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Britain's First Sea Lord; Sir Henry Jackson, K.C.B.

The Story of a Brilliant Record of One Who Worked Himself Up to His Present High Position By Sheer Merit.

The present First Sea Lord, strangely enough, for one holding perhaps the most important administrative office in the Empire, is the least known of the men who are winning the War. It is therefore with keen pleasure that we publish this, the first long article on his personality.

HOWEVER true it might be in Sir Henry Taylor's time that "the world knows nothing of its greatest men," the man who achieves greatness today, however retiring and modest he may be, cannot long escape the limelight of public curiosity which is focussed on him. No man has shrunk more from publicity than Lord Fisher; and yet the "man in the street," who has perhaps never set eyes on a war-ship, knows him "inside and out." He will talk familiarly of him as "Jacky Fisher," or "Fighting Jack"; draw a picture of the bluff old sea-dog with the keen eyes and the shaven face tanned by half-century's suns, and reel off stories of his Sphinx-like silence, his iron will, and the good heart that beats behind his grim exterior.

Even Sir Arthur Wilson—although relatively that great sailor is a "back number"—is an book to him. He calls him "Tug" Wilson, as if he were his most intimate friend; he will tell you, as one who knows all about it, that he is an "iceberg with a volcano underneath," a veritable tyrant for discipline and a glutton for work; "the finest strategist we have got, sir, not even barring Jacky Fisher; and yet a man of such simple, retiring tastes that he loves nothing better than to escape from the world to tend his roses."

All this and a great deal more the world at large knows of two of the finest "rulers of the King's Navy." England has ever had; and yet of the man who today sits in their vacated seat, and whose brain controls the greatest fleet the world has ever known in the greatest war of all time, so little is known that, on his appointment to succeed Lord Fisher as First Sea Lord, everybody was asking everybody else "Who is Sir Henry Jackson, and what has he done?" Not one man in a thousand could give anything like a satisfactory answer. But if you had asked almost any naval man he would have answered, "Jackson? Why, he's one of the best men, if not the very best man we've got; a tip-topper, the finest of strategists and organizers, with the cleverest and coolest brain in the Fleet. The Navy's all right with Jackson at the helm."

So little was the new First Lord known to the outside world that the Admiralty Press Bureau felt called on to supply a few biographical details, and to state half apologetically that "notwithstanding that his name is not nearly so well known as his predecessor's, it may be assumed that he will be a worthy occupant of the First Sea Lord's post."

Yorkshireman.

Probably no man who has climbed the high ladder of naval promotion has ever reached its topmost rung as the result of more sterling merit, and also more unnoticed by the world, than Sir Henry Jackson, and certainly no one has cared less for public recognition. For nearly fifty years his heart and soul has been in his work, to the exclusion of all else; through every stage of his career he has won golden opinions from his superiors by his zeal and cleverness, and although the highest reward of all has now come to him it has wrought no change in the modesty which has marked him ever since his days as a midshipman. It is the reward of conspicuously good work consistently well done, and serves only as a stimulus for, if possible, still better work performed with equal modesty.

More than sixty-one years have gone since Henry Bradwardine Jackson first opened his eyes at the small town of Cudworth, in Yorkshire—"Like yourself," he once said to the writer, "I am a Yorkshireman, as many of my forebears were before me, and I am very proud of the fact"—and from his earliest years his heart was set on the sea, although his only glimpse of it was on the rare occasions when he was taken by his father to Scarborough or Whitby for a brief holiday. And it was at Scarborough that he had a few years' schooling before, at the age of thirteen, he blossomed into a naval cadet.

As Cadet.

"I remember Jackson very well in those days," a fellow cadet, tells the writer. "He was a little bit of a chap, slight, and short for his years, with fair hair and a keen, clever face—a painfully shy boy, with a passion for his books. But all the same, he was

quite a good little sportsman; could play a very fair game of cricket and soon knew how to handle a bat better than most of us. He had plenty of pluck, too, in spite of his rather frail physique, as one or two of the fellows found out when they tried to chip him. He was game enough to stand up to the biggest of them; and he knew how to use his fists, too.

"In brains he was more than a match for the cleverest of us. At the terminal examinations he came out easily at the top, and knew more about seamanship, navigation and nautical astronomy than most full-blown lieutenants. Popular? Oh, yes; he was always a popular little chap. You couldn't help liking him; he was so modest and good-tempered, and always ready to do a good turn. It was remarkable, too, what power he had to handle men in his quiet way; they were devoted to the 'little skipper' and would have followed him anywhere. As for the officers, he was quite a pet among them; and I remember one of them once saying, 'Mark my words, those who live long enough will see young Jackson near, if not at, the top of the tree.'"

Marked for Big Things.

And the boy was "father of the man." As midshipman, sub-lieutenant and lieutenant, Jackson distinguished himself by his zeal and his exceptional cleverness. He became an expert in all branches of sea-craft, from navigation to gunnery and pilotage, and on every ship he won the highest opinions from his seniors. He was, they all recognized, marked for big things, and although he had to wait for his captaincy until he had passed his forty-first birthday, every step was won by sheer merit he owned nothing to favouritism or influence.

It was in the same year that I first made the acquaintance of the future First Sea Lord; and I can still see him as I saw him first on that summer day in 1896—a slight, erect figure, of medium height, with a clean-cut, clever face, walking towards me with quick, energetic strides, his keen grey-blue eyes looking straight ahead. "Who is that?" I asked the friend with whom I was walking, as he passed. "He's the new Captain of the 'Defiance' (the torpedo school-ship in the Lynher, near Devonport), was the answer. 'He has taken the house near to you, just at the top of the Home Park; and I expect you'll see quite a lot of him before long.'"

A Charming Neighbour.

And so it proved. For, the new tenant of the house, "a biscuit-throw" from my own, was Captain Jackson, whose acquaintance I soon made and whom I saw, almost daily, for two years. Every morning, with clock-like regularity, I saw that alert, electric figure pass my house on his way to the "Defiance"; and almost daily he was my companion either in the train returning from Devonport, or in his house or my own. Thus I was able to know him as intimately as is possible with a man so incorrigibly modest.

Never have I met a man more charming and at the same time more inscrutable. Of courteous manner, a brilliant talker on almost any subject under the sun, except those to which his life was dedicated, the most fascinating of companions, he was a veritable sphinx as regards himself, his work and his ambitions.

Invented Wireless before Marconi.

I remember once talking to him of the marvels of Marconi's discovery of aerial telegraphy, which at the time was the wonder of the world. He listened to me with interest and without comment, and then adroitly changed the subject. And it was not until a couple of years later that I learnt that Jackson himself had discovered the secret of air-telegraphy before Marconi; and at the very time at which I was innocently enlightening him on it, was successfully sending wireless signals and messages from the deck of the "Defiance."

This is a typical illustration of the modesty, the almost self-effacement which has made Sir Henry Jackson "an unknown quantity" to the world, until his promotion to the office of First Sea Lord brought him suddenly and dramatically into the "limelight."

I shall always have the most delightful memories of those two years, during which I was privileged to know the most charming and the cleverest and most modest man I have ever met. His work was his life; he had little leisure and less inclination for any pleasure apart from it. His only outside hobby at the time was shooting (to which he now adds golf), but he would be the first to disclaim excellence in either; and beyond an occasional dinner, at which he and his

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wife—daughter of a clever scientist—were the most welcome and charming of guests, he took practically no part in the social life of the place. His chief enjoyment, apart from his life-work, was in the company of two or more friends, whom he would keep as enthralled by his wit and encyclopaedic knowledge as delighted by his geniality and unaffected simplicity.

The Velvet Glove.

That there was another side to his character I learned when one day I remarked to one of his lieutenants, "What a delightful man Captain Jackson is—so genial and simple!" The answer came with emphasis—"Genial and simple, you call him? Well, he may be; but on the 'Defiance' we don't see much of those particular qualities. We are all very proud of him, and most of us like him very well; but, don't you make any mistake! His glove may be of velvet, but his hand is of iron, and we are made to feel it. He is one of the strictest disciplinarians in the Navy. He stands no nonsense from anybody, and when he gives an order, the Lord help the man who doesn't execute it properly and at once. But, after all, that's what he's there for, and though we're a bit afraid of him, there's no doubt about our respect for him!"

From the "Defiance" and its torpedo work, in which he was recognized as our greatest expert, Captain Jackson found himself transported to Paris for a couple of years as Naval Attaché to our Embassy, a position in which his courtly gifts and graces (for he is a born courtier as well as a born sailor) made him very popular in social circles. But, in spite of his equipment, this was no congenial life for Jackson, and no doubt he heaved a sigh of relief when he was recalled to England as Controller of the Navy.

The Turn of the Road.

At last he had reached the turn of the long road that was to lead to a full exercise and recognition of his great abilities, and his progress was now rapid and sure. Admiral Fisher, one of the finest living judges of men, saw what splendid material he had in Jackson, and now took him "under his wing." After seeing the "Dreadnought" through its cradling while serving as Controller, a brief command of the Sixth Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean was followed by his appointment to the Headship of the Royal Naval War College.

Honours had by now begun to fall plentifully to the modest sailor. His magnificent work in the development of wireless telegraphy had been rewarded by a Fellowship of the Royal Society; he had blossomed into a K.C.V.O. and K.C.B.; and he was recognized in the Navy as one of the ablest of all our seamen. And when in 1913 he became Chief of the War Staff, his succession to Fisher's seat, whenever it was vacated, became almost a certainty.

As Head of the Naval War Staff at the Admiralty, the body whose duty it is to assist the First Sea Lord in the preparation of war plans, the training and disposition of the Fleet, and all questions of strategy generally, Sir Henry Jackson was in his true element. But his tenure of his new office was not long; he had, in fact, just handed it over to Sir Frederick Sturdee, when war broke out, and was about to take up the Mediterranean command. He was, however, retained at the Admiralty on Special Service, and thus he had in his hands all the threads of the skein of strategy by which the Sea Affair had been conducted up to then. And when Lord Fisher retired he was obviously the best, if not the only man to take his place.

NAVAL BATTLE INCIDENT

Drowning Seamen Cheer the Warspite

An authenticated story of the naval battle is that after the Defiance had been sunk her crew, struggling in the water and seeing the Warspite going into action, held up their hands and gave a lusty cheer of encouragement.

Admiral Togo Lives Quiet Life

The great naval hero of the Russo-Japanese War, Admiral Togo, lives at his home of thirty-six years in Kami Rokubancho, Tokio. He is 70 years old. Saito Man writes of him in the Tokio Advertiser: He is but 5 feet 2 inches in height, but muscular, weighing about 145 pounds. He lives a quiet life with the Countess. They have three maids and two boys servants.

His eldest son, 32 years of age, is just back from London; and the second son, 28, a graduate of the Naval Cadet School, is now studying in the Gannery College. The latter comes home three or four times a year, and for the rest the distinguished couple lead a lonely sort of life. They do not seem to pay any attention to their personal comfort. Luxury is absolutely unknown in the Togo home. When the Admiral is at leisure, he amuses himself by a saunter in his garden, surrounded by its old style black wooden fence, or playing with his favorite dog.

Since his illness about three years ago he never drinks, except a little foreign wine before he goes to bed. In a small stable near the house are two chestnut colored steeds which were the coronation gift of the Emperor. In the shed adjoining the stable there is a carriage which is always in the neatest state, imaginable. Simplicity and cleanliness of habit can be seen in the outside appearance of his home life, we hear from the tradespeople of the neighborhood nothing but most impressive stories of 'insignificant' bills, 'always the same fish order and a 'very small' meat order.

The barber clips the hero's hair short twice a month, except that he has an extra cut when the Emperor calls for him. He pays 25 cents every time. 'I never see him except in cotton clothes, and in the parlor there is nothing that can be called an article of luxury.' The rice dealer and the draper tell similar tales. The green grocer was especially reverent. The bills for vegetables seldom go beyond 75 cents a month, but 'it would be a great rudeness for a man like me to make any comment about a godlike man like Togo.' When the Admiral entertains, however, the feast is served generously from a nearby restaurant.

MUNITION MAKERS SUFFER

Handling of Explosives Gives Rise to Diseases

London, June 23.—The high pressure under which the production of munitions has had to be performed has brought with it destructive maladies. These are particularly noticeable in connection with the manufacture of high explosives. Thus in handling trinitrotoluol after a prolonged period one becomes drowsy, suffers from frontal headache, loss of appetite and may even become afflicted with a distinctive eczema. Unless the operative takes a rest in time jaundice may supervene, with decided danger to life. In a few instances death has been directly traced to the handling of the explosive.

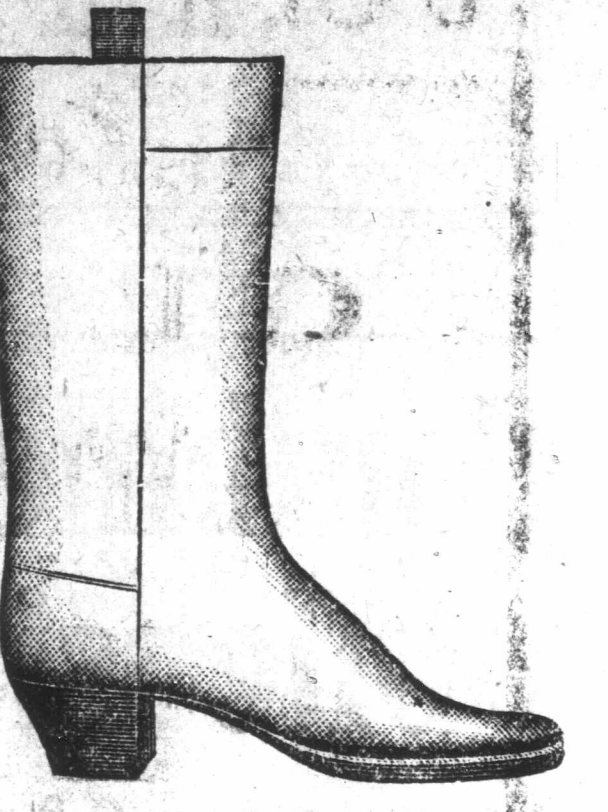
Tetryl throws off a slight dust, which unless timely precautions are taken leads to troublesome eczema. Another medium inimical to health is the varnish with which the wings and bodies of aeroplanes are treated. Tetrachlorethane enters largely into the preparation of this varnish, and this throws off a noxious vapor which produces drowsiness and loss of appetite and if work is persisted in ultimately jaundice, liver complications and coma. In this case an alternative varnish has been discovered which is free from the evil constituents; but it has not come into general use for the simple reason that there are insufficient supplies of the necessary ingredients to meet demands.

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