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FLEETS OF THE GREAT POWERS ARE COMPARED

The present situation in Europe inevitably suggests consideration being turned to the relative standing of the fleets of the great Powers, writes the naval correspondent of The London Daily Telegraph. He goes on:

Naval and military force is intimately related and though Serbia has no fleet, Austria-Hungary not only wields one of the most formidable armies on the continent, but possesses a navy which in the past few years has shown considerable expansion. By slow steps she has ranged herself beside Italy and France, her two neighbors in southern waters, as a country with sea aspirations and sea-power which cannot be ignored. Though at present it seems unlikely that the Austro-Hungarian fleet—or any other fleet for that matter, it may be hoped—will become involved in the existing trouble (the article was written before the war became general), the relative position of the principal navies of Europe must in the circumstances be a subject of some immediate interest.

It may be remarked at the outset that since the Agadir crisis the predominance of Germany on the seas has become less pronounced than it was. After a long period of comparative inaction, France has begun to make up the leeway which she lost owing to mistakes on the part of her politicians and naval advisers—but chiefly of the former—and Russia has spent lavishly in pursuit of the task of rehabilitating the naval organization which suffered so severely at the hands of Japan during the war in the Far East. But in spite of these movements Germany remains the second greatest naval power not only of Europe, but of the world; having out-manoeuvred France, she has now definitely out-distanced the United States.

BASIS OF COMPARISON.

It is desirable always to avoid committing the error of assuming that the standing of the fleets depend on the number of dreadnoughts that they contain. Dreadnoughts are excellent battleships, but it would be absurd to ignore the value of older battleships merely because they do not happen to mount more than four

ing guns. Nor is it even safe to base a final judgment on statistics as to the relative strength in executive battleships—dreadnoughts and pre-dreadnoughts. A navy is a delicately organized machine and with its battle fleets must be associated squadrons of cruisers and flotillas of destroyers and submarines.

Even when all these facts and figures have been mastered, no conclusion can be formed, because ships without crews are useless, and crews without long and persistent training are more dangerous to themselves than to an enemy if he be efficient. Consequently, in the light of all these considerations, it is no easy matter to assess the fighting weight of the great fleets: estimates must be based on a variety of considerations, such as the number and types of ships, the strength and character of the personnel, the strategical and tactical ability of the admiral, and the efficiency of the central organizations and all the supply services.

But, although this is not the occasion, perhaps, nor is space available, for a complete study of all the several factors which have been suggested, it is, nevertheless, possible to reach a rough and approximate estimate of the standing of the great fleets of Europe.

NAVAL STRENGTH OF GROUPS.

If the figures as to the number of completed battleships and cruisers less than twenty years old are examined in association with the number of officers and men on active service, a basis for judgment can be reached. If, furthermore, the battleships be classified in classes—first, second and third—the last named being the oldest and weakest—we secure a conspectus which is at once simple and fairly reliable.

The figures reveal a curious movement in naval politics. The succession of German navy acts and the explanatory memoranda accompanying them, have already produced an effect on the navies of France and Russia, while the political movement of the Triple Alliance have tended to consolidate the Triple Entente. German predominance among the continental fleets is far less pronounced than it was; the change has been in progress since the events of 1909 and will become even more marked if the Russian shipbuilding activity is accompanied by not less persistent efforts to raise the esprit de corps and professional efficiency of the officers and men and political vicissitudes in France do not undermine the strength of the naval organization, which has so recently had new life breathed into it.

It would be unwise, of course, to

draw too wide assumptions from these statistics as to ships and men, or to ignore the spirit which is the real talisman of victory—what we may call the "Nelson" touch. But, on the other hand, the conspectus which has been presented does suggest that if the dual grouping of Europe is to be regarded as a factor at this moment, the time is hardly one favorable to Austria-Hungary and her friends. They are engaged in great schemes of naval expansion, which will not reach the point of culmination for five or six years. Owing to the increased number of conscripts and volunteers now under training—a larger proportion than ever before—the efficiency of the fleets for action has certainly not been increased in the past five or six years.

BRITISH SEA POWER.

The survey of naval strength suggests another consideration. Our margin is not what it once was, but it is still very considerable, even though we avoid the danger of attaching great importance to the old battleships, of which we possess an undue proportion. The standing of the British fleet at the moment, as revealed in the above comparison, suggests that British sea power is a counter in the present international situation of no mean value. So far as can be judged by any available means of computation, the British navy—which is at least as strong in torpedo craft as in battleships and cruisers—may be regarded as one of the greatest influences likely to make for peace.

As the first lord of the admiralty remarked on a famous occasion, we stand purely on the defensive.

"We must never conduct our affairs," he said, "so that the navy of any single power would be able to engage us at any single moment, even at our least favorable moment, with any reasonable prospect of success."

This on the one hand. On the other:

"It is inconceivable that we should make a surprise attack on Germany or any other power, We have no means of forwarding such an attack, even if it were successful."

The British navy exists in an atmosphere of detachment in a continent of great standing armies and vast fleets. It is the great instrument of peace and many conflicting currents of international affairs. It has saved Europe from the horrors of an Armageddon in the past. May it, by its strength and efficiency, once more assist in dispelling the shadow which today hangs over man's thoughts and overpowers their imaginations.

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NORAH'S BAD BREAK.

Norah was a new girl in the employ of the Smiths and hardly had twenty-four hours passed before she had the misfortune to drop a piece of beef on the floor. Roast beef that has been used as a mop is gritty eating, so Norah thought it the part of wisdom to consign it to the garbage can.

"I think, Mary," remarked the mistress, rambling into the kitchen later in the day, "that we will have some of that roast beef cut cold for supper."

"Sure, an' it's meself that's very sorry, ma'am," answered Norah, contritely, "but the cat got it when Oi wasn't lookin'."

"The cat got it!" exclaimed the mistress, with a surprised expression. "What cat?"

"Jays whizz, ma'am," cried Nora, concernedly. "Ain't there no cat!"

SHEEP FOR BREEDING

Some Things to Observe in Founding the Farm Flock

In starting a farm flock of sheep it is important that the farmer should have an ideal before him as to the kind of sheep he wants. We cannot say that there is any best breed, for each breed has its own merits and deficiencies. The mutton-producing sheep are divided into two classes—the long-wools and the Downs. Of the former we have the Leicesters, Cotswolds, and Lincolns; of the latter the Shropshires, Oxford Downs, Southdowns, and Hampshire Downs. Both these classes of sheep have their merits. The long-wools are larger, yield a larger clip of wool, and are possibly slightly more prolific than the Downs. On the other hand, however, neither their mutton nor their wool is quite so good quality, and they are not so hardy. This latter fact is due to the nature of their fleece, writes Donald Ewing in Farmer's Magazine. Being long and open, it "parts" down the centre of their backs when wet. This allows the rain to penetrate to the skin of the sheep, so that they are wet through after every rain, and cold and catarrh are more or less prevalent among them during the fall and spring. Against this the wool of the Down breeds is close and tight, and even a very heavy rain does not penetrate it. After a drenching fall rain they will get up from under the fence or tree where they have found shelter, shake themselves, and be as dry and comfortable as before the rain. Added to this is the fact that the Downs yield a fine quality of mutton and wool slightly more valuable than the long-wools. Still, as we said before, we cannot claim that there is any "best" breed. Every prospective sheep-raiser must choose for himself, following his own preferences.

Selecting Sheep

Having chosen the breed, it is important that certain well-defined principles be followed in selecting the individuals. We are not dealing here with the raising of breeding stock, but of sheep-raising in a commercial way. At the same time, when selecting the foundation for the flock, it is better to get pure-breds or good grades, conforming very well to breed type, rather than cross-breds or mongrels. It lends character and value to our lambs if they conform fairly well to some recognized breed type. Aside from breed type, there are certain characteristics we must have.

First, we want constitution. This is indicated by a good heart-girth, bright eye, wide muzzle, and pink skin. This last I regard as rather important. If we will part the wool so that we can see the skin, we will notice a decided difference in different sheep. Some will be decidedly bluish in tinge, while others are quite pink. We should avoid bluish or pale skins, and choose a good, pink skin as indicating a good constitution and good circulation.

Then we must look for flesh-producing qualities. As the best meat is found along the back and loin, and in the hindquarters, we must look for a strong, broad back and loin, and for deep hindquarters, carrying the flesh well down toward the hock. In fact, the same general form which indicates meat form in the steer also indicates it in the sheep. The general form should be blocky and square, with good top and underlines, not too long legs, and that general roundness and smoothness, as indicated by feeling the animal over, which shows quality in the sheep as well as in the steer.

The wool, though of minor importance, is still important, and we must see to it so far as we can that the sheep we are selecting to form our breeding flock have reasonably good wool-producing characteristics.

Pearls of Great Price

There was exhibited at a Court Jeweller's in Bond Street a striking collection of pearls. One magnificent rope is valued at no less than \$300,000; while for a single pear-shaped drop pearl, perfectly symmetrical, \$70,000 was asked. But probably the most exquisite article in the collection was a single necklet of gems of extraordinary hue, the matching and graduation being superb. The cost of this article was \$190,000.

If one of the stones were lost it would be impossible to replace it with an exact duplicate. Black and pink pearls also found a place in the exhibition; whilst a passing reference must be made to a pair of button-shaped ear rings valued at \$40,000.

Illicit Distilling in the Highlands
Smuggling appears still to continue in the Highlands. The Excise officers recently discovered in the district of Kintail a new smuggling still and head hidden in a cairn between the fishing village of Bundalloch and Camushnie.

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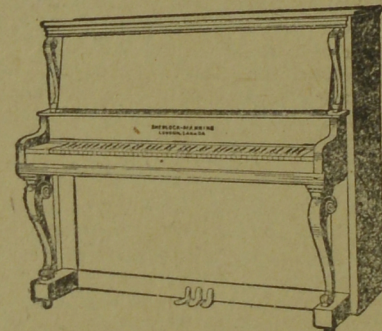
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The War

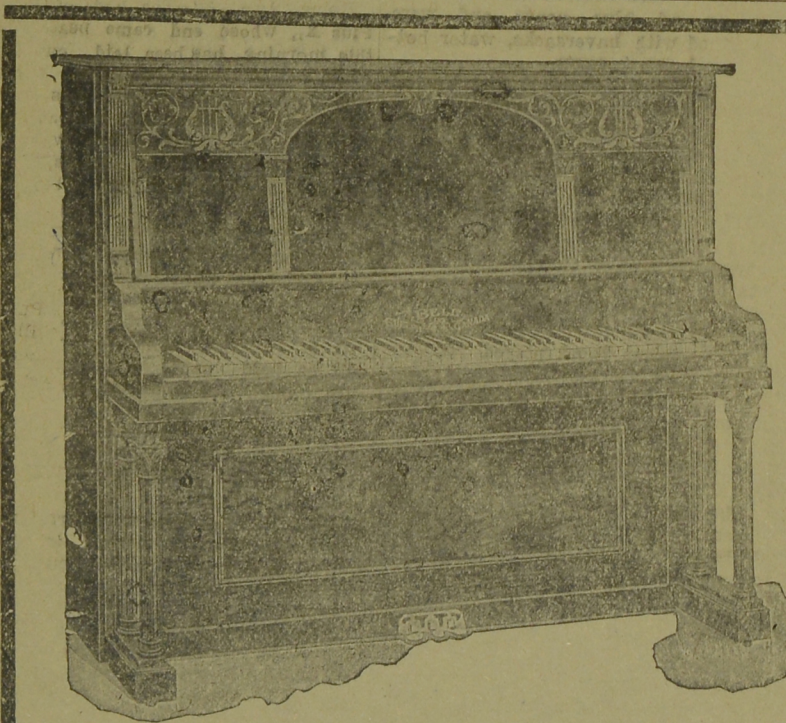
THE shutting off of imports from continental Europe into Canada, due to the war gives many home industries an unexampled opportunity for immense and immediate development.

Canada will prosper at the expense of Continental Europe. This is not a time in Canada for repining on the part of the business man. We must be careful, even frugal, but we must also be bold.

Victory is to him who has courage

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