

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING

Discussions between the Governments of the Mother Country and of the Dominions, particularly during the Imperial Conferences of 1909, 1917 and 1918, had demonstrated more and more clearly the desire of the Dominions to co-ordinate the Naval effort of the Empire, and to establish on a sound basis schemes of local and Imperial Naval Defence.

At the end of 1918, in order to meet the wishes expressed by the Governments of India and the Dominions, Admiral Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa undertook, at the request of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a great Naval Mission with the following terms of reference:—

“To advise the Dominion Authorities whether,
“in the light of the experience of the war, the scheme
“of Naval organization which has been adopted, or
“may be in contemplation, requires re-consideration;
“either from the point of view of the efficiency of
“that organization for meeting local needs, or from
“that of ensuring the greatest possible homogeneity
“and co-operation between all the Naval forces of
“the Empire; and, should the Dominion Authorities
“desire to consider how far it is possible for the
“Dominion to take a more effective share in the Naval
“defence of the Empire, to give assistance from
“the Naval point of view in drawing up a scheme
“for consideration.”

It was decided that Admiral Lord Jellicoe should fly his flag in a Battle Cruiser for his world-wide tour of the Empire.

The vessel selected by the Admiralty was H.M.S. “New Zealand,” a Battle Cruiser of 18,800 tons, which was built at the charge of the New Zealand Government and presented to the Mother Country. She was completed in 1912 and during 1913, under the command of Captain Lionel Halsey, now Rear Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey, K.C.M.G., C.B., visited New Zealand and the