

imagine the scene in London ! Business still went on at the banks, for bills matured although the independence of the country was being fought out under our own eyes, so to say ; and the speculators were active enough. But even with the people who were making and losing their fortunes, the interest in the fleet overcame everything else ; men who went to pay in or draw out their money stopped to show the last bulletin to the cashier. As for the street, you could hardly get along for the crowd stopping to buy and read the papers ; while at every house or office the members sat restlessly in the common room, as if to keep together for company, sending out some one of their number every few minutes to get the latest edition. At least this is what happened at our office ; but to sit still was as impossible as to do anything, and most of us went out and wandered about among the crowd, under a sort of feeling that the news was got quicker at in this way. Bad as were the times coming, I think the sickening suspense of that day, and the shock which followed, was almost the worst which we underwent. It was about ten o'clock that the first telegram came ; an hour later the wire announced that the admiral had signalled to form line of battle, and shortly afterwards that the order was given to bear down on the enemy and engage. At twelve came the announcement, "Fleet opened fire about three miles to leeward of us,"—that is the ship with the cable. So far all had been expectancy, then came the first token of calamity. "An ironclad has been blown up"—"the enemy's torpedoes are doing great damage"—"the flagship is laid aboard the enemy"—"the flagship appears to be sinking"—"the Vice-Admiral has signalled"—there the