

appetite for emotion as strong as their distaste for any kind of intellectual activity, and there were some who found it worth their while to feed this appetite by amplifying and retailing the gossip of dockside loafers. The finding of the coroner's jury finally closed the ground to these garbage-hunters; but a painful rumour of any kind seldom fails to leave behind it, even when conclusively disproved, some injurious and lingering effects, and these are not always so effectually averted by official statements as by trustworthy and independent opinion. We therefore give our own view as a public duty and without fear of contradiction or disproof, for we know it to be in accordance with the facts and with the impression made by the facts upon those best qualified to judge of them.

The submarine was struck while in the act of submersion by a vessel of great tonnage going at considerable speed, filled with water after the shock, and sank. When at last the wreck could be examined, the body of every officer and man on board was found exactly in his station, and without any sign of struggle or effort. These, without suppression or addition, are the facts; and it may be positively asserted that they afford no ground for any conclusion but one—that death came suddenly. It is impossible to believe, if it had been otherwise, that there would have been no sign of any tendency to collect in that part of the vessel where there would be most air up to the last moment. Whether any or all of the crew were stunned by the shock itself becomes, therefore, a question of little importance, and it is probably, in any case, one past solving. It is enough for us to know that they were taken by that swift and not unmerciful death which they and their like have faced every day this thousand years, and that the disaster was caused by no lack of skill or of courage, but solely by an over-rapt attention to the business of attack—an excess which Nelson would probably have classed among the virtues.

The confusion of thought arising from this accident was more widespread and more serious than the sensationalism. Just as bats will venture out during an eclipse of the sun,