

thermore they have been unfortunately eclipsed by the spectacular and incessant combat carried on over thousands of miles of battle front on land.

But admitting even that the naval engagements fought during the first few months of hostilities might be considered in the nature of skirmishes, it is none the less certain that their result has been to put an end to the war of corsairs from which the Germans hoped for consequences so decisive.

Since then, thanks to the incessant watchfulness of the British fleet, peace reigns on near and distant seas, where the flags of all nations float in security—save and except the German. It is only in a limited corner of a European sea, and that corner growing gradually less, that navigation presents the slightest risk, and that from a policy of ferocious piracy, from which the ships of neutrals and belligerents have equally suffered.

We have seen that the immediate entrance of the whole combined British and French maritime forces into action, at the very outbreak of the war, had a prodigious repercussion in every domain, military, political, economic and financial.

It was formerly said that "the storm-beaten ships of Nelson, which the grande armée of Napoleon never saw, stood nevertheless between that army and the Empire of the world." This expressive phrase can with equal truth be applied to-day to the great British fleet.

No one sees it; but it inspires the Germans with such fear that they dare not venture from their dens; or when rarely they have sneaked out, it has only been by night, and with every precaution to evade the vigilant guardians of the British coast, and to take precipitate flight before them.

If England had not exercised this indisputable domination in the North Sea and in the Channel, the German fleet would have held at their mercy all the French coast and ports from Dunkerque to Brest. For the French fleet, concentrated as it was in the Mediterranean, pursuant to the entente cordiale, could not have returned in time to bar the route to the enemy.

In that event, neither the military science of the General Staff, nor the heroism of the troops, could have prevailed against the long planned machinations of the Germans. A letter seized among the papers of a spy, in Paris, is very suggestive on that point.

A personage closely related to a reigning German family, announced there to his comrade the near approach of war, and confidently predicted that the action of the German Imperial Marine would cause some surprising sensations. But all those beautiful predictions have pitifully come to nought.