

public bodies. I refer to the court-martialing of Captain the Hon. Hedworth Lambton, and Staff Commander Clifford Bawden. The circumstances are briefly these: On the 10th of August last, H. M. S. Warspite ran over a rock in Seymour Narrows. The rock was not marked on the chart; no one knew it was there, Captain Lambton and Captain Bawden were on duty on deck at the time. A report was sent to England in due course and after weary months of waiting for the official investigation that was to be held, word was received that the Admiralty had ordered the two officers named to be court-martialled. That means, they were tried by a court of their peers and the charge against them was that they had been negligent. The trial lasted three days. The finding was that the officers were not guilty of negligence but were guilty of default. Just what meaning is to be attached to "default" I do not know. Anyway, it was the finding and the sentence was a reprimand. With all due deference to the experienced officers who composed the naval court, let me make one or two remarks which I consider pertinent in the case. Those officers were guilty of negligence or else they were not. If they were guilty of negligence, the sentence was not half severe enough; if they were not guilty of negligence, what in the name of conscience were they to be reprimanded for? To my mind there is no half way distinction. If the rock was not on the chart and there was no reason to suspect that it was there, and there was supposed to be deep water all around, how in the name of goodness were the officers to anticipate the danger? The anomaly is too apparent. You all know the old song:

My object all sublime,  
I shall achieve in time,  
To make the punishment fit the crime,  
The punishment fit the crime.

Here is a case in which the suggestion implied in those words comes in. If the Captain and the navigator of the Warspite had been guilty they ought to have been severely punished. The responsibility of their positions, brings with it the invariably consequential pains and penalties in case of default. The court however, held that there was no negligence, therefore there was no crime, and therefore there should have been no punishment. But there must have been some one to blame, of course there was. That one was the man in whom had been vested the responsibility of making the survey. The chart was wrong, the chartmaker was to blame and because the court could not punish him or dare not reprimand him and I venture to think that word *dare* is the better one, they make scape-goats of Captain Lambton and the Staff Commander. In olden days the Crown princes used to have what were I think known as whipping boys. When the princes would do something naughty the unfortunate whipping boy would be flogged. How would it be to establish an "office" of the kind in the Royal Navy so that when the Admiralty Lords or hydrographers are responsible for some serious mishap, they can laugh and say "give the fellow forty welts on my account."

PERE GRINATOR.

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