

*Moral Effect*

The attack on Zeebrügge and the two successive attacks on Ostend, carefully planned and boldly and resolutely carried out, achieved a very high measure of success. It was natural enough, on the first receipt of the news, that we should all have been carried away by our wonder and admiration at the astonishing heroism that made it possible to carry through so intricate a series of operations, when every soul engaged was seemingly aware of the desperate character of the enterprise, when no one could have expected to return alive, when the enemy's means seemed ample, not only for the killing of everyone engaged, but for the immediate frustration of every object that they had in view, and so made most of the astounding gallantry and daring of all concerned. For over four years now we have had a constant recurrence of such feats of courage, and repetition does not lessen their power to intoxicate us with an overwhelming admiration of those who are the heroes of these great adventures. But we should be misconceiving the significance of these events if we were to measure their importance either by the ordered daring of those engaged, or by their successful execution, or by their immediate military results, great and far-reaching as these were.

The thing was more important as affording conclusive evidence that the British Navy, as inspired and directed from headquarters, had now abandoned the purely defensive rôle assigned to it by ten years of pre-war, and three and a half years of war, administration. It meant that the fleet had escaped from those counsels of timorous—because unimaginative and ignorant—caution which had checked its