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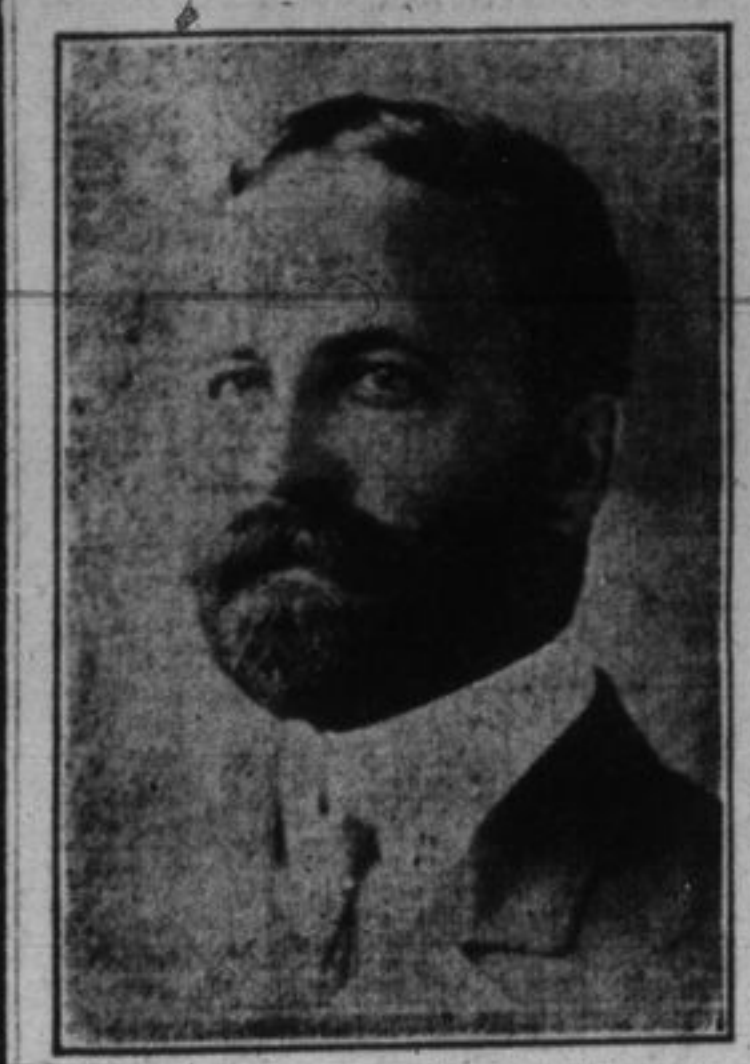
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## THE STRENGTH OF BRITAIN'S WAR

Great Muster of the King's Warships at the Coronation Review—Motto of the Navy, Fighting or Feasting is "Thorough."

Copyright by Publishers Press, Ltd. When the British navy undertakes to do a thing, from mine-laying to entertaining its friends, it does it thoroughly. For the coronation visitors from overseas, intent on seeing the naval review, on June 24th, the admiralty provided a huge trooper, the *Dongola*, which for the day was transformed into a pleasant yacht. The special train from Waterloo ran alongside the steamer's berth, so there was no trouble in finding one's way on board. As each guest reached the deck, he was handed a pamphlet, containing an excellent chart of the whole review, giving the name and position of each ship, together with such details as armament, engine power and steaming rate. Look-rooms, deck chairs, camp stools, awnings were among the arrangements for our com-



PROF. ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

fort. All the boats had been leached and swung out-board, so that there should be an uninterrupted view from the decks. Not only lunch and tea were provided, but even breakfast for those who had been stinted by the early hour of departure, from town, and as soon as breakfast was over, lunch began. A running banquet all day long. Best of all, there were a number of naval officers whose duty for the day was obviously to furnish information and make themselves agreeable to their guests, as only naval officers can. Nothing had been forgotten. The motto of the navy, fighting or feasting, is "thorough."

"The wind has backed. This will spoil the whole show," said one naval man, when we were clear of the fort, at Southampton and steaming down to our destination. It had poured rain all night in London, and though the weather had cleared during the railway journey and gave us charming glimpses of the soft green English landscape bathed in sunlight, the outlook now was most threatening. More rain came, driving the sightseers to shelter but later the wind blew so fiercely, that the clouds withheld their burden, and the rest of the day was clear and bright but cold. The green water was ruffled with white, and long purple streaks overspread the sea as the clouds swept by.

Spithead, which we are approaching rapidly from the westward, is simply an open space of water between the Isle of Wight and Hampshire. On the left hand, on the mainland is the famous naval station of Portsmouth, and on the right, on the island, are the headquarters of English yachting, Cowes and Ryde. The advantage of this roadstead are that it provides ample room for the secure anchorage of a large number of ships, and, being surrounded practically on three sides by land, it is protected from all heavy weather, except when the wind is east. To-day it is blowing strong from the west, so there will be no sea and no sea sickness. From the dock at Southampton to our station at the far end of the line just behind the "Buenos Ayres" is about eighteen or twenty miles.

Some time is spent in exploring the ship and getting our bearings. The atmosphere of the sea begins to take effect at once. Constraint disappears. Although the majority of these five or six hundred men and women never saw one another before, they lay aside their stiffness and chat with their nearest neighbors on the slightest provocation. It is just one happy imperial family. I suppose there never was such a representation of the British dominions overseas brought together in one ship before. Here is a very pretty, pink-cheeked lady from New Zealand in eager conversation with a swarthy, black-moustached, little man, very fashionably dressed, who hails from Madras. A nice girl from Vancouver has his plump, round-eyed wife in a corset of the saloon plying her with questions. The little dark woman in European dress and fabulous rings on her slim fingers, is interested and amused. When she smiles, she shows a set of brilliantly white teeth. Two of my neighbors at luncheon came from the Seychelles. Two others discuss audibly the marriage of a Canadian girl I happen to know. An Australian lady is quite sure she had gone out to Sydney in the same ship with a bluesome ten years ago. Another stately dame wears a large green fern-branch pin, which is an unmistakable badge as the maple leaf. Here is an Australian colonel in full regimentals. He has a plan for getting all the "Cornstalks" together and giving the king the "pooce" when he passes in the royal yacht. Unfortunately the scheme comes to nothing and he has to content himself with a British cheer. Another man in uniform has "Ceylon" on the shoulder. A very handsome, black-haired, foreign-looking lady with a long-handled eye-glass is talking what one conceives to be the "Tan" to a stately but impressive man standing beside her. One bears French and Hindustani within a few steps. It is a notably tall and stal-

wart body of mature men and women with a distracting proportion of young and pretty girls. A member of some legislature in the Isle of Continent relates to a friend the life history of Sir John Forrest (a not unfamiliar name), his exploration of the Australian desert with a camel team, and his bringing water to a western old-field in spite of "incredible" difficulties. One catches odd, far-off names in passing, like "Columbo." Here is a tall, stately, old Chinaman in wadded silk garments, being questioned by two Canadian journalists. The old boy smiles amusedly. He is perpetually smoking very slim, long, white cigarettes, which he lights deftly in this strong wind with a modern box of safety matches. Part of the after deck is raised off and marked "Reserved." About the cabin behind the barrier, two strapping footmen in the royal scarlet livery are hovering in attendance. We have an Indian princess on board, and these funkeys are there from the royal household in complement. This is certainly a representative gathering, and the tone of all the talk one hears is frankly and enthusiastically patriotic.

Canada is well represented. Here are the governor and the premier of Ontario, the governor and the premier of Saskatchewan, the premier of Alberta, the premier of New Brunswick, and the premier of Prince Edward Island. One noticed also, Mr. Foster and Sir Mackenzie Bowell looking very well and much interested in all that there was to be seen. Other Canadian politicians were also on board, far one heard the fatal words "judgeship" and "party service" joined in unholly union. Later on, our distinguished statesmen exerted themselves to the utmost to get as thorough a conception of the British fleet as possible, scrambling on "indiscreet" places, such as capstan-boards and steamwheels, glasses in hand, for the best possible view. Some plump figures silhouetted against the blue sky, with coat-tails flying in the stiff breeze, contributed to the gaiety of the scene.

As the "Dongola" steams on we distinguish right ahead through the flying scud and sea mist, a long, black triangle of masts and dim hulks stretching all across our road and reaching the sky. There was no end of them, and as far as one can see, no order. It is a confusion which seems unextricable, but disorder is the very last thing one can venture to predict regarding the royal navy. Order is its last law, as well as heaven's.

As we approach the western end of the tangle we perceive that the fine heart in everyone's hand is perfectly correct, and that every prediction it comes true. Every single ship is moored in her appointed place and can be picked out with perfect accuracy.

What is then the plan of this review? You are to imagine 167 ships of all sizes and makes, designed for all kinds of deadly purposes, aggregating more than a million tons and carrying sixty thousand hands-men, disposed in long lines, streets and lanes, with room for each to swing clear, as the tides ebb and flow. Each street, or sea-lane, is a mile long, and there are five of them—five miles of ships of war. The "Dongola" enters between D and E, and proceeds steadily, gives her hundreds of sightseers, swept together from the four corners of the globe, an unparalleled opportunity to study a fleet in being "the strength and splendor of England's war."

The best place to see it from the open forecastle. The sun is warm there, the view unobstructed, and it is easy to move from side to side. Perhaps it is best to select one bulwark and watch the panorama from it. My choice is the port side, looking north, for on that hand lies the bulk of the fleet.

First to be seen is a swarm of torpedo-boats, thirty-two all together, in one flotilla. The low black hulls bulge, speed have something snake-like about them; they go through the sea like sharks when they have to move. A mosquito fleet, each armed with its deadly sting, which, if once it gets home, can slay the strongest battleship afloat. Kipling calls them the choosers of the slain. You must have had a torpedo explained to you in the shops quickly and calmly if you are to realize its truly diabolical nature and the almost human intelligence of its machinery; but the machinist must first be satisfied that you are not a foreign spy. And all explanations from artificer or torpedo-lieutenant only deepens their mystery. Some of the comments one hears are amusing—"Yes, those are the torpedo-boats." "You see that bow? Well! It's rush at a big ship and ram her!"

There is a colonial bishop, probably from Rumi-to-fo, who knows a great deal more about ships, which is a real admiral's flag, for instance, he makes things clear to a lady in low tones. Perhaps like your correspondent, he has spent half his life on a naval station and cannot help picking up some trustworthy information.

Not far away a couple of petty officers are recognizing with delight one ship after another—"There's the *Belly-ruffin*," says one to another. "I had tea on the *Belly-ruffin* at Southsea last week." And one relishes the correct pronunciation, after all the learned affection, which would place the accent on the second syllable. Wasn't there a *Belly-ruffin* at Trafalgar? and another on the North Atlantic station not so long ago? And who ought to know a ship's name better than a sailor?

But the "Dongola" is running on. The lane is fenced with cruisers of all classes, whose duty is to run and look and find out, and the huge

battle-ships, built to fight in a line with the thick plating and the heavy guns. Only by the big ships and the big guns can naval battles and, perhaps, the fate of empires, be decided. All look much alike. They wear the grey war-paint, which, at the distance of a few cable-lengths, make a ship simply an elusive indistinguishable smudge upon the sea, almost impossible to define with the strongest glasses or train a gun upon. Tide and wind most obligingly swing them broadside on, with noses pointing west, and we see them in profile like a series of illustrations. It is useless to lament the absence of the tall masts and snowy canvas of long ago. A fleet at anchor for review would not show an inch of canvas. Fighting ships are built to fight, and the smallest third-class cruiser here could choose her own distance, circle Nelson's strongest fleet, and give her enough ammunition—hammer it to pieces at her leisure. Besides, it is hard to rob anything that floats of its picturesque quality. These lean steel hulls with the funnels and the long, slim tubes protruding from port, and casemate and turret look like greyhounds or racers, strongly held in. Give them the wind of the word, and away they would go.

Besides, the ships are "dressed." That means that a long line of bunting, red and blue and yellow, barred and striped and marked with all manner of dots and bands, run from the bow to the top of the foremast, thence to the top of the mainmast and thence to the stern-pennant and flag; flag and pennant alternately—of every ship. A bit of colored cloth waving in the air suggests gaiety, and, when two

hundred ships are contributing their scores of flags, spaces no one need speak of the ugliness of modern war. The strong breeze gives full value to every fluttering pennon and every jack and white ensign.

We might read the glorious annals of the fleet and the history of England in the names of the ships as we pass. There is the cruiser "Blake," called after the famous admiral of the Commonwealth, who rounded the Dutch up and down the channel. These floating steel forts bear the titles of Nelson's wooden three-deckers, Vanguard, Mars, Bellorophon, Superb, Agamemnon, and the "fighting Temeraire," with deathless memories of the Nile and Trafalgar. Other flags are splendid insolent names, which have been made good by three centuries of hard fighting and naval supremacy, Victorious, Irresistible, Indomitable, Invincible. Others remember the distant past, like King Alfred, and the Black Prince, or the Armada; for Queen Elizabeth also is remembered in her fleet, others recall the great captains—dead and gone, who spent their strength and gave their blood to keep England inviolate, Cochrane, St. Vincent, Collingwood, and Nelson, the peerless; while others remind us of the common needs and common duties of the modern empire—Dominion, Commonwealth, Hindustan, Good Hope, New Zealand. Behind the floating city of cruisers and line-of-battle ships, there is a phantom fleet that carried the same names and the same flag through the ages. This is a godly muster of the king's ships.

Some time after luncheon, an officer said: "Do you see that bright yellow funnel over there? That's the royal yacht coming out of Portsmouth." And everybody looked as hard as he could. Soon there was the report of a gun from the eastern end of the fleet and then another and another. The hum of the reports struck the ear irregularly, and the spectacular black powder reserved for saluting half veiled the ships in floating wreaths of smoke. When the Real Thing comes, no one will be able to see what gun was fired. The reporters wrote of 3,000 guns booming, or 3,000, according as they multiply 21 by 167. But no gun is going to fire. It is going to have the rifle of his precious guns fouled with black powder. Only one gun per ship is used for saluting; and modern breech-loading makes quick serving an easy matter.

In the uproar the royal yacht enters the lines from the eastward, preceded by four black torpedo boats and a standing crew, all looking more like sharks than ever. The yacht is a big steamer with three masts; from the main floats the royal standard in the strong breeze, as still as a diagram. On the bridge, visible only by the eye of faith, is the king. As the yacht stands past, the crew who have been different ships stiffen into neat regular black patterns, a sort of human lace, and the wind carries a faint sound of cheers. We cheer too, taking the time from the captain. The most enthusiastic person is the dark gentleman from Madras, who, in the intervals of the review, has been busy with his first foreign ship to observe the courtesy of the sea according to ancient custom was the huge American Delaware, the largest man-of-war afloat. And soon the white ensign dipped from the stern of the yacht in acknowledgement. The first two ships I did not see salute.

And so the king passes to his own place in the heart of his great fleet where he will meet and greet the captains from the foreign vessels of war. We have seen a great sight, and we must imagine the rest.

The king is not a sort of tepid royal dummy. He is a man with a man's likes and dislikes. He has spent half his life in the rough, hard sea-service, and one thing that training does for a man—it cures him of indecision. The way the king decided to throttle the fleet was repeated till everyone believed it, shows that the stuff he is made of. Being a man, he has his preferences; being a naval officer, he has decided preferences. And now he is where he would fain be, on ship-board, with the fleet that is England's bulwark. If he knows pride, it must have entered his heart this day when he looked down on those ordered lines, and knew that everything afloat from the farthest submarine to the latest super-Dreadnought was ready for instant action.

As we steamed back to Southampton in the sunset, the ships grouped themselves differently. I saw them, not in profile, but head on, some more tangled pyramids of colored flags in a disorderly but picturesque medley. In the yellow, westerling light, they would have made a subject for the brush of Turner.

### BRITAIN'S VITAL STATISTICS.

#### Births and Deaths Decrease to Lowest Recorded Rates.

The annual summary of marriages, deaths and births, in Great Britain for 1910, lately issued, shows that there has been a slight increase in marriages and a decrease in both births and deaths, which fell to the lowest rates on record.

In England and Wales the marriages numbered 267,000, corresponding to a rate of 14.8 persons per 1,000 of the population of all ages. This was 0.2 per 1,000 above the corresponding rate of 1909, but 0.7 below the average rate in the decade 1900-1909. In 1899 the marriage rate was 16.5. The deaths were 483,000, equal to 13.4 per 1,000 of the population. This was 1.1 per 1,000 below the rate of 1909, the lowest hitherto recorded.

There is a satisfactory decline in infant mortality. The proportion of deaths under one year of age to registered births was 106 per 1,000 in 1910, or 3 per 1,000 less than 1909, the lowest recorded up to that year. Compared with the decade 1900-1909, the rate of infant mortality showed the remarkable decrease of 26 per 1,000 births. Births numbered 507,000, an average of 24.8 per 1,000 of the population of all ages. This was 0.8 per 1,000 below the rate in 1909, which was the lowest rate reached till then. Compared with the preceding ten years, the birth rate showed a decline of 2.7 per 1,000.

With regard to London, the marriages in 1910 numbered 39,000, a rate of 16.0 per 1,000 of all ages, or an increase of 0.2 per 1,000 on the previous year. The London births numbered 114,000, a proportion of 93.6 per 1,000 of the total population—the lowest deaths under one year of age to registration was established. Deaths in London were 61,700; a rate of 12.7 per 1,000 of the population. This was 1.3 below that of 1909, which was at that time the lowest on record.

It has yet to be ascertained that a duke ever died of brain fever.

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## Facts About Motherhood

The experience of Motherhood is a trying one to most women and marks distinctly an epoch in their lives. No one woman in a hundred is prepared or understands how to properly care for herself. Of course nearly every woman nowadays has a medical treatment at the time of child-birth, but many approach the experience with an organism unfitted for the trial of strength, and when the strain is over her system has received a shock from which it is hard to recover. Following right upon this comes the nervous strain of caring for the child, and a distinct change in the mother results. There is nothing more charming than a happy and healthy mother of children, and indeed child-birth under right conditions need be no hazard to health or beauty. The unexplainable thing is that, with all the evidence of shattered nerves and broken health resulting from an unprepared condition, women will persist in going blindly to the trial. It isn't as though the experience came upon them unawares. They have ample time in which to prepare, but they, for the most part, trust to chance and pay the penalty.

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