

The British Contribution ; or Maritime Preponderance in the War

[NOTE:—This translated article and its introductory note were prepared by arrangement for the "Westminster Review." Just after the proofs were passed by us for the printer, we found that, through misunderstanding of instructions given by Mr. Downie to a representative of another publication, the article was published elsewhere. Nevertheless, because of the importance of the subject, we decided to retain the article.—Editor.]

[From the French of Monsieur Henri D'Avray in the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, (translated by Fanny E. Downie, Vancouver), and dedicated, with compliments, as an answer to Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett (Somewhere in Australia) with an Introduction by D. D.]

A talented and charming journalist entertained Vancouver audiences the other week in a platitudinous pessimistic and recriminatory sort of way. He was preceded by a valuable publicity, and burdened with a heavy lantern, a large map, a fine conceit of himself, and a deep grouch against the Managing Directors of the British Empire. We met him with some interest and listened to him with mingled curiosity, impatience and regret. He discouraged the timid. He emphasized the obvious. And he is now on his way to Australia to tell the brave people there how needlessly they have sacrificed the children of the soil; to show them how many blunders may be made in a subordinate military campaign; to augment his own importance by distributing reproaches to all those above him; and, in short, to prove to his public, at this inopportune moment, with how little ability a great Empire may be governed.

According to this discouraging young wiseacre (of foreign extraction) "the war is going to be a kind of draw. No great victories can ever be gained by either side. It is to be a species of stalemate." Furthermore, we are "told," the war is to be won "not by military, but by moral forces." And as we are now engaged in recruiting forces here and in Australia, in order to win the war, those moral forces are probably the kind he would have us send. He has a method, I suppose, for raising those moral forces and leading them. So had Henry Ford. Every other amateur strategist and drawing-room diplomat is ready to prove that Joffre should have moved faster, and that the diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey is a failure. As if any one of us who know the Balkan Peninsula, did not know that it is easier for a Kaiser to put his foot into that corruptible nest of rattlesnakes than to get it out again.

But we are an amiable and a patient public in this corner of the Empire. We listened lately, without protest, to a wealthy German woman from New York (who is now exhibiting on the Ford circuit in Europe) telling us, in the same way, how very little Britain had done and how badly reforms were needed there, and all the other shortcomings of our country. Will they listen as patiently to Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett on the same tone in Australia? I doubt it. Let us wait and see.

But meantime the only object of presenting this article here, which in the too faithful translation of an amateur may lose some of its fine force, is to contrast the large view, the firm confidence, the enlightened and characteristic generosity of a distinguished Frenchman, who takes high ground and sees the whole field, with the petty, harmful criticism of a carping co-patriot, recalled from his one narrow peninsula and with regard to a campaign that has now been abandoned.

For a man, or a nation, that does much is sure to do something wrong, and for that wrong must suffer the censure of those who do little or nothing at all. We must recollect, however that war is not a parlor game: that it is always possible to take one trick, but not so simple to win the rubber; and that it is impossible to make an omelette without breaking some eggs. But now let Monsieur Henri D'Avray speak for himself.—Donald Downie.

If one regarded merely the pomp and circumstance of battle, it might seem that, up to this moment, the navies of the Allies have played in the actual conflict, only a secondary role. On closer observation we perceive that it would be a serious error to hold to that superficial opinion.

True, we know little and that imperfectly of all the exploits accomplished at sea. For those exploits are widely scattered over a space of fifteen months and dispersed in all the waters of the globe.

And again they have been published by communications so extremely laconic, when they have not been altogether suppressed. Fur-