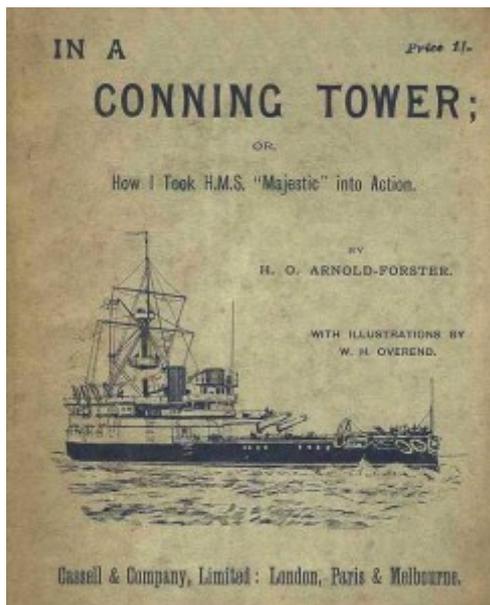


Arnold-Forster, H.O. (1888) In a Conning Tower

Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster (1888) *In a Conning Tower; or, How I Took H.M.S. "Majestic" into Action. A Story of Modern Ironclad Warfare*, Murray's Magazine



Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster (1855 - 1909), was a British politician and writer. He notably served as Secretary of State for War from 1903 to 1905. From boyhood he had devoted himself to the close study of naval affairs and of warships. His love of the sea was insatiable, and he spent many a holiday cruising in a Thames barge, which he fitted out in quite homely fashion. In 1884 he inspired the famous articles on 'The Truth about the Navy' (published by Mr. Stead in the 'Pall Mall Gazette'), which led to a large increase in the navy estimates under the Gladstone government and to endeavours of later governments to place the navy on a footing of adequate efficiency. In a forecast of a modern naval battle entitled 'In a Conning Tower' (1888) he showed a technical knowledge remarkable in a civilian. [Wikisource]



Full text is available (USA Access only) at [Hathitrust](https://www.hathitrust.org).

HAVE you ever stood within a Conning Tower? No; then you have not set foot in a spot where the spirit of man has borne the fiercest and direst stress to which the fell ingenuity of the modern world has learnt to subject it. You have not seen the place where the individual wages a twofold contest with the power of the tempest and the violence Of the enemy, where, controlling with a touch and guiding with his will the gigantic forces of Nature, he stands alone in the presence of death, and asserts

amidst the awful crash of the mental and physical battle, the splendid majesty of the spirit of man. For indeed there is nothing grander, more consoling to humanity, than the power of man to hold his Own unshaken and unshakable in the face of unknown and incalculable dangers, upborne by the high inspiration of personal courage, by devotion to duty, or. by the power of faith.

Such a gift is vouchsafed to man ; but it is often bought at a great price, and Often though life be spared to him who wins it, and though the human protagonist Come out a victor in the he survives with the scars Of the terrible conflict burnt in for ever upon his inmost soul.

I have known a man, a giant in mind and body, emerge from the ordeal with hair blanched in an hour by the dread and strain of the conflict. Another I could tell you of, he who writes these lines, to whom the struggle between fear and duty, between terror and pride, brought the keenest suffering and the hardest trial which a man Can bear.

Yes, I use the words fear and terror. I who have fought not without honour and success for my sovereign and my country, Who bear on my breast the cross for valour, and whose name is not unknown among my countrymen and my comrades. But let me come to the story I have to tell you.

Other posts of possible interest:

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[Conan Doyle, A. \(1914\) Danger! and Other Stories](#)

[Wood, W. \(1905\) Submarined](#)

[Anonymous \(1885\) The Great War and Disastrous Peace of 1885](#)