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EDITORIAL.

DESERVING OF THE HIGHEST PRAISE.

The announcement made on Tuesday that Admiral Sir Percy M. Scott, Bart., K.C.B., has been appointed to take charge of the gunnery defences of London against attack by enemy aircraft, became known with a sense of relief; but why such an officer had not been appointed before is what the public has a right to know—now that Parliament has again assembled.

Without hesitation we express the opinion that hushing up the damage done by Zeppelin raids in this country is a mistake. If the end aimed at, to keep the enemy uninformed of where they have dropped their murderous missiles, and what damage they have done, could be attained by silence, the policy might be permissible. But we may be sure such an object is not attained, and all that is really done is to keep the people of these realms in the dark, and thus fail to arouse, and use for reprisals, their just indignation as a factor for the energetic prosecution of the war. We are more than ever deeply convinced that the "hush" policy is a mistake, after the raid on the Metropolis last week; when the barbarous irresponsibility of the murder fiends, by the irony of fate, very nearly killed hundreds of innocent helpless sick people in their hospital beds, in several separate districts. What a glorious feat for the valiant executive of the All-Highest War Lord! One bomb, guided we can but think by a more potent power, fell in a garden square surrounded on all sides by hospitals; nearly every pane of glass was shattered, and many window frames shattered, but the poor suffering operation cases, nerve wrecks and paralytics, little children splinted in their cots with hip disease, every jar an agony, and babies in arms, were all mercifully preserved alive—the murder missile fell a few yards short!

Further east, a Sister seated on the fountain in the centre of a hospital square saw a death-ship sailing overhead, its searchlight flooded

the area, and a few seconds later came the crash of doom. Then in this colony of suffering pandemonium was let loose. The cracking and splintering of glass, the rending and tearing of walls, showers of sparks and burning brands from uprising fearsome flames of fire. Again the sick were mercifully preserved—the bomb fell a few yards beyond the hospital gate with terrific and irruptive force. The nurses' home felt the full force of the shock: great structural damage resulted, but within the gates there was no injury to life or limb. Houses near by were gutted and ruined by fire. In both places we have seen the devastation, and thousands and thousands of people have also contemplated the scenes. To imagine that amongst such crowds the well-paid treacherous spies of the German Government did not freely mingle, and that without delay their reports were not safely docketed in Berlin, is to refuse to acknowledge the trained skill and demoniacal craft of the ubiquitous spies in our midst, in the pay of the enemy. To discount this guile, by a futile attempt to minimise the horrors of bombardment from the skies, is neither wise nor seemly.

Of course, we have another and a very resplendent side to this attempt to terrorise the civilian population, and that is the accumulated evidence that the British people cannot be terrorised. Throughout the nursing world it is well known that in every hospital shaken by the bomb blast the nursing and domestic staffs, to say nothing of the men, behaved superbly. There was no instinctive fear, no panic: everyone came forth quietly and obeyed fine national instincts and reasoned directions. A Hospital Committee which met next day sent a letter to its nursing staff, expressing its opinion "that their conduct deserved the highest praise," and so it did. Nevertheless, it is the duty of our Government to prevent the massacre of innocent and unarmed people—and we must see that they do it.

A public meeting, to demand that more effective steps should be taken in dealing with Zeppelin raids, would prove the strength of public feeling.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)