man* with red corpuscles in his blood, an ideal travelling companion, an excellent showman, who was proud of what he had to show and relate, but had not a shadow of swagger or buck.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LAST DAYS OF THE CENSORSHIP

The German Wireless announcing the Kaiser's Abdication—  
The Nauen Messages as Reflections of Germany's Mentality  
—Suspense while Waiting for the Signing of the Armistice  
Terms—Scenes in Whitehall when the News became Public  
—"Bouquets" for the Chief Naval Censor—I become a  
Free Man once more.

THE final stages of the Great War were quite as exciting and dramatic as the opening scenes, and even a people surfeited with emotions of every description during the previous four years and three months could not avoid being thrilled as the dramatic news heralding the end of the bloody business came in by wireless.

Following closely on the knowledge that there was mutiny in the High Sea Fleet, the news that the Kaiser had abdicated, which reached us at about 4 P.M. on Saturday, November 9, went a long way to justify those of us who had always maintained that when the time came the German nation would crack and engulf the whole machinery of the Government. Yet, truth to tell, it was hard to believe. Here is the wireless message announcing the great news :

The German Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, has issued the following decree :

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The Kaiser and King has decided to renounce the Throne.

The Imperial Chancellor will remain in office until the questions connected with the abdication of the Kaiser, the renouncing by the Crown Prince of the Throne of the German Empire and of Prussia, and the setting up of a Regency have been settled. For the Regency he intends to appoint Deputy Ebert as Imperial Chancellor, and he proposes that a Bill shall be brought in for the establishment of a law providing for the immediate promulgation of general suffrage, and for a constitutional German National Assembly which will settle finally the future form of Government of the German nation and of those peoples which might be desirous of coming within the Empire.

*Berlin, 9th November, 1918.*

THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR,  
PRINCE MAX OF BADEN.

I had always anticipated that, if things went really badly, so that the end could be reckoned upon with comparative certainty, the Kaiser would have got himself up into the firing line somehow and somewhere, and would have sought death as others in his position had done in the past; that he would never endure the debacle of a dethronement and of a life in which he would be "*conspue'-d*" by all his fat-necked German subjects.

Moreover, I argued that if he really had fled, the whole country would go to pieces, and I thought that, apart from the satisfaction of seeing this sword-rattler humbled at last, it might be better to have him to treat with than some unknown son of Demos.



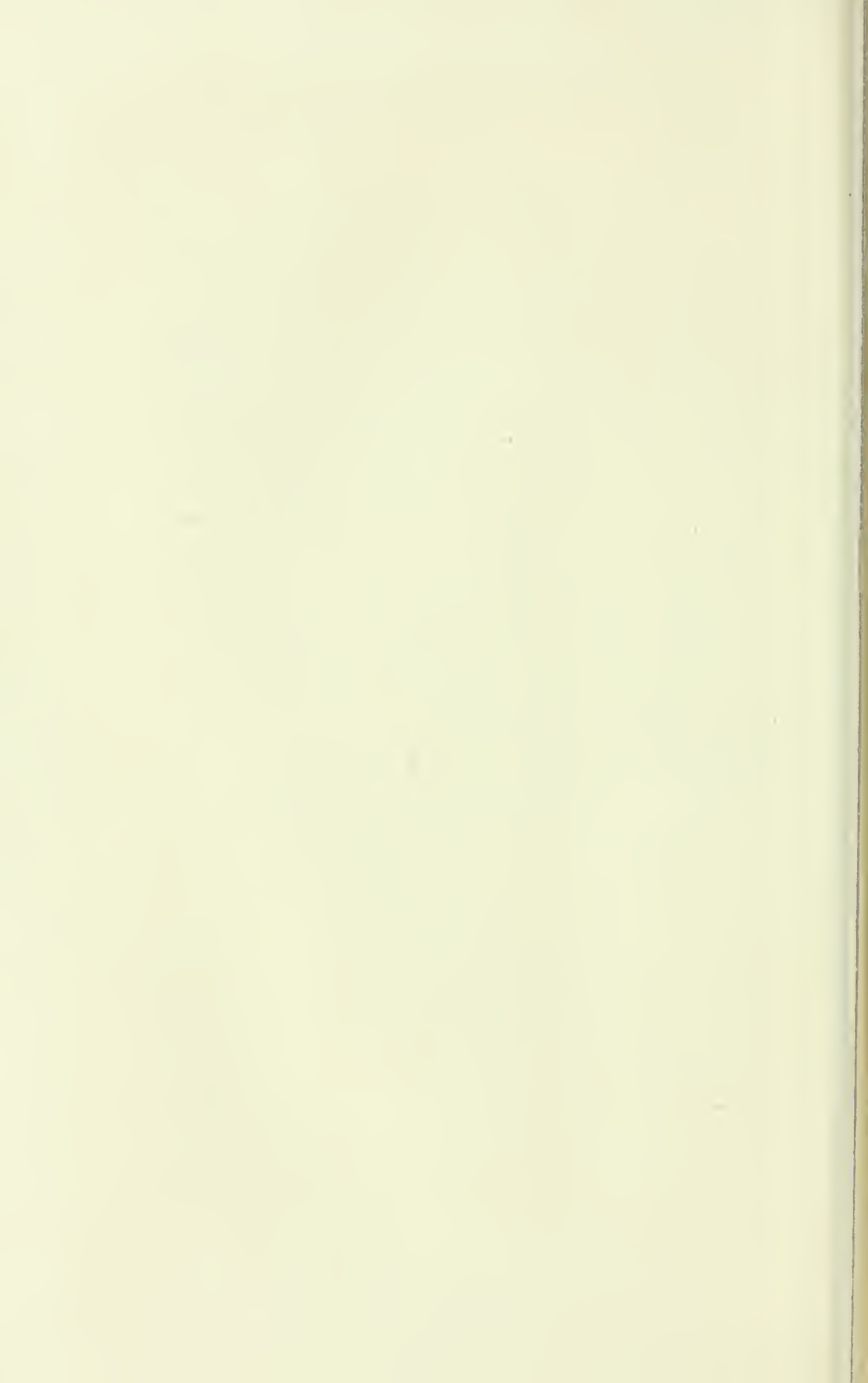
*Back out*

*Back out*

**A BATTLESHIP'S BAND**

One of its duties is to play the National Anthem every morning when the ensign is hoisted

*Showing the Censor's markings*





## Last Days of the Censorship

In fact, Russia was rather vividly before my mind as a dreadful example.

Such a mixture of lies and truth had been pumped out from Nauen (the German high-power wireless station) from the very commencement of the War that it was a little hard to make up one's mind to believe this news.

The Nauen Wireless was, as a rule, not a bad barometer, showing whether things were going well or ill with the Boches. For instance, about the end of August, 1914, they had put out a long windy message, intended to cheer the Boches scattered over the face of the globe, that all the talk of the British sending troops to the assistance of their foolish Allies, the French, was mere rubbish, the *facts* being the British ships were pinned down to the East Coast ports through fear of the German submarines which were controlling the North Sea and Channel. And on the very day on which they put out this message I got from the War Office the number of men landed in France—86,000—with many of whom the Boches had been fighting and whom they had the best reasons for remembering, for had they not caused the first breakdown of their “according to plan” war?

So during the War they continued with their wireless, and it came to be quite well known among us that

- (1) If things were going well with the Boches, their wireless told the actual truth without exaggeration.

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(2) Whereas, if things were going amiss with them and they were "getting it in the neck," the wireless was an extraordinary jumble of truth and lies, the latter being well up to forty per cent. of the whole mixture, as witness their first Jutland message.

While waiting for the Germans to sign the Armistice existence again became hectic at that end of the Admiralty—the Old Building—in which we who were specially interested in radio telegraphy lived and moved and had our being.

It was expected, and the Prime Minister certainly hoped, that he would be able to announce the signing of the Armistice at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on November 9. I reverted to my routine of the first days of the War by taking my meals in my office and keeping the old bad hours, viz. 8 A.M. through the day to 1.30 to 2 A.M. I had a motorcycle messenger in the quadrangle that night ready to fly off to the First Lord's house and to the Prime Minister. So I waited nearly all through the time during which the Lord Mayor's banquet lasted, and if I was wild with excitement what must have been the feelings of the company down at the Guildhall, and especially of the Prime Minister?

At 6.10 I received the following message :

EIFFEL TOWER,

GERMAN PLENIPOTENTIARIES TO GERMAN HIGH  
COMMAND.

Helldorf passed the lines at 3.20 this afternoon (Central

## Last Days of the Censorship

European time) towards Fournies. Please facilitate his journey up to General Headquarters.

VON WINTERFELD.

It being quite clear that as the German officer carrying the terms of the Armistice back to Germany had only crossed the lines bound for Spa at 3.20 that afternoon the Armistice could not possibly be signed that day, so the message was rushed off to the First Lord, with the distances which this officer had to travel before he could reach German G.H.Q. clearly set out. This enabled the Prime Minister to announce that, though he could not tell the company present that the Armistice would be signed that day, he could tell them that the Kaiser had abdicated.

So I continued waiting all through Saturday night and Sunday, and, as the time for the Armistice came nearer, the excitement grew more intense, until at last at 9.40 P.M. on Sunday, November 10, Lieutenant Faudel Phillips rushed into my room with the following message :

### *German Wireless.*

GERMAN SUPREME COMMAND TO PLENIPOTENTIARIES  
WITH THE ALLIED COMMAND.

The Supreme Government of the German Empire hands to the Supreme Army Command the following for Secretary of State Erzberger. Your Excellency is empowered to sign the Armistice. At the same time you will hand over the following statement :

The German Government will endeavour to carry out the conditions imposed. But the signatories consider it

## Indiscretions of the Naval Censor

their duty to point out that compliance with these conditions must bring famine to the population of the part of Germany not to be occupied. The abandonment of all stores in the districts to be evacuated which were intended for the provisioning of the troops as well as the limitation amount to sequestration of foodstuffs for distribution in conjunction with a maintenance of the blockade make provisioning and the organisation of distribution impossible. The signatories therefore request to be allowed to negotiate with regard to such alterations of these points whereby the provisioning may be guaranteed. (Signed) IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR.

The Supreme Command further calls attention to the points handed over at noon to-day to General von Winterfeld.

THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE GERMAN PLENIPOTENTIARIES WITH THE ALLIED COMMAND.

The German Government accepts the Armistice conditions offered on November 8th.

(Signed) IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR.

Request acknowledgment of receipt.

Thereupon, the messages were speedily typed and roneo'd and sent off to the First Lord and Prime Minister, who must have got them by about 11 o'clock at latest, though the First Lord had already had them by 'phone from me. To my intense regret it was decided not to permit publication of these messages because the signature on the message was not "recognised" as any particular head of the Government, being merely signed "Imperial Chancellor." I considered that that news should have been given to the public in their Monday morning

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papers. However, a Boche is a Boche, and so perhaps it was as well to wait until the Germans had actually signed and the Armistice came into force.

It was impossible with that ferment in one's head to sleep, and so I was down again in my office next morning at 7 o'clock to see the last stages of the business through. At 7.15 A.M. the message from our Allies arrived saying that the Germans *had* signed at 5 A.M.,\* and this message was sent out as usual to Ministers, and at about 10.50 A.M. we got the welcome news that the public would be informed by the firing of three maroons. No sooner had the maroons been fired than all work stopped, apparently all over London and, I dare say, all over the country and the world too! Everybody rushed out into Whitehall, which before very long was a packed mass of happy and excited people not knowing how to give vent to their feelings, and, being truly British, they were too shy to shout or dance or do anything, so they stood and swayed about like sheep—very British, bless them!

The situation was saved by a subaltern, who, I suppose, happened to find himself on a bus bound down through Whitehall to Westminster. As the speed of the bus was reduced by the crowd to rather less than foot pace, he solemnly stood up at the back of the roof, and with his cane beating time he started three cheers, which lifted the safety valve of the

\* The Armistice came into force at "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month."

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crowd and they then began to give voice to the ferment of joy that was inside them.

This subaltern was an extraordinary sight. He travelled to and fro three times on buses, keeping the crowd yelling and cheering in a perfectly orderly manner, his face remaining sphinx-like with not a trace of a smile on it. He did good work that morning.

The Lords of the Admiralty came out to see what was going on, and stood on top of some erections which were being built over part of the First Lord's old house facing Whitehall. I was moving about among the crowd, in mufti, as I had been practically throughout the War, and told the crowd who these people were, and so it was not very long before they yelled for a speech, but it would have been quite impossible to make a speech owing to the continuous uproar that was going on.

However, the First Lord held up his hand and obtained a certain degree of quiet from those within a radius of about fifty yards, and then called for "three cheers for the British bluejackets," which was wildly responded to. More calls for a speech, so once more the First Lord held up his hand for silence, and then called for "three cheers for Sir David Beatty," and the crowd let themselves go once more in response to that call.

After that the Board returned to their work, and no doubt they, like many and indeed most others, have said: "Well, if this is Peace, for my part give me War!" for the work, instead of being on certain

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recognised lines, was completely thrown out of gear, and wholly new problems arose as if by magic.

For my part, directly the Armistice terms reached us I determined to remove the Naval censorship as soon as it could be clearly seen that the Boche intended to carry out the Naval terms of the Armistice. As I have stated, this was done on November 20, 1918.

There remained then only the clearing up to do, tearing up of documents which in our opinion were not worth putting among the records (and I have had ample cause to regret many of those lost documents already!), preparing an official record of our work, scheduling the documents which were to be kept, and demobilising the staff and getting them other jobs, some in civil life, and others in Government departments whose sphere of work grew by reason of peace, demobilisation, and so on.

When I was a boy at school about ten years old, I was punished for something I had *not* done, by having that part of me which I should ordinarily place on a form or chair thoroughly well caned, and then being made to stand on a form (presumably because I couldn't sit), and told to learn ten lines of Cæsar! I hated Cæsar, not the man, but the book; I hated the schoolmaster and the form on which I stood. I was very sore both physically and mentally, *but*, as I stood up and tried to collect my thoughts and began to concentrate them on old man Cæsar's doings, I remember slipping my hand into my waist-

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coat pocket, and feeling and caressing a new silver watch my father had given me—my first watch—and saying to myself: “Well, at any rate, they can’t take this away from me,” and with that warm and comforting feeling I tackled Cæsar.

In the days when abuse of the Censor was especially warm, I tried to console myself with the knowledge that I had tucked away at home some letters, which I handled now and again as I used to handle my new watch when a boy, and say to myself that they were ample reward for all the worries, annoyances, long hours, broken nights, and so on.

I used to tell my friends that whatever degree of popularity I had attained in London before the War, I speedily lost as soon as the War got going, for the simple reason that on being asked for news, a popular form of baiting which took place with distressing regularity at all luncheons and dinners, I invariably said there was no news. By the morning I was proved to be a liar, and so one by one my acquaintances came to the conclusion that I was a “wash-out” or “dud” or “dead-head,” whilst some friends from across the Atlantic guessed I was “a back number anyway.”

Throughout the War, and especially during the later years of it, I was frequently bidden to banquets or luncheons given to Allied, Overseas, and most often American pressmen. I listened to a lot, a great lot of speeches, and went back to the Admiralty to work. On every occasion I was the butt of one



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or more of the speakers; and of course of all quasi-comic speakers, who, when in search for a word or a yarn, would metaphorically throw a cabbage at the Censor. It was the recognised form of wit, and like the mother-in-law of my younger days at the music halls never failed to draw a round of applause! But on no single occasion was I ever asked to reply, or to say a word in my own defence.

I like to lend myself to any good cause, and if the genuine pleasure the applause seemed to indicate aided the digestion of the company, *tant mieux*; the plain fact remains that tail-twisting of "The Censor" became a habit with every after-dinner speaker connected with newspapers or books like chewing-gum or any other senseless practice, and only on *one* occasion did I ever hear a man who had the courage to say a word in favour of that miserable devil "The Censor."

That one speaker was at a dinner given to American journalists at the Ritz, which took place the day after the Armistice. I would give much to remember his name, because he had the courage to say what I am certain many must have felt, but had not the "guts" to acknowledge—viz. that he considered the Censor was really an essential person and could not be dispensed with. He cited his own case during the Spanish-American War, when he cabled from Key West to his paper the number of the American squadrons, the names of the ships, their *precise locations*, &c. &c., and he finished up by saying that in

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his sober judgment (and it being speech time this was *after dinner*) he should have been shot for that senseless act which any Censor would have prevented. I take off my hat to that one speaker!!!!

But writing thus I have run away from those letters which are now among my most cherished possessions. The first which I pick up is from Commander Charles N. Robinson, the naval correspondent of *The Times*. "All the newspaper men who have worried you during the War," he wrote, "will, I am sure, be pleased and gratified by the advancement of the Chief Naval Censor"—I had been promoted to Rear-Admiral. He said a number of other nice things, but I am normally a modest man. And another letter which reached me the same morning was signed "J. E. M.-S." The writer is now Sir James Masterton-Smith, and I valued his kindly words. "It is not a mere figure of speech to tell you what I have often told you before," he wrote, "that the job you have been given throughout the War has been one of the most difficult bits of work that any single man in London has had thrust upon him; and that you should have survived the life of your office for over four long years, and have emerged from it with distinction and with honour, is a measure of the skill and success with which you have discharged the duties of Chief Censor at the British Admiralty." "J. E. M.-S." has been up against some tough propositions in the course of his varied career, having acted as private secretary to five

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First Lords of the Admiralty in succession—Mr. McKenna, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Balfour, Sir Edward Carson and Sir Eric Geddes. So Masterton-Smith knows what "difficult bits of work" are like.

I forbear to bore my readers of these reminiscences who are still hanging on wondering when I shall have finished counting these "bouquets" of a more or less personal character. But I cannot omit mentioning the letter I received with the heading "Committee Room, Lloyd's, Royal Exchange, London, E.C.," and dated November 16, 1918. It was signed by Admiral Sir E. F. Inglefield, and he congratulated me on my work at the Admiralty. "The work must have been very trying most of the time, but I have heard nothing but admiration expressed on all sides for the way you have conducted it." And then there is another letter from Mr. W. W. Bradfield, C.B.E., manager of the Marconi Company. I had sent him back the code books, and in acknowledging them he added: "I take the opportunity to say that all hands here wish me to thank you and your associates very sincerely for the courteous, considerate and most businesslike manner in which the duties of Chief Censor have been exercised since the establishment of your office in August, 1914." A very pleasant farewell word came to me across the Atlantic from Colonel Ernest J. Chambers, Chief Censor for Canada. One of the difficulties of the censorship was to preserve a uniform standard in all parts of the Empire as to what

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could or could not be published. Colonel Chambers referred to this matter in writing to me :

You do not quite realise, perhaps, how gratifying and helpful it has been to feel that as regards the vitally important matter of naval and marine censorship, I have had available through your unfailing courtesy a channel of direct communication and a source of authoritative advice which I could always depend upon at short notice. It was largely due to the knowledge possessed by the newspaper men and shipping interests of Canada that this office was in direct communication with a high and responsible official at the Admiralty, whose prompt and sympathetic attention to requests for information relating to censorship topics could always be depended upon, that there was such a very fair observance in Canada during the War of censorship requirements regarding naval and marine news.

But I really cannot go on in this strain, and I must finish up with the note I received from Lord Beaverbrook. He was ill at the time that my office closed down, but nevertheless he sent me a most kind letter. "The smooth working of the regime of the Ministry—i.e. Ministry of Information—with the Admiralty was entirely due to your willingness to consider every point raised on its merits, and to assist us by every method in your power. I shall always be extremely grateful to you for the help that you afforded the Ministry. It was always a great pleasure for me to work with you."

I have put away the other letters as I haven't the courage or the inclination to go on in this strain.

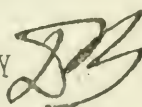
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What I did—good, bad or indifferent—I did to the best of my ability, and we will leave it at that.

A most gratifying mark of approval of my work consisted in the bestowal upon me of a number of decorations—C.B., Officer of the Legion of Honour, and the D.S.M. of the United States. The last-named was received some three months after I had written the bulk of this book, but some months before its publication. I was frequently asked by ladies what this or that ribbon meant, and my invariable reply was that it had been given me for eating pea-soup with a fork. It may well be said that I have been far too amply rewarded for my work, which consisted of sitting in an office at the Admiralty while my brother officers were out “playing the game” in the North Sea and elsewhere. I agree, but all I can say is that I did not ask for these decorations.

On March 2, 1919, having cleared up the outstanding contracts and closed up the office, I demobilised myself and walked out a free man; and there ceased to exist the Chief Naval Censor.

(P.S. I wish I could have told the whole truth!)

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CHIEF CENSOR, ADMIRALTY	
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