

ardour and limited its activities since August, 1914. The effect may be incalculable. The doctrine that every operation which involved the risk of losing men or ships must necessarily be too hazardous to undertake, was thus shown to be no longer the loadstone of Whitehall's policy. The navy was at last set free to act on an older and a better tradition.

It is indeed on this tradition that on almost every occasion the navy has, in fact, acted when it got a chance. When *Swift* and *Broke* tackled three times their number of enemy last year, and *Bolha* and *Morris* six times their number this year, the gallant captains of these gallant vessels did not wait to ask if the position of their ships was 'critical' or otherwise; but, with an insight into the true defensive value of attack—which, seemingly, it is the privilege only of the most valorous to possess—went straight for their enemies, fought overwhelming odds at close quarters, and came out as victorious as a rightly reasoned calculation would have shown to be probable.

Similarly, on May 31, 1916, Sir David Beatty, when his force of battle cruisers, by the loss of *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary*, had been reduced below that of the enemy, persisted in his attack upon von Hipper and, by demoralising the enemy's fire, provided most effectively for the safety of his own ships. Losses did not make him retreat then, nor, when Scheer came upon the scene with the whole High Seas Fleet, did he withdraw from the action—his speed would have made this easy—though the odds were heavy against him. He kept, on the contrary, the whole German Fleet in play, drawing them dexterously to the north, where contact with the Grand Fleet would be inevitable. And, when