

THE NAVY AND THE MAN IN THE STREET

THE British Navy is not only the possession and the pride of a great nation; it is the sole guarantee of their daily bread, their personal liberty, and their political existence. The world's history shows no parallel to our present position; it is a truism which has been uttered again and again, and which should be repeated until every child in the country knows it by heart, that from the moment when we cease to command the sea, we exist only upon sufferance, and from the moment when our Navy is crushed by an enemy England is no more the seat of an empire or a nation, but an island off the coast of Europe, crowded with forty millions of starving and helpless people.

To grapple with a situation such as this needs all the skill, all the courage, and all the foresight that any one nation can possibly hope to have at its disposal. To understand the gravity of our position does not, however, require anything more than an ordinary intelligence working upon information which is accessible to every one of us. It is, therefore, natural that the citizen of ordinary intelligence and information—the Man in the Street, as some one has named him—should be anxious to know if the best is being done that can be done to ensure his national life, not against loss or injury—other countries share these risks—but against sudden and total collapse. It is not his business to know