

Fully realizing that Hipper was drawing him towards the enemy's battleships, but hopeful of forcing him into action before Scheer could support him, and in any event calculating that unless he clung to Hipper the main fleets could not be brought to action at all, Beatty took the risk of encountering the main German Battle Fleet, and set his course also southward.

For more than an hour the two Battle-cruiser fleets steamed SSE. on parallel courses distant from 18,000 yards ($10\frac{1}{2}$ miles) to 14,500 yards ($8\frac{1}{2}$ miles).¹ At 4.8 p.m. the heavy ships of the Fifth Battle Squadron came into action at a long range of 20,000 yards ($11\frac{1}{3}$ miles), while the destroyer flotillas of both fleets engaged. For half an hour the fight between the battle-cruisers was 'very fierce and resolute', though the enemy's fire, at first effective, depreciated considerably in accuracy and rapidity as the engagement proceeded. The visibility, however, was becoming considerably reduced, and the ships were indistinctly seen. At 4.38 p.m. the enemy's Battle Fleet was reported ahead. The British destroyer flotillas were recalled at once, and four minutes later (4.42 p.m.) Scheer was sighted south-eastward. Beatty's first task was accomplished. He was in contact with the enemy Main Fleet. It was now his function to draw it into touch with his own.

¹ See diagram on p. 27; also the German diagram on p. 28.