

sweep" of the North Sea may sound simple enough, but reference to the map will dispel the popular delusion that the North Sea is a glorified lake which can be "swept" from end to end in the course of a single day. Plans governing the exact movements of every unit in the participating squadrons and flotillas had to be prepared, in order to avoid perilous mistakes which might have arisen unless the entire force were under perfect control. It is probable that throughout the two days the commanding and other responsible officers of every vessel had to remain constantly at their posts, for contact with the enemy might come about at any moment. The strain on the men must have been almost equally great. At any moment hostile torpedo-boats or submarines might make their presence unpleasantly felt, a contingency which demanded that every gun should be kept fully manned and instantly ready to open fire. Finally there was the ever-present menace of the mine. That, in spite of all these dangers the vast sweeping movement should have been carried out without untoward incident is another tribute to the incomparable seamanship and the hardihood of all concerned.

This second refusal of the German Fleet to emerge from its shelter and accept battle quite naturally gave rise to a popular impression that its fighting spirit was of no very high order. In justice to the Germans, however, we have to remember the awkward position in which their Fleet has been placed. Germany has two sea frontiers to guard, the one on the North Sea, the other on