

Therefore it was his task to prevent him from avoiding action by escape to his own waters. Beatty's force alone was unable to hold von Seheer. Hence Jellicoe's change to an easterly course.¹ His handling of the delicate situation was masterly in its sureness and decision.

From 6.17 to 8.20 p.m. the two Battle Fleets were in action intermittently, as the light allowed, at ranges between 9,000 yards (5 miles) and 12,000 yards (6½ miles). The British course was consistently hauled round to the west in an effort to close. But Jellicoe's efforts were frustrated by the enemy, who 'constantly turned away and opened [increased] the range under cover of destroyer attacks and smoke screens as the effect of the British fire was felt', favoured by the conditions of visibility, which rapidly deteriorated as the evening advanced. In consequence the Battle Fleet lost its initial and favourable position on the bow of the enemy, but remained between him and his bases.²

Meanwhile, Beatty's squadrons ahead of Jellicoe were endeavouring to establish contact with the fleeing enemy. At 7.14 p.m. he was again in sight at a range of about 15,000 yards (8½ miles). The sun was then descending below the clouds, and the increased visibility permitted half an hour's effective gun-practice. But the enemy's destroyers at the head of the line 'emitted volumes of grey smoke, covering their capital ships as with a pall, under cover of which they turned away'. At 7.45 p.m. they were again lost sight of. Once more, after 8 p.m., contact was re-established and further punishment was inflicted before 'the mist came down'. At 9 p.m. the enemy was completely out of sight of Jellicoe. Half an hour later (9.24 p.m.) Beatty

¹ See Map II, 6 p.m. (*Iron Duke*).

² See diagram, p. 50.