

ponderance of 10 per cent. over the combined strength in capital ships of the two next strongest Powers. Theoretically this standard is accepted by both political parties in the House of Commons, but in practice the present Government has to some extent disregarded it; and this, coupled with the enormous and unexpected acceleration of the German programme of ship-building, has left Great Britain distinctly behind. In the course of the recent debate, Mr. Balfour was able to submit figures which showed that—assuming that both nations maintained their present rate of increase—in December, 1910, Great Britain would have ten Dreadnoughts and Germany thirteen; in July, 1911, Great Britain would have fourteen Dreadnoughts and Germany seventeen. And he demonstrated that the Government's present programme was utterly insufficient, not only to secure the two-Power standard, but even to maintain the one-Power standard in ships of the first class.

With regard to the inefficiency of the existing navy, the limits of our space prevent us from doing more than merely to outline the chief points of weakness, though confirmatory details, supplied to English papers by undoubted naval experts, are in abundance before us. The present condition of the navy is unsatisfactory: (1) Because the Admiralty have, as regards a considerable portion of the ships in home waters, substituted the ideal of a 'practically ready' fleet for that of a fleet instantly ready for war. By 'practically ready' ships are meant those which are kept 'in commission in reserve,' with nucleus crews, equal to about two-fifths of the ordinary complement. When the plan of keeping ships 'in commission in reserve' was originally adopted (i.e., in December, 1904), it took the form of bringing ships out of complete reserve and giving them a partial mobility. And that, of course, was sound policy. In the autumn of 1906, however—as first revealed by the *Standard*—this plan was reversed, and since then it has taken the opposite form of retiring ships from full commission and reducing their full mobility to half mobility. That is 'a horse of a very different color,' and is a line of policy that is fraught with danger. The command of the sea might easily be destroyed in the three or four days which would admittedly be required to convert a ship 'in commission in reserve,' with a nucleus crew, into an actual fighting unit of the first class. In other words, the 'practically ready' fleet means in reality a practically unready fleet. (2) The existing navy is ineffective, because the ships are not kept concentrated in such a way that they could assemble before the enemy could arrive and obtain contact with them. They are so distributed over the Channel, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean that, before the whole fleet could assemble, it would be possible for a relatively smaller but more highly concentrated naval force to attack and defeat them in detail. A significant contrast is afforded by the German policy in this respect. The entire fighting force of the German navy is kept as far as possible in home waters, concentrated in one large fleet. It was expressly stated in the Navy Act of 1900 that the German navy hoped to compensate for any inferiority on its part in numbers by 'tactical training by evolutions in large bodies of ships.'

(3) In the third place, the present Board of Admiralty have allowed the efficiency of the navy to be endangered through getting steadily and seriously into arrears in the execution of necessary repairs. During the past year the Channel Fleet was constantly below its nominal strength, owing to the absence of ships repairing and refitting. At one stage its battleship strength was reduced from fourteen ships to six from this cause. The precise significance of this is admirably indicated by a naval writer by means of a simple illustration. He supposes the case of a man who boasts that he has thirty pairs of horses and thirty carriages in his stables and coach houses ready to meet any call that can be made upon him. Suppose, on hearing that boast, a patron went through his stables and found that only fifteen pairs were really ready for work. That is, he found that in one pair of horses the off horse was lame, that another pair wanted shoeing so badly that they could not go on the road in their present condition, that in the case of a third pair the essential parts of the harness were broken and would require some days to mend, that in a fourth case one of the wheels was off the carriage, that in a fifth the pole was broken, and so on. In such circumstances one would say that, instead of having thirty carriages-and-pairs ready for work, the owner had only fifteen, and that this was the limit of his efficiency. It would be admitted, no doubt, that if he chose to spend a great deal of money and time he might eventually be able to turn out thirty pairs. But until this was done he was only deluding himself, and those who relied upon his stable, by talking about thirty pairs. The writer referred to maintains that this is a by no means an unfair illustration of the present state of the British navy. It seems obvious to the common-sense lay mind that ships should either be kept in repair or else struck out of the effective list altogether. An unrepared ship is, after all, little better than a dummy, and where repairs are allowed to accumulate, a navy tends to become not even a 'practically ready' navy, but a paper navy—a matter of empty statistics rather than a solid fighting force.

It will be seen, therefore, that, while there is no ground for panic or hysteria, there are very good grounds indeed why every aspect of what is undoubtedly a grave situation should be calmly and fairly faced. There must be, of course, an immediate increase in the ship-building programme, and there should be, we hold, a careful and exhaustive investigation into the present management and administration of naval affairs. Judging by the evidence available, all is not well with that force 'upon which, under God [to use the words of the Preamble to the Naval Discipline Act] the safety and welfare of the Realm doth depend.' And when the present situation becomes a little less tense, the Imperial Parliament will be discharging a plain duty if it appoints a representative Commission for the purpose of taking stock of the navy and the Admiralty, of seeing whether things are or are not satisfactory, and of considering whether the administrative policy of the future is being shaped on sound lines. We deeply regret the situation which has arisen, because it means that the reduction of armaments all round, which the friends of humanity had fondly dreamed was within hope of realisation, is indefinitely put back. The truth is, we suppose, that to achieve this end forms of secular policy will always be found wanting; and that nothing but the humanising and mellowing influence of religion—the universal recognition of an authoritative Christianity—will prove potent to bring the hearts of all nations into trust and toleration of one another. In the meantime, the multiplication of the German Dreadnoughts is a reminder to us that blood and iron are as much realities as ever; that we live in a world where not only Nature, but man, the child of Nature, is still red in tooth and claw; and that the 'law of facts' still is that national security can be maintained only by vigilance and readiness in arms. Life is practical; the passions of human nature make stern alternatives necessary; and the nation which is content to rely on sentiment for national safety is doomed.

Presentation to Father Howard, Milton

On Monday evening the Catholics of South Dunedin assembled in very large numbers in the parish schoolroom for the purpose of presenting the Rev. Father Howard, who was recently appointed to Milton, with an address and substantial tokens of their esteem and appreciation of his labors during the three and a half years he had labored in their midst. The chair was occupied by Mr. J. J. Marlow, who was supported by the other members of the presentation committee. Among the clergy present were the Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., Rev. Dr. Cleary, Rev. Fathers O'Malley, Hearn, O'Reilly, Corcoran, and D. O'Neill.

Mr. J. J. Marlow, before reading the address, said they were assembled that evening to present Father Howard with a slight token of the appreciation and esteem of the Catholics of South Dunedin, amongst whom he had labored with such zeal and success during a period of three and a half years. He was placed in a difficult position that night, as they all knew how much Father Howard disliked any reference to his good qualities and his good work. If there was one thing more than another that Father Howard practised, and one lesson which he impressed upon his people, it was that his right hand should not know of the good that was done by his left hand. Mr. Marlow then referred to the great interest taken by Father Howard in the welfare of the youth of South Dunedin, and said that if he had been left amongst them for a few months longer a more suitable meeting-place for their young men's club would have been provided. For this reason alone he felt doubly sorry for Father Howard's departure. Father Howard had the consolation of knowing that the people of South Dunedin fully appreciated his worth and work. Mr. Marlow then read the following address:—

'Rev. and Dear Father,—During the years you have labored in our midst we have learned to highly value and esteem your kindly disposition and your many other sterling qualities. You have evidently taken as your guide the highest traditions of the priestly state. In all matters affecting our holy religion you have always proved a wise counsellor and a true friend, while those in affliction have ever been helped and consoled by your advice and sympathy. Your zeal in ministering to the sick and dying, your charity to the poor, your warm and untiring labors for the young men, your energy and wholehearted enthusiasm for any project that you deemed useful for our spiritual advancement, have endeared you to us, and stamped you as a true priest and valued friend, and will cause you to be remembered in our prayers for many a year to come. Whilst regretting your departure, we are pleased at your well-deserved advancement to the important parish of Milton, and we earnestly trust that your labors there may be such as to reach even your own high ideals. We ask you to accept, with the accompanying purse of sovereigns, our best wishes that your future may ever be brightened with the happiness that knows no alloy.

'We beg to remain, Rev. and dear Father, on behalf of the Catholics of South Dunedin, affectionately yours—James J. Marlow, chairman; J. Saunders, hon. secretary;

J. TAIT, Monumental Sculptor

875 Cashel Street W., Christchurch;

{ Just over Bridge and opposite Drill Shed, } Manufacturer and Importer of Every Description of Headstones, Cross Monuments etc., in Granite, Marble and other stones.