

undoubtedly have been taken as decisive proof that a confusion had occurred and that one event had been described in two different ways and had come to be thought of as two distinct events.

The first of these events is what is known as the Battle of the Falkland Islands. This occurred in the first year of World War I when a British squadron of ships met a group of German ships off the eastern coast of South America. After heavy fighting the German ships were sunk and Vice-Admiral Graf von Spee went to the bottom of the ocean with his fleet on December 8, 1914.

Twenty-five years later, in the first year of World War II a German battleship named Graf Spee met a British fleet off the east coast of South America. After heavy fighting the Graf Spee was disabled. It put into the port of Montevideo, Uruguay, and attempted to repair the damage. Being unable to do so in the time that it was permitted to remain, the ship steamed out of the harbor and there was scuttled by its crew, so that the new Graf Spee also went to the bottom of the ocean off the east coast of South America. This occurred on December 17, 1939.

The similarity between these two events is so great that any good literary scholar a century ago would have had no doubt that the two accounts described the same event. There was of course a difference. In the first case Graf Spee was a man; in the second case it was a ship; but any good critic would say that such a confusion could very easily occur, while to believe that actually two such similar events had happened in this way would have been said to be beyond the bounds of historical possibility.