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THE BRITISH NAVY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ALL ITS SEVEN FLEET FUNCTIONS

The New York World publishes an important statement, in reference to the work of the British Navy, by Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty. It is a reply to a vainglorious boast by Count von Reventlow (published on Saturday) in which the claim was made that Germany's navy "holds Britain at bay," and that "the days of absolute British supremacy at sea are at an end." To this Mr. Balfour replies:—

So far the German Fleet has thought it wise to avoid engaging a superior force, and I am the last person to blame them. But this surely is hardly to be counted as a triumph of either tactics or strategy: it is a military exploit which, however judicious, would be well within the competence of the least efficient fleet and the most incapable Commander.

Toutons Have Done Nothing.
The truth is that the German high-sea fleet has so far done nothing and probably has not been in the position to do anything. At the beginning of the war we were told that, by a process of continual attrition, it was proposed to reduce the superior British Fleet, ship by ship, until an equality was established between the antagonists. The design has completely failed.

The desired equality is more remote than it was twelve months ago, and this would be true even if certain extraordinary misstatements about such small actions as have occurred in the North Sea had any foundation in fact. He tells us, for example, that in the skirmish of August 28, when some German cruisers were destroyed the British squadron suffered heavy damage. This is quite untrue.

He tells us again that in the skirmish of January 18 last, when the Blucher was sunk, the British lost a new battle cruiser (the Tiger).

This is also untrue. In that engagement we did not lose a cockle boat. I do not know that these misstatements are of any great moment, but for the benefit of those who think otherwise let me say that in no sea fight, except that off the coast of Chili, has any ship of the British Fleet been either sunk or seriously damaged.

Apart from these purely imaginary triumphs the only performance of German warships in the North Sea on which Count Reventlow dwells with pride and satisfaction is the attack by some German cruisers on undefended towns in Yorkshire.

Inglorious, Immoral.
This exploit was as inglorious as it was immoral. Two or three fast cruisers came over the North Sea by night; at dawn they bombarded an open watering place; they killed a certain number of civilian men, women and children, and after an hour and a half of this gallant performance retired to the safety of their own defended waters. Personally I think it better to invent stories like the sinking of the Tiger than to boast of such a feat of arms as this.

But, in truth, if anyone will examine Count Reventlow's apology for the German high sea fleet he will find that it amounts to no more than praise of German mines and German submarines. There is no doubt that German mines scattered at random and with no warning to neutrals, have been responsible for the destruction of much neutral shipping and some vessels of war. The first result is deplorable, the second is legitimate. Mine laying is not indeed a very glorious method of warfare. Though, used against warships, it is perfectly fair.

As To Submarines.
But something there must be said about submarines. Anybody reading Count Reventlow's observations would suppose that submarines were a German invention and that only German foresight had realized that their use would necessitate a modification in battle fleet tactics. But this truth has been among the commonplaces of naval knowledge for years past and was no more hid from Washington and London than from Berlin and Vienna. What was new in German use of submarines was not their employment against ships of war but their employment against defenceless merchantmen and unarmed trawlers.

This, it must be owned, was never foreseen either in Washington or London. It is purely German. But Count Reventlow is profoundly mistaken if he supposes that during the year which has elapsed these murderous methods have affected in the slightest degree the economic life of Britain: what they have done is to fix an indelible stain upon the fair name of the German navy.

Functions of a Fleet.

If any one desires to know whether the British fleet has during the last year proved itself worthy of its traditions there is a very simple method of arriving at the truth. There are seven, and only seven, functions which a fleet can perform:

It may drive the enemy's commerce off the sea.

It may protect its own commerce.

It may render the enemy's fleet impotent.

It may make the transfer of enemy troops across the sea impossible, whether for attack or defence.

It may transport its own troops where it will.

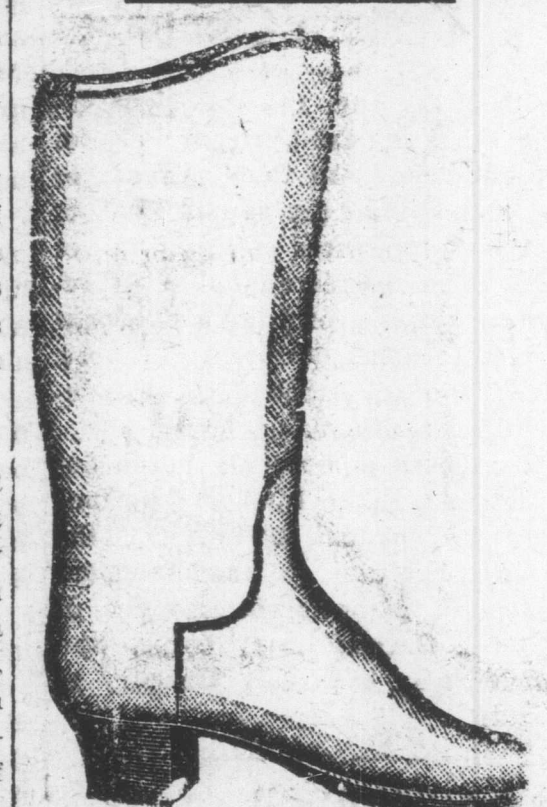
It may secure their supplies and (in fitting circumstances) it may assist their operations.

All these functions have so far been successfully performed by the British fleet. No German merchant ship is to be found on the ocean. Allied commerce is more secure from attack, legitimate and illegitimate, than it was after Trafalgar. The German high sea fleet has not as yet ventured beyond the security of its protected waters.

No invasion has been attempted of these islands. British troops, in numbers unparalleled in history, have moved to and fro across the seas and have been effectively supported on shore. The greatest of military powers has seen its colonies wrested from it by one and has not been able to land a man or a gun in their defence.

Of a fleet which has done this we may not only say that it has done more. And we citizens of the British Empire can only hope that the second year of the war will show no falling off in its success, as it will assuredly show no relaxation of its efforts.

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GOODS FINDING WAY TO ENEMY

United States to Contest Contention in the British Notes.

Washington, August 4.—Elaborate statistics have been assembled by the state department to refute the British assumption that increased exportations from the United States to Holland and Scandinavian countries indicate that some of these goods are finding their way into Germany and Austria. The figures will be included in a preliminary draft being prepared for President Wilson of the reply to the three British notes made public yesterday.

A study of trade conditions between the United States and neutral European countries has been made by the state department and investigations of Scandinavian and Dutch trade by the department of commerce. A report from Consul-General Skinner at London also has been received on the foreign trade of Great Britain for the six months ended June 30. It shows that exports to the Scandinavian countries and Holland have increased since the war began along the same lines as American exports to those countries.

The state department will contend that there can be no more assumption that American goods going to these neutral countries are bound for Germany, than that British goods exported to neutrals will reach Great Britain's enemies.

British Imports.

The London report showed that while Great Britain's exports decreased materially in the first six months of 1915 as compared to the same period of 1914, imports increased. Re-exports during June, the first month during which the British order-in-council was fully effective, showed an increase of \$2,904,838.

In cotton, one of the much-disputed articles in the trade, Great Britain's imports increased by 1,314,592 cents of 112 pounds each.

Large increases in all lines of cotton goods and cotton yarns from Great Britain to Sweden, Norway, Denmark and The Netherlands during the first six months of 1915 are shown. Despite a general decrease in exports of manufactured copper, Great Britain sent Norway 317 tons in 1915 as against 48 tons in 1914. Increased American copper exports to Scandinavian countries have been cited by Great Britain to sustain her contention.

These British trade figures with many others collected by the state department, have been arranged for use in reply to Great Britain, if the president determines to argue the question, despite the flat refusal of this country to recognize Great Britain's right to interfere through neutral ports, even if it is with non-contraband commerce for final consumption by a belligerent.

To Release All Cargoes.

Encouraged by the announcement from London that a part of the cargo of the steamer Neches had been released, officials determined to-day to press informal negotiations to secure an agreement that would release all the vast quantity of American-bound commodities now lying in Rotterdam docks. The British note in the Neches case sets forth that if it is alleged that in particular cases and special circumstances hardships may be inflicted on citizens of neutral countries, His Majesty's government is ready in such cases to examine the facts in a spirit of consideration for neutrals. In line with this assurance, the foreign trade advisers of the state department are forwarding to London affidavits covering hundreds of individual cases in which they allege that hardships are being inflicted. The total involved will be millions of dollars and undoubtedly will precipitate extended diplomatic correspondence.

The state department is hopeful of results in many of these cases, and an arrangement already has been made to facilitate American commerce in oil.

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