

## BRITISH CAPACITY AND GERMAN EFFICIENCY

**T**HERE is much present-day talk about efficiency. The newspapers are full of it. College professors lecture on it. Mr. Roosevelt, who is using all the influence of his towering personality for the right, while strongly condemning Germany's militarism and all that goes with it, wants us to acquire her efficiency. President Wilson injects into his speeches on preparedness admonitions for every one of us to become efficient, bodily, spiritually and in all other imaginable ways and in some which are unimaginable. The word is rapidly becoming as full of cloudy meaning as that term 'service' which, some years ago, was employed in endless iteration to make our ordinary actions appear either in the light of altruistic phenomena or else as against the higher public interest. Naturally we all wish to be efficient, both individually and collectively, both physically and mentally. If by efficiency we mean what the dictionaries say and what, until recently at least, the history of the language has connoted, it would be as unfortunate to be inefficient as to be ill, for to be efficient means to be effective, to have the power of producing the desired result. Who would be otherwise? And if this be true, why lay so much stress on what is obvious? Are such men, among others, as presidents and ex-presidents of the United States wasting our time and theirs, in these days of stress, by solemnly propounding platitudes? By no means. The fact is the word efficiency has recently become endowed with a new sense. It now primarily denotes that type of ability to accomplish objects which flows from administration, organisation, attention to detail and the strict coordination of all activities under unifying minds or authorities by a sort of mechanistic process. In fact, it implies even a little more than this, since all ability to attain ends premises a certain amount of these qualities. So we shall not go