

even where men are afraid it is generally not death that they fear. Their fear is a physical and instinctive shrinking from hurt, shock, and the unknown, which instinct obtains the mastery only through surprise, or through the exhaustion of the mind and will, or through a man being excessively self-centred. It is not the fear of death rationally considered; but an irrational physical instinct which all men possess, but which almost all can control.

OUR "SHAM" FLEET

Germans Believe England Has Built Fake Dreadnoughts

THE following is from an article by a British spy, who signs himself J. M. de Beaufort, in the Quarterly Review: The day after my arrival in Kiel, I was invited (my "guest" had obtained the invitation for me) to see some of the German warships in action—in Kiel Bay. My naval friend and another officer called for me at my hotel in a huge grey car with Germany's coat-of-arms painted all over it. The car was a German "Mercedes" and certainly built for speed. An orderly was seated next to the driver and frequently blew a long horn of a peculiar but not unpleasant sound. Whenever the man sounded his "Ta-ri-ta-ta," man, woman, child and beast, within half a mile, ran for cover. Through the suburb of Gaarden we flew, then north through the People's Park, past the Imperial Wharf, and through Elterbeck and Wellingdorf. At the Howaldts Dock Yards we were ferried across the Schwentine, and then turned north-west again to reach the shore-road. Just north of the Naval Artillery depot (ammunition magazines) we stopped, and our guide invited us to leave the car and follow him to a promontory for a view of the harbour.

It was indeed well worth while. The sight was superb. In front of us, to left, to right, wherever our eyes travelled, we saw nothing but warships, of all types and ages. On closer inspection I noticed, first, four distinct lines of them, anchored near large black and white buoys. The naval officer explained to me the different anchorages. The four rows of buoys are designated respectively A, B, C and D, the letters being followed by numbers, beginning with zero (nearest to Kiel) and running up to 17. One of the features of any map of these positions would be the corrections since the war began. The names of the ships were printed in fat black type,



READY.

The big knife is out. Its edge will soon be tried on Chinese soil.

—Osaka Puck.

but I noticed at once a fair sprinkling of red lines and dates. These indicate the ships that have been lost, and the dates on which the losses occurred. It is a sad but somehow comforting spectacle.

Less than a third of a mile in front of us, at A 11,

lay the "Kaiser," one of Germany's finest 25,000-ton battleships, capable of delivering a broadside of ten 12-inch guns. When with the fleet, the Kaiser lives on her. About a thousand feet in front of her, towards the mouth of the harbour, at A 12, the "Kaiserin" was anchored. Through our glasses we could follow the lines north and south. A 10 was empty, while at A 9 the Kaiser's Yacht, "Hohenzollern" was riding. Next to her at A 8 lay the "Friedrich der Grosse," the flagship of the fleet. Although belonging to the Kaiser class, she was placed well back in harbour, separated from the other ships. A 7 was empty, and the British fleet knows why. Once it had been the safe slumbering place of the "Blucher." Buoy A 6 should have been occupied by the "Deutschland," but she was "draussen" ("outside"), we were told. "Where? in the North Sea or the Baltic?" I could not resist asking. Our guide did not know. Probably she was gallivanting round the North Sea, looking for the British that never came, aching for a scrap—like her late neighbour at A 7. Still further down, at No. 1, was another ominous vacancy, viz., at the "Mainz" buoy. The more one looked at those lines through one's glasses, the more vacancies one observed. Our guide knew the names of all the missing ships. What a host of memories were called up when he sadly pointed towards Buoy B 5, once the "Emden" anchorage; to Buoy A 16, where the "Scharnhorst" used to lie; to Buoy A 17, the former home of the "Gneisenau."

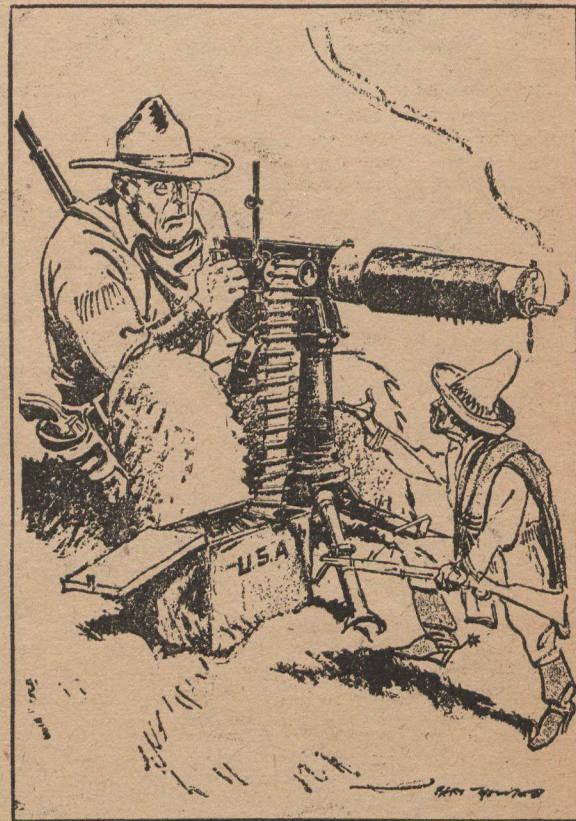
Besides these four rows, there are two others—an alphabetical line, indicated by letters only; and a numerical line, indicated by numbers only. In the alphabetical row where also one or two blanks which never would be filled again by their original owners, viz., at Buoy "F," which was the old home of the little "Hela," torpedoed in August, 1914, and at "K," the anchorage of the "Koln," sunk in the same month. The "D" column had a vacancy at No. 3, where the fast cruiser "Maddeburg" will never sleep again. It was quite an imposing spectacle, but I must admit having been bloodthirsty enough to wish for a few more vacancies in the lines. There were too many battleships left; and, as I gazed at them so peacefully and safely at anchor there, I thought how the sight would warm the heart of any British submarine commander. What a place for torpedoes! But the bottle-neck of Kiel Bay, only three-quarters of a mile wide, giving entrance to the real harbour, is too well guarded.

I regret to say that my naval vocabulary is inadequate to describe the manoeuvres those ships were put through, though they did not seem to be very complicated. They consisted largely of moving in line ahead, and then suddenly swinging to port or starboard. A figure, which we should call in Army parlance the "echelon" formation, was also executed several times. The final manoeuvre was a surprise attack by torpedo-boats. Two flotillas (22 boats) which had been in the fire-lee of the "Friedrich" class, suddenly dashed out from behind them and advanced to within about 3,000 yards of their presumed adversaries, from which distance they were supposed to fire their torpedoes. Then, as fast as they had come, they swung round and returned to shelter behind their own ships. Several of the German naval officers, whom I met, claimed that the German torpedo-boat had reached a very high degree of efficiency. I must admit that I admired what I saw of their work that day and also on subsequent occasions. Though some of their evolutions might be described as "playing to the gallery," every manoeuvre was carried out quick and clean. Cutting through a line of battleships going at full speed in line ahead calls for a brain as quick as lightning and the greatest skill. Whether exercises of this kind would ever be required in an actual sea-fight, is perhaps problematical; but they looked well.

But the information I received was by no means confined to German naval affairs. I learned more about the British Navy during those few months in Germany than I have in England in ten years. For instance, when we were talking about submarines one evening, a German naval officer gave me an elaborate account of the British boats, describing all the different classes, from the oldest to the newest, in great detail. If his statements were correct, they prove that a good deal of British naval information still finds its way to Germany, for I understand that the boats of the "F" class, and those of the "Nautilus" and the "Swordfish" types, have only recently been commissioned. I learned also of a new "crime" committed by "Perfidy Albion," which deserves to be recorded. It is not enough that England will persist in keeping ahead of Germany by always going one better, whenever that peace-loving country lays down a new battleship; she must now aggravate the Fatherland still more by building "Sham Dreadnoughts." "Sham Dreadnoughts" (I exclaimed)? "What do you mean? Oh, you are thinking of the

resurrected 'Lion.' You mean 'ghost' Dreadnoughts?" No, they did not mean anything of the kind. They meant what they said. "Sham Dreadnoughts." No other words could describe them.

Just as Potemkin conjured up flourishing villages before the astonished eyes of his imperial mistress, by means of canvas and pasteboard, so the British Admiralty (I was informed) has created a new fleet of a hundred battleships, by means of canvas, wood



TOO PROUD TO WRITE.

Mexico (to President Wilson): "Hang it all, Woodrow! Play the game—that isn't a typewriter."

—Bert Thomas, in London Opinion.

and paint. At the beginning of the war England bought up a hundred old passenger and freight steamers. The holds were filled with stones and cement, the crossbeams strengthened, and the hulls painted a dark grey, just like the real thing. The addition of a wooden superstructure and turrets armed with heavy-calibre guns—of wood—gave them a realistic, "man-of-war" like appearance. A friend of my informants, who were German naval officers, had had an opportunity to visit one of the shipyards where some of these sea-terrors were being converted. He saw one ex-passenger steamer that was equipped with wooden nine-inch guns, and it looked really terrible. While admiring these monsters, a painter, who with his brush and pail was adding the finishing touches to one of the turrets, slipped and fell. He landed on one of the nine-inch guns and smashed it to pieces. They are much puzzled in German naval circles what possible object the British Admiralty can have in view with this colossal sham fleet. They could understand that a real "man-of-war" should disguise herself as an innocent merchantman, as for instance, the "Sydney" did when she surprised the "poor Emden," but to mask ordinary liners as battleships—well, that beat them.

"Hitherto (they said) the British have had their hands full in hiding their real battleships from German attacks. Perhaps that may be the very service these fake "Dreadnoughts" are to perform. Perhaps they are intended to attract our submarines and cruisers. Thus the German battleships, which are so anxiously and eagerly scouring the seas, would be drawn away from the real British "Dreadnoughts." Those sham fighting ships would constitute a sort of lightning conductor for the real fleet. Or, again, some other use might be made of these stone and cement-filled battleships. Perhaps they are to serve for blocking important harbours and channels, as was done during the Spanish-American War, when the harbour of Santiago de Cuba was thus closed. Perhaps they are to advance against Kiel? through Danish waters? Well, be that as it may. The real English Dreadnoughts have not been able to frighten the German fleet; and our sailors are still less likely to recoil from wooden guns. The British, with their stage battleships, will not delude the watchful administrators of the German Navy!"

Editor's Note: These articles in the Quarterly have been of great interest, not only to the casual reader, but to officialdom in England as well. Needless to say the signature is a false one, and that the "spy" in question has made other and fuller reports to the British War Office and the Admiralty long ere writing these public notes.