

In a few weeks he was "reported missing." Eventually he was "presumed dead."

His mother took to Spiritualistic séances, in the hope of finding him, and sought to obtain messages from him by a board the Spiritualists supplied. "Some have their boys; — has her board!" her sister said.

The No Conscription Fellowship held a great convention of two thousand objectors of military age and many hundred sympathisers at Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, the headquarters of the Society of Friends. There had recently been rowdy scenes there during lectures by Roden Buxton. To provide against disorder only ticket-holders were admitted. The shouts of the would-be disturbers were heard outside. After the first great burst of applause, when the pledge not to undertake war service was adopted, it was decided not to provoke the opponents by further applause. The waving of handkerchiefs was substituted. Three sailors climbed over the barriers and were met in the passages of the building by stewards who induced them to depart quietly with friendly handshakes.

The atmosphere was very tense. Clifford Allen, the chairman of the N.C.F., a frail young man afflicted with curvature of the spine, was then regarded almost as a saint by thousands of followers. One could hardly realise that he had been satisfied to work as business manager of the jingo *Daily Citizen* until it ceased publication.

In December 1915¹ the German Social Democrats had made a plea in the Reichstag for peace negotiations. The Chancellor had replied that his government would welcome negotiations; but the peace must guarantee security and freedom of development to Germany. General Hindenburg, however, announced in the Press that the time for peace was not yet. Asquith and the French and Russian Ministers made bellicose statements. In the New Year it had been reported here that crowds demanding peace had assembled at the opening of the Reichstag, that the military had fired on the people and four hundred men and women had been killed.

When our Parliament reassembled in the New Year F. W. Jowett had tabled an I.L.P. Amendment to the Address, urging that the British Government and its Allies should disavow aims of conquest, and intimate willingness to accept the mediation of neutral nations to conclude the War, on a basis providing for the evacuation of Belgium, Northern France, and all invaded territories. The Government refused to allow time for this Amendment to be debated. Its terms were undoubtedly inconvenient in view of the agreements for annexation the Allies had already made. Instead a general peace discussion, opened by Snowden, had been permitted on February 23rd. Asquith then scouted Snowden's suggestion that the Germans were willing to open peace negotiations, and repeated his old declamation that this country would "never sheathe the sword" until Belgium and Serbia had recovered "all, and more than all" they had sacrificed, until France was adequately secured against aggression, the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe established, and the military domination of Prussia "wholly and finally destroyed." At the

¹ On June 23rd, 1915, *Vorwaerts*, the Majority Social Democratic newspaper, had published an appeal for peace negotiations. On June 26th it had been suppressed.