

# The Two Admirals—Beresford and Fisher

(By X in the London Daily Mail.)

HE world knows little of its greatest men," and the truth of a line famous for generations was never more incisively proved than by the profound ignorance of the man in the street concerning the potent and original personality whose untiring generalship has revolutionized naval administration. Lord Charles Beresford you know. Since the signal of "Well done, Condor" was made, his winning, gallant, hot-headed personality has lived in the limelight.

But who is Sir John Fisher? His name is in all mouths. A realistic image of him exists in very few minds. This is in itself the best refutation of a common charge. The First Sea Lord is often described as an advertising admiral. The suggestion has even more than the usual falsehood of half-truth. Sir John Fisher is, above all, the man of his age. The Daylight Saving Bill would not help him to get up earlier than he does. He is a ruthless realist in all things, and what he does not know of his human nature is hardly worth knowing. He knows very well that in free countries publicity is a power which no force can ever again suppress, and that it will be used for the wrong purposes if it is not used for the right. Sir John Fisher has believed all his active life in awakening national interest in the navy, and in treating England upon matters affecting the fleet as though this country consisted of forty millions who are, after all, something other than fools. He has advertised the navy. It is untrue that he has advertised himself. If he had he would be the best known instead of the least known of all the creative and prevailing personalities in the service of the empire.

Who is Sir John Fisher? He is a shadow, a rumor, a name. To this day the average citizen is unable to "put a face" upon the name whenever this extraordinary personality is mentioned. One thing about him is, indeed, obvious. The number of his enemies is the tribute to his greatness. Let us be certain of it that people are never popular when they wrench persons and systems by main energy out of the accustomed grooves. Beware when all men speak well of you; and when you find that any man who has done great things is at the same time greatly hated, the probability is that there is much good in him as well as much power. Every strong man in every branch of the public service and in every other sphere of human activity has, sooner or later, to fight for his life; but it will be an ill day for England when we see the triumph of those political and social influences which are tending more and more to make the existence of strong men impossible.

The heads of the army are always familiar personages, just as the Horse Guards with its splendid sentinels seems always more prominent than the admiralty to the eye of the passer-by in Whitehall. Yet the commander-in-chief of the navy is an infinitely more important character than any leader in the land service; and for the last four years the real commander-in-chief of the navy—under the secretary of state—has been Sir John Arbuthnot Fisher. In that period he has stamped a deeper personal impression upon the whole organization of the fleet than had been left upon it since Trafalgar by all previous First Sea Lords put together. This seems a startling statement, but it is literally true. Let us remember that just as elections are won in the committee-rooms, not in the ballot boxes, battles are settled before they are fought; and they are decided by the efforts which have been created on one side or the other superior efficiency in time of peace. In modern contests, as Japan showed during the late war, it is the machine that wins; and the improvising genius of a great individual can no longer remedy the vices of bad organization. Von Roon did not command in the field, but he created the armies with which Moltke marched to victory.

In the same way Sir John Fisher, though it is probable that he will never have the chance to show what he might have done in war at sea, has reconstructed from top to bottom the whole mighty machine which will fight our naval battles in the future. Sooner or later our destiny will be decided by the results of the reforming action of Whitehall during the last half decade. The spirit of the present professional head of the navy will work in the conflicts of the future; and in that day of the dread decision, as terrible as Armageddon in its significance for this island, when we shall look back upon the obstruction and the obloquy with which Sir John Fisher has been met at every step of his reorganizing career, we may thank God we had him.

Nominally, the First Sea Lord is sixty-seven. Practically, if vital spirits are any index to a man's real age, he is the youngest admiral in this or any other service. His great opportunity did not come until he was over sixty. Then came a day when there was offered to him the highest prize of a sailor's ambition in time of peace—the position of First Sea Lord. But even that honor he would only take on terms. He carried in his brain a full scheme of reorganization. He believed the training and the distribution of the navy to be perilously out of date. He had watched the change from the wooden walls to iron citadels packed with tremendous and exquisite machinery. Yet there had been no fundamental change since Nelson's time in our method of training officers for their profession. There had been a revolution in our political relations, and it was clear that the struggle of life and

death in the future would be fought in the North Sea and no other place. Yet our fleets were still organized as though the Mediterranean would be, as in the eighteenth century, the chief scene of crisis. Our ships were stationed anywhere but where we would probably have to fight. Sir John Fisher clearly stated his intentions. They were approved. He came into the admiralty to carry them out. That is what he has done. His activities have been revolutionary though constructive. He has been denounced for the sheer daring and resolution of the changes he has introduced. But he was commissioned from the outset to effect them. That is what he was there for. To the foreign mind, as has been said, he has appeared like nothing so much as an incarnated torpedo waiting for its war-head to be fixed on it.

And what has he done? At Osborne he is training the officers of the future to handle the grim machines which have superseded for ever the old vision of masts and sails. He has obtained vastly increased efficiency while reducing expense. He struck out of the estimates every penny which did not yield real fighting value. He most mercilessly scrapped scores of weak vessels that could neither attack nor run. He transferred the men to real fighting ships. He created with the inspiration of nothing less than genius the system of nucleus crews, by which every ship in the reserve—as the silence and swiftness of last week's great object-lesson showed—can be mobilized for war in a few hours. Above all, he swung the whole fleet, as it were, clean round to face the tasks of the future. He recognized that in the twentieth century, as in the seventeenth, the empire will be saved or lost, not in the Mediterranean but in the North Sea. Quietly he massed our strength in the narrow seas until, in Admiral Mahan's words, "Eighty-six per cent of the British battleship strength is concentrated in or near home waters."

That settles it for the vast majority of Sir John Fisher's countrymen. They know that battleships are gun-platforms; and not only are the vessels now where we ought to have them, but the gunnery efficiency of our fleet has risen almost by leaps and bounds, and never has been so formidable as today. As for personal characteristics, it would tax Mr. Sargeant to paint him. His profile, like that of most born fighters, juts clean out from forehead to chin, like the bow of a battleship. There is a certain force of expression about it which recalls the "hammer and tongs" captain in Marryat's ballad. The eyes are direct and alive, under brows showing extraordinary powers of concentration. Above them, the forehead is a wonderful network of fine lines, and the mouth is full of humor and ruthless will. His figure is of middle size and active, and if you passed him in the street without knowing him you would be compelled to look at him twice. His talk is full of the unexpected yet revealing phrases which light up a subject with flashes of conversational lightning. He is as irresistible in anecdote as in energy. Once, when asked what was his favorite text he replied instantly: "And there shall be no more sea!" His motto throughout his career has been that "the frontiers of England are the coasts of the enemy." When the Viennese courtiers were abusing Bismarck to the Emperor Francis Joseph, that monarch listened in silence and then said: "I only wish I had him." In reply to Sir John Fisher's assailants the Kaiser might say the same.

(By a Sympathiser in the London Daily Mail.)

The officer whose name is in the mouths of all today is one who, though of distinguished birth, has won every step in his service career by sheer merit. Born in 1846, and therefore sixty-two years of age, Lord Charles Beresford, when he was a mere boy, saved the lives of three persons, and for his gallant conduct received the Royal Humane Society's medal and various clasps. He earned his captaincy by his gallant deed in the little Condor, the one episode which touched the imagination in a not well-managed military execution, for such the bombardment of Alexandria really was.

Lord Charles ran in under the guns of Fort Marabout with his unprotected gunboat. By his skill in handling her and by the very audacity of his action he escaped injury to his ship and crew and gave very important help in silencing the Egyptian battery. For ninety

minutes he fought unsupported at close quarters, and only then, when the crisis had passed, was help sent to him. The Condor, when she was recalled at the end of the attack, was cheered by the whole fleet, and the flagship made her the stirring signal, "Well done, Condor."

It was for his conduct in the expedition which advanced through the desert to the relief of Gordon that Lord Charles next came before the public eye. He was there in front of the square with his naval brigade and machine gun at Abu Klea when the dervishes charged the troops. He held his post with his seamen in face of the rush; the dervishes broke in on the little group about the gun, which jammed at this dreadful moment; on his right hand and his left hand comrades were killed, and he himself was scratched by a spear. It was by a miracle that he escaped.

Again, he commanded the crazy little steamer Safieh, which all but fell to pieces when her guns were fired, and could only steam 2½ knots against the Nile stream, when

with its special grant of £20,000,000, vindicating Lord Charles Beresford.

The Naval Defence act was the beginning of the modern British navy. Without it, it is morally certain there would have been intervention in the Boer war. "Battleships," Lord Charles has said, "are cheaper than battles," and it was largely owing to him that the British battleships were there when the moment of danger arrived.

During the Boer war he was second in command under Sir John Fisher in the Mediterranean. The position was of extreme importance, for there was some reason to believe that a coalition was being formed against England, and there was every possibility of the Mediterranean fleet having to fight. Sir John Fisher, with a courage for which every Englishman should be grateful to him, insisted that the force under his orders should be made equal to its responsibilities. He called for more battleships, cruisers and destroyers. The admiralty did not at once accede to his views, and he brought pressure of every kind to bear, while his subordinate, Lord Charles, co-operating with him for the good of the country, did the same.

Violent attacks were made upon both the admirals, Sir John as well as Lord Charles, in the press. On July 3, 1901, the Times declared that Sir John Fisher was injuring discipline "by arrogating to himself the right . . . of determining how the naval forces of the empire shall be disposed," and was "impairing the morale of the fleet."

Observe that Sir John Fisher did in 1901 exactly what Lord Charles Beresford is censured for doing to-day, which is only the same as saying that he acted as a capable commander is bound to act. If a commander is given an insufficient force, his plain duty is not, like a Cervara or MacMahon, to march unresisting to unspeakable catastrophe, but to protest, protest, protest; and in the last resort, but only then and after using every imaginable effort, to back his remonstrances by resignation. For defeat at sea means the fall of the British empire.

I pass over Lord Charles' conduct in the days of the North Sea affair. His fleet was the only one ready and concentrated. I come to the date in 1906 when this officer, by the judgment of all in the service, including the present admiralty, was offered the Channel fleet, which watches over the safety of England, as the "iron corps" on the frontier of Lorraine stand between France and invasion. He declined the command because in his judgment it would have been in danger of defeat in the event of a sudden attack.

He was asked to name his conditions, and did so. The admiralty granted the most important requirements, after a prolonged discussion. It was not Lord Charles' personal position, but the safety of his country which was at stake, and there were hundreds of officers in the "silent navy" who shared his uneasiness. Yet the conditions have not been fulfilled by the admiralty, though many of the ships removed from the Channel fleet have been put back.

As to the personal issue, they are of minor importance. The overshadowing question is that of the safety of the country. No one can deplore more than the writer does the alleged friction between Lord Charles and Sir Percy Scott, or between Lord Charles and the First Sea Lord. All three are great officers with splendid records, and surely even in this hour an appeal to their patriotism will not be in vain. The wrongs are not all on one side. Let us have such a Channel fleet as the conditions demand, and a shipbuilding programme such as Mr. Asquith has promised, and there will be no more trouble and bickerings.

H. W. WILSON.

"M. A. P." in its issue of July 18 has the following propos of "The Fight Between the Admirals":

Not the delights of the season; not the surprises and possibilities of the Olympic games; nor the splendid change for the better in the weather—not one of these or a score of others of the usual topics, has occupied so much of the gossip and discussion of the week as the fight between the Admirals. Naturally it is not a subject into the merits of which I have the least notion of entering here. I note, at the same time that this quarrel seems to differ from other service quarrels in the fact that there is evidently a very well planned and or-

ganized press campaign—I rather think on the one side as well as the other. The Times seems to have taken the part of Sir John Fisher; the Morning Post and the Standard, as well as the Express, have ranged themselves on the side of Lord Charles Beresford. It is evident that the feud, then, is very hot; and of course it must end in the disappearance of either the one or the other of the two protagonists.

My humbler duty here is to attempt to give some idea of the personality of the two great officers. Lord Charles Beresford, having known him for many years as a member of the House of Commons. He is almost ridiculously like what everybody's natural impression would be of a British Tar—especially if the Tar were, in addition, of Irish birth. There is not a single detail wanting in the image—I might say the eternal image—of the Tar as seen in a score of melodramas and as he presents himself to all our imaginations. The face is round and chubby, the complexion rough, ultra-ruddy, very like that of the typical busman and for the same reason, namely, constant life in the open air; the frame is robust, taut, and alert, a little inclined to stoutness; he walks in somewhat bandy-legged, as is bound to be the case where a man has had to balance himself for years on the rolling deck; the arms are held akimbo—also suggesting the breezy Tar life; and finally the voice is loud, hearty, and as harmonious as a fog-horn. Add to all the ordinary characteristics the friendly and cordial manner of an Irishman—the love of fun, the keen sense of the humorous, and the desire to be friendly with everybody—and you get a fairly good idea of the impression Lord Charles Beresford makes upon people. He is not in the least the inarticulate creature the sailor is supposed to be; he can talk rapidly and almost volubly on any subject he understands; and whenever the Navy Estimates came along in the House of Commons Lord Charles Beresford was certain during his Parliamentary career to make his fair share of speeches. He spoke in such a way as you would expect a sailor to speak, loudly, peremptorily—though there was always a redeeming gleam of fun in his eye and a ready smile on his face, and with that fog-horn voice pitched to such a high note that you could hear him down on the Terrace and even across the Thames in the wards of St. Thomas's Hospital.

Lord Charles comes of a wild stock; wealthy, powerful, for some generations almost the leading family in the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. The head of the family is Marquis of Waterford, and owner of innumerable acres. Usually also another of them is enthroned in the Archbishop's Palace of the See of Armagh, and of course with a seat in the House of Lords in the old days before the Disestablishment of the Irish Protestant Church. I remember well an uncle of Lord Charles—Archbishop Beresford of Armagh—who took a prominent part in the Convention which settled the new constitution of the Church after Disestablishment. A courtier or more aristocratic or distinguished-looking man I never saw. He had the aquiline features of the conquering race; his eyes—which, as in the case of all the Beresfords I have ever seen, were a beautiful blue—shone clear and humorous and perhaps a little rigid, although he was a man of something like seventy when I saw him; and his archiepiscopal dress seemed always like some splendid uniform which got additional grace from the fine features and the stately bearing of the wearer. He intervened but rarely in the debates, but always pertinently, sensibly, and with a judicious combination of unpretentiousness and command, and managed to be a popular figure in an assembly where the majority of the lay delegates at least—being strong Evangelicals—were no friend of Bishops, were almost Presbyterian in their hatred of Prelacy, which, like the stout Protestants they were, they regarded as savouring of Popery.

There was another famous Beresford, who disappeared before my time—a wild, irresponsible creature who brought into the sober mid-Victorian epoch some of the pranks and the orgies of the nineteenth century, when George III. was still King. Some of his exploits made one think that he was just the kind of man Lord Byron would have liked to have a carouse with—through an all-night sitting in Crockford's gambling rooms in St. James's Street, in one of the intervals in which Byron gave up eating potatoes and vinegar, and took to lobster and brandy. I remember as a boy hearing all kinds of stories of this mad Marquis here in London, where he ran the same kind of career—except that being an Irishman he made it funny and not sombre—as the Marquis of Hastings, who was killed by the loss of the Derby to Mr. Chaplin's Hermit; and Lord Waterford wound up like the English marquis in an early death.

Another Marquis belonged to my own days, and I often saw him in the House of Lords. He also had his day of pranks. One of my recollections is of the day when the newspapers came out with the portentous announcement that he had run off with the wife of Colonel Vivian, a well-known member of the House of Commons, and, indeed, an under-secretary at the moment in the ministry of Lord Palmerston or Lord Russell. The career thus begun ended more auspiciously than might have been expected, for the young lover proved faithful to the woman who had given up so much for him—this does not always happen. They settled down at Curraghmore, the family seat at Waterford, and the new



"ENGLAND EXPECTS—"  
SHADE OF NELSON: "I see you're hoisting my old signal."  
BRITANNIA: "Yes. One or two of my admirals seem to have forgotten it."

she went to the aid of Wilson and his little party, who had had the misfortune to lose their two steamers and to be left stranded and menaced with hourly destruction by the triumphant dervishes.

Up the river with a tiny party Lord Charles took his old tub. He had to run the gauntlet of a devilish fort, and even the dervishes could not miss so slowly moving a target. They winged the Safieh in the boiler, and she had to lie to, disabled for twenty-three mortal hours, while Engineer Benbow worked below in the sweltering heat to make his name famous as the "man who mended the boiler," and Lord Charles fought above to keep down the enemy's fire. No deed in the Sudan campaign was more thrilling than this, and the glory of it was enhanced by the fact that the rescue of Wilson was safely accomplished.

Lord Charles next distinguished himself in the office of junior sea lord of the admiralty. His first act was to press for the organization of the navy for war. He urged his superiors to create a general staff and an intelligence department. In 1886 a confidential memorandum written by him appeared in the Pall Mall Gazette, which shocked the careless complacency of the country. But he could not obtain his way, and he resigned office in consequence. Some years later an intelligence department was created, though we are still without a general staff.

The state of the navy in those days was miserable. In force, according to the late Admiral Colomb—no alarmist—it was not superior to that of France alone. Lord Charles realized the peril, and in 1888 he insisted that an outlay of £20,000,000 on new ships was vital, unless England was to lose the command of the sea. He was attacked with violence, and told by the mandarins to mind his own business, obey tamely his superiors, and to leave the navy to the tender mercies of the politicians and the "responsible experts," who proved conclusively that England did not need another ship, and was overwhelmingly strong. But next year came the Naval Defence act,

Lady Waterford pined, and so Christ she died she was the whole country poor, all of another—though, I believe later years. Lord was always, like his the hounds; kept county—Waterford hunting county—gaily recovered. The House of Lord at his height. I had when, one Hoise of Lords, I trating and rapid, the voice of the reason of my perpp ford speaking, but not standing; he w sequence of his in agonies which his

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HE following livers by the House of Commons. Mr. Spe committee remark w condition, on the basis usual of late years s summing up of the r and, to a certain exte with regard to it, wh from on the present o is particularly timel of the more recent o to Canadian financ the conditions of thi time. The Governm about twelve years. tion of the principles they propounded bef have been gone ov there remains not ver ition it in a review.

The three principa finance of Canada at the country, the exp the increase or otherw this sum. The Govern before 1896 profess declared that the tax the increase of the p 1898 raised to \$11.70 p 1898, amounting to \$27 per cent. The Govern ment, increased the of the history of taxat in taxes has been pa the expenditure in 1896 has the eleven years and. The Government has the people in tax \$48,000,000 yearly, and in Canada a little o collection of \$76,000 more than six million pared, with about five increase in rate in v taxation has been inc increase of population.

Coming next to ex part which was the expenditure of that cessive, have raised the country from the amount of the expen to \$12,000,000 in 1898, that period, being an increasing to know the and three-quarters \$5 by this government of 1,000,000 yearly, and ditures of the country 000 in 1898. Although the ordinary expendi period when we appra find that the expendi plated is far and away history of Canada. The timates of 1907-1908 a in parallel columns:

Supplementary . . . . .	1,000,000
Main . . . . .	10,000,000
Subsidies . . . . .	1,000,000
Excise . . . . .	1,000,000
Other Items . . . . .	1,000,000
Bounties (estimated) . . . . .	1,000,000
Total . . . . .	15,000,000

Loans—	1,000,000
Quebec bridge . . . . .	1,000,000
Mont. Harbor . . . . .	1,000,000
St. R. Guaranteed B. . . . .	1,000,000
Total . . . . .	4,000,000

This is extremely a account the condition, and throughout the w compared with the ce you would naturally ic and if anything a cur find a very large and a indication in this of a Finance Minister or the of the country or the in the world. If they conditions they have men in business, bank lions always are read. Buy the expenditure a has a feature in it wh the measure of the v items of estimates, par These are what you r a very large portion of works which in the adequate examination. Estimates were passing t very large figures, but are the initiative vot completion.

There is also this y dies amounting to som millions of dollars, tends over a period of if we take for granted prices and will be ca expenditures, and inde experiment for the la to be no species of ex public help; to expen of each department a continuing sense of the expenditure of Dor be avoided. The limit of the Marine and P. I believe it made in a