

CANADA'S FIRST WARSHIPS

The Rainbow described by a Canadian who visited Portsmouth

By W. R. PLEWMAN

THE Canadian navy is taking shape. The cruiser Rainbow is hurrying to Esquimaux, the cruiser Niobe arrives this week at Halifax, and plans are being completed for the four new cruisers and six torpedo destroyers sanctioned by the Canadian Parliament. The naval stations on either coast are now preparing a royal welcome for the two warships, and from now on the people of Canada can be relied on to take an ever-increasing interest in their new national adjunct. For whatever difference of opinion may have existed about the advisability of the Dominion maintaining a fleet, Canadians, equally with other Anglo-Saxons, are susceptible to the fascination of the life on the ocean wave.

It was on the 18th of July last that the protected cruiser Rainbow passed from the possession of the British Admiralty into the hands of the Canadian Government, and just a month later when she slipped past Nelson's flagship, the old Victory, and started on her 13,000 mile voyage from Portsmouth to Esquimaux. To-day she is still ploughing through the billows on her way round the South American continent, and she is not expected to arrive at Vancouver until the seventh of November.

Though the Rainbow is the first-born of the Canadian navy, Johnny Canuck hardly knows whether to be proud of his progeny. He knows that some of his friends are producing even more precocious children, children that can show their heels or their teeth as occasion requires, and take good care of themselves. He fears his own offspring is comparatively weak and helpless, even though able to literally knock the tar out of Nelson's pets when they were at their best.

The Niobe has undergone renovation at Devonport during the last three months, and is now equipped to the satisfaction of Rear Admiral Kingsmill, director of the Canadian naval service. She is a big vessel, of 11,000 tons, and a first class protected cruiser. She requires 30 feet of water to float her safely, and when her course is clear can steam 21 knots to the hour. Her greatest width is 69 feet, and her length is 460 feet. With her four lofty funnels, and her dull, blue-grey sides, that tower up in front but taper off towards the stern, she presents a truly formidable appearance.

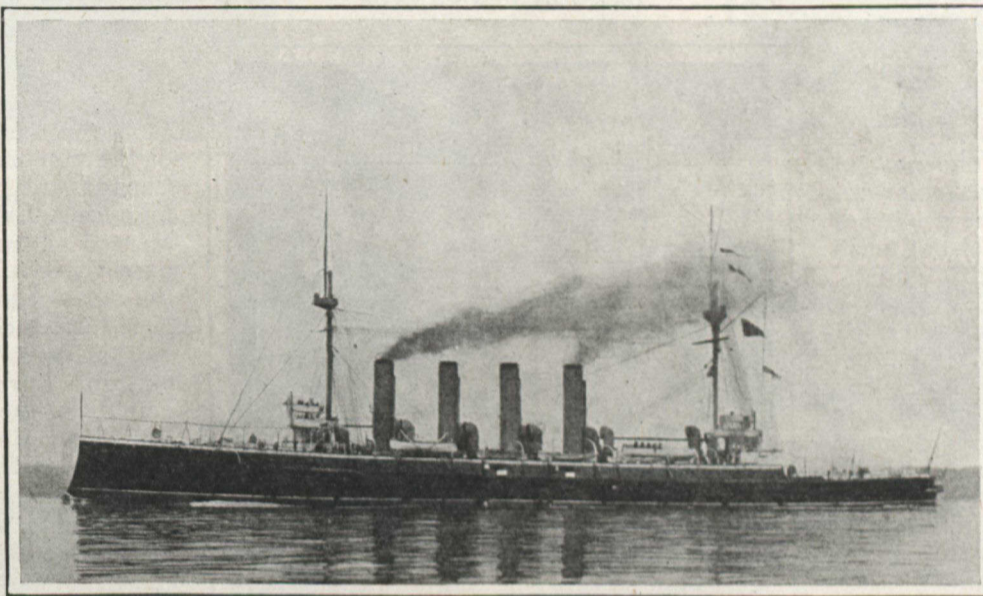
At a single discharge of her main battery, the Niobe can hurl almost a ton of projectiles at an enemy. She has sixteen of the big six-inch guns, so called because the gun is of that diameter at the bore, and each of these is capable of throwing a hundred pound projectile through eighteen inches of wrought iron at a distance of over a mile. With less effect the projectile can be hurled three times that distance. The hundred pound shot is the heaviest that is loaded without the aid of machinery. The guns weigh over seven tons apiece. They move around on swivels and the gunners are protected by several inches of Harvey-ised steel.

For close range the cruiser is armed with fourteen 12-pounders and six 3-pounders, and also with two deadly maxim guns, whose hail of bullets lay men low like grain before a summer storm. Equally fearsome are the three torpedo tubes, two of them submerged, which discharge a projectile loaded with 200 pounds of guncotton, which could sink the mightiest ship afloat.

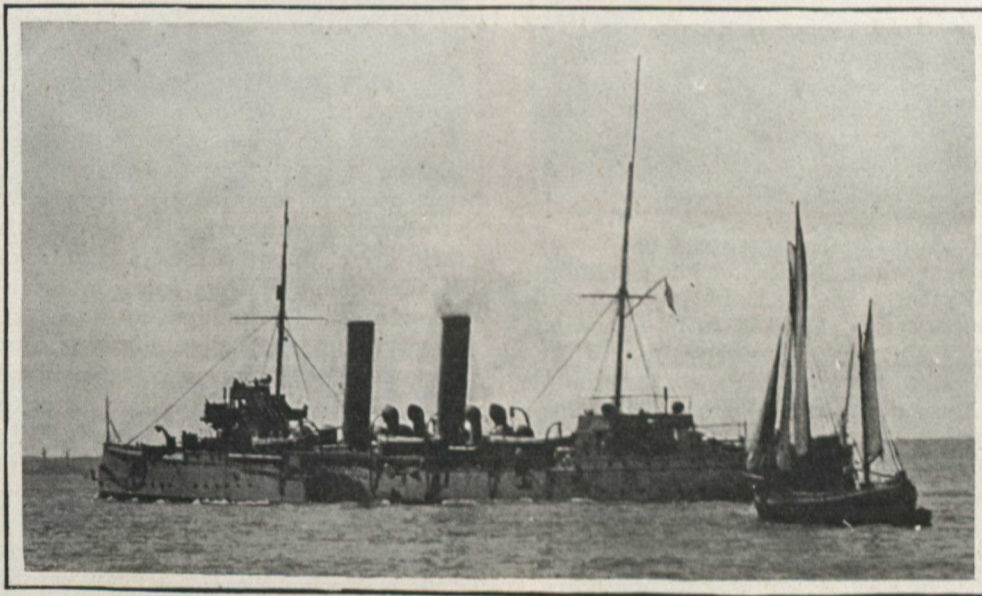
The Niobe, while having as great offensive powers as many an armoured cruiser, is weaker in armour, and consequently only classifies as a first class protected cruiser. She has the typical convex steel

deck just above the waterline which gives her class its name. This deck is made convex so that an enemy's projectiles that may have pierced the hull, will glance off without injuring a vital part. The deck runs the whole length of the ship and covers her magazines and engines. It serves the additional purpose of keeping the vessel afloat, if struck below the waterline, being materially helped in this object by the compartments into which the vessel's interior is divided.

When in England last July the writer made the trip from London to Portsmouth with the express purpose of inspecting the Rainbow. A letter from



H.M.C.S. Niobe, first class protected cruiser, purchased as a training ship. She was launched in 1898 11,000 tons. Crew 677.



H.M.C.S. Rainbow leaving Portsmouth Harbour on its long trip round Cape Horn to Esquimaux.

Rear Admiral Kingsmill enabled him to pass through the Admiralty dockyard to the tidal basin where the Rainbow was secured. Earlier in the week she had been turned over to the possession of the Canadian Government. Rows of submarines and torpedo boats were roped together in the vicinity, and at right angle to the Rainbow were the Barfleur and the Centurion, her old comrades on the China station. Both of them are more powerful than the Niobe, but they have been sold for a mere song to the junk-dealer while the Rainbow, which rusticated for four years at Mother Bank, a sort of Admiralty's home for the aged, has blossomed out in a fresh coat of paint as the first ship of the Canadian navy. Such are the tricks of fortune.

Neither the Rainbow nor the Niobe could take her place in the fighting line. Each belongs to a type which is practically obsolete. Modern naval science has discarded intermediate types and developed the extremes—the all-big-gun ship, to fight, and the multiple-torpedo ship to scout and run. Some of the latest vessels are strong in both departments. The Rainbow is too slow to be a scout,

and too weak to be feared by anything more powerful than a poacher. Nor can the Niobe run or face the fire of a battleship. An 850 pound shot from a 12-inch gun would pierce her as it would a pack of cards. The warship now building in England for New Zealand could whip a whole fleet of Rainbows and Niobes before breakfast.

Political capital cannot easily be made out of these facts. Circumstances alter cases. New Zealand and Australia fear the yellow peril and are eager that Britain should make an immediate and continued demonstration of force in the Pacific. Canada has no fears and is simply providing for contingencies that seem remote and unreal. The Rainbow and Niobe are not intended for war service. Both are to be used as training ships, and the Rainbow will incidentally render an important service by putting a stop to the depredations of a host of slippery American poachers that, equipped with wireless and powerful engines, have been laughing at the Dominion Government's slow fishery cruiser on the Pacific seaboard. For the Rainbow is still good for 18 or 19 knots, and her newly installed wireless system will enable the government stations along the coast to post her as to the movements of the slippery gentlemen from Seattle. Once within a mile or two of these her two 6-inch guns would compel submission.

The two warships are coming out with skeleton crews, composed for the most part of picked men who volunteered from the naval reserve, but some expert men from the active list were supplied to the Canadian naval service, including the champion gunner of the British navy. It is hoped to soon recruit the vessels up to their full strength—nearly seven hundred in the case of the Niobe—and to have enough trained men to man the warships that are to be built, by the time they are ready to go into commission.

The two warships now in the possession of Canada offer a novelty in being without grog tubs. Most of the crews chosen are total abstainers. The officers of the Niobe have been presented with a service of plate by Lord Strathcona, and Halifax will present the ship with a service worth \$500. News items appearing in the daily papers every few days indicate that the new navy will play an important part in Canada's national life.

The English Luggage

IT is really a touching thing—the veneration an Englishman has for his luggage. A few years ago Rider Haggard was being interviewed by a crowd of Canadian reporters, by whom he was caralled in his room at the hotel, all ready with pencil and pad to hear what he had to say about South Africa. The novelist was mute.

"No, I really can't say a word till my luggage arrives," he said. "I say, Thomas," to his attendant again, "are those blessed trunks anywhere in this country?"

"Ah! Thank heaven! Here they are"—as into the room came tumbling a rampart of boxes. Instant relief! The novelist pounced upon one, opened it to see if everything was all right as he had packed it; then he shut down the lid and with a smile of contentment sat on it to give his experiences to the press.

This attachment of the man to his luggage you find all over England. The Englishman can't understand the American who lets his trunks go by one train while he takes another, separated from the main body of his luggage for days at a time; in all probability not having seen one of his trunks since it was packed in his bedroom.

When the Englishman begins to acquire the American's contempt for luggage he will begin to be a different sort of traveller. At present this personal affection for a "box" is almost idyllic.

You see it especially on English railways and in the baggage rooms where it seems to be every man for himself in rounding up his trunks; everybody quite unwilling to trust a baggageman or a porter.