

the contact was made, his last effort to break up the German line was to close from the 14,000 yards, a range he had prudently maintained during the previous two hours, to 8,000, where his guns would be more certainly effective, realising perfectly that no loss of ships in his own squadron would signify, if only the entire destruction of the German Fleet were made possible by such a sacrifice. It would not be difficult to give scores of incidents in which individual admirals and captains have shown the old spirit under new conditions.

But, save only for the crazy attack on the Dardanelles forts—and this was hardly a precedent we should rejoice to see followed—we have looked in vain for any sign of naval initiative from Whitehall. The explanation lies in the fact that we had no staff for planning operations, nor the right men in power for judging whether any proposed undertaking was based on a right calculation of the value of the available means of offence and defence. The events, therefore, of the night of the 22nd and the early hours of the 23rd were of quite extraordinary importance, for they marked an undertaking needing long and elaborate preparation, and one which could not have been brought to a successful issue had it not enjoyed from its first inception the enthusiastic support of the Admiralty. But this is not all. Not only was this an Admiralty supported undertaking, it was one that, unlike the Gallipoli adventure, was carried through on right staff principles. There was a definite, well-thought-out plan—careful preparation for every step in the right selection of men and means for its execution.

I think it is right to put this forward as the most important aspect of a significant, stirring, and