

**THE .**  
**INDECISIVENESS OF MODERN WAR**

# THE INDECISIVENESS OF MODERN WAR

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

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## PREFACE

THESE essays are the outcome of many years of study of the problems of war and national policy. The first two set forth the conclusions to which, I believe, every open-minded student must come if he contrasts the prolonged deadlock in the North Sea and on the Western Front in 1914-18 with what was achieved by the weak, slow fleets and small professional armies of earlier times. This strange contrast has long impressed me ; and, at the risk of seeming to exaggerate its import, I have felt impelled to point it out. History would abdicate one of her functions if she did not examine the causes of the mass-wastage into which mass-warfare has degenerated. It is also demonstrable that the study of Admiral Duckworth's expedition to Constantinople in 1807 should have saved England from the glorious but disastrous venture of 1915. His final decision, which I have quoted (pp. 177, 179), stated emphatically the condition on which alone success could reasonably be expected ; and the advent of the mine, torpedo and machine-gun ought to have added point to his warning. Why was not that warning taken into account at Whitehall early in 1915 ?

The other essays deal with subjects bearing on national safety and expansion, the balance of power in the Mediterranean, the ultimate dependence of India on Sea Power, certain aspects of the careers of Napoleon and Nelson, the well-being of the fleet in 1805, our acquisition of Malta, and, finally, the comparatively recent growth of the spirit

of comradeship at sea. For permission to re-publish Nos. V., VI., VIII. and XI., I am indebted to the editorial committees of *The Indian Historical Journal*, *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, *The Mariner's Mirror*, and the Royal Society of Literature. On the topics treated in Essay I. I have received valuable advice from Admiral Sir William Henderson ; and on those of Essay II. from Lieut.-Colonel F. Moloney, R.E., and Major G. K. Rose, M.C. Other friends have read and criticised the remaining essays. One and all I thank them ; but mine alone is the responsibility for the opinions finally expressed.

J. H. R.

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