

## *MARE LIBERUM.*

stood in clear antithesis at the date of the Declaration of London in 1909. Some advance towards the American view was made at that conference; with the result that the British Parliament refused to ratify it, on the ground that it stripped sea-power of an indispensable weapon. An attempt was also made, in the same document, to define "contraband" by making a list of contraband articles. But this was bound to be unsatisfactory under modern conditions, as is shown by the fact that cotton—a principal ingredient in explosives—was actually put upon the non-contraband list.

When the Great War opened, no one of the three rival views had triumphed. Despite the efforts of America and Germany, all belligerent trade was liable to interruption. Despite the efforts of Britain, neutral ships were liable to destruction without a judicial decision, and were exposed to the danger of mines.

During the course of the war the question has been deeply affected by the actions of both sides, and by the way in which neutrals have received these actions. But the greatest innovator has been Germany. (1) By declaring a blockade of the British Islands in spite of the fact that thousands of ships in a week were able to reach British ports she has asserted the right to dispense with "effectiveness" in a blockade, and has therefore enormously increased the risks to which neutrals are exposed. There has been no effective protest against this claim. (2) She has asserted the right to sow unanchored mines indiscriminately over the seas in spite of her own definite pledges. There has been no serious opposition by Neutrals to this claim. (3) She has asserted the right to destroy neutral vessels carrying contraband without judicial decisions not merely as a rare and exceptional