

20 THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND BANK

also reported that no ships were visible, and concluded that the enemy was well to the north-westward. The Fleet therefore was dispersed for the night, manœuvring between the enemy and his bases, with intention to renew the combat at daybreak.

PHASE IV

(See Map II, 9.24 p.m., May 31–Daylight, June 1).

In spite of baffling atmospheric conditions, the third phase of the battle had made it conclusively a British victory. The earlier loss of the *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable*, and more recent losses in Arbuthnot's First Cruiser Squadron,¹ were more than balanced. The head of the enemy's line had been crumpled up, his fire had become ineffective, and his guns' crews, who had fought well in the earlier stages of the battle, had become demoralized. From 8.20 p.m., when the intermittent engagements between the two Battle Fleets came to an end, the German High Sea Fleet was no longer an ordered body, but a scattered mass of units intent upon a *sauve qui peut*. From that hour the British ships never once were in contact with an organized Fleet. The victory was not complete, but it was indisputable and considerable.

Not the least convincing proof of defeat is the fact that the German Admiralty, in the semi-official 'explanation' of the battle published by the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, deliberately falsifies the strategical log from the moment, at 6.15 p.m., when Hipper went

¹ *Defence, Black Prince, Warrior.*