

the building and maintenance of twelve dirigibles of Zeppelin type. As far as the knowledge of the rest of the world was concerned that was all the sky navy that Germany possessed; as a matter of fact, however, she had even at that time three times the number which she officially acknowledged. The number has since, as everybody knows, been very largely increased. There are five dirigible balloon centres in Germany, situated at important strategic points. There are two on the French border—at Strassburg and at Frankfort-on-the-Main; one on the Russian border—at Posen; one on the Atlantic coast—at Wilhelmshaven; and a central station near Berlin. There is also a remarkable and specially equipped station at Heligoland, in the North Sea, built for the special purpose of attack on Great Britain. Nothing is publicly known about this station, and no one but those on official business is permitted—under the direst penalties—within a thousand yards of it. Immense labor and pains have been bestowed on the training and organisation of the German aerial corps. It is called the Luftschiffer Abteilung, and is composed of ten battalions, each consisting of 350 men. They are all trained absolutely for this branch of the service, and only the smartest mechanics and artificers are selected. In the higher branches the most intelligent and daring officers hold command; and the men in the general aerial corps are the highest paid in the whole German army. They are required to serve for a lengthy period; and for obvious reasons married men are not encouraged to enrol in this branch of the service. The equipment of the different stations is complete down to the smallest detail, and each station is an absolutely independent centre in itself. The base at Heligoland is the newest, and is said to be a marvel of human ingenuity. In it are installed two powerful searchlights as well as a complete wireless outfit. All the Zeppelins carry wireless. By means of elaborate reflectors it is possible with the searchlights to flood the whole place with daylight in the middle of the night, and thus ascents can be made safely at any hour of the twenty-four. The German military authorities have—perhaps we should rather say had—such confidence in their Zeppelins, even as a defensive weapon, that the strength of the fortifications at Heligoland has been greatly reduced; half the soldiers on duty there have been transferred elsewhere; and numbers of the big guns have been removed. There is, it is considered, no longer any need for them. In case of attack, the huge air ships would simply float in the sky and rain death upon the enemy.

Under the circumstances it is little wonder that the Germans built high hopes on this new factor in aerial warfare, and honestly thought that it spelt sure victory for the Fatherland. Here is the Zeppelin programme as it was visualized by official Germany, sketched by a German authority who wrote only two months before the outbreak of the war:—“Picture the havoc a dozen such vultures could create attacking a city like London or Paris. Present day defence against these ships is totally inadequate. In attacking large places, the Zeppelins would rise to a height of from 6000 to 8000 feet, at which distance these huge cigar-shaped engines of death, 700 feet long, would appear the size of a football, and no bigger. I know that Zeppelins have successfully sailed aloft at an altitude of 10,000 feet. Picture them at that elevation, everybody aboard in warm, comfortable quarters, ready to drop explosives to the ground. The half-informed man—and there appear to be many such in European Cabinets, which recalls the proverb about a little knowledge being a dangerous thing—likes to say that a flock of aeroplanes can put a dirigible out of business. Consider now an aeroplane at an elevation of 6000 feet, and remember that the new Zeppelins have gone thousands of feet higher. An aviator at 6000 feet is so cold that he is practically useless for anything but guiding his machine. How in the world is he or his seat-mate going to do harm to a big craft the size of the Zeppelin that is far above him? An aviator who has ever gone up, say 8000 feet, will tell you when he comes down

what a harrowing experience he has had. What good can be an individual, exposed to the temperature and the elements at such an altitude, in doing harm to the calm, comfortable gentleman in the heated compartments of the Zeppelin? *Quatsch!* which is a German army term for piffle! At 8000 feet the small target a Zeppelin affords would move at a rate of speed of from thirty-five to sixty miles an hour. The possible chances of being hit by terrestrial gunfire are infinitesimally small. This does not take into account the vast opportunities that a dirigible has for night attacks or the possibility of hiding among the clouds. The X15, sailing over London, could drop explosives down and create terrible havoc. They don't have to aim. They are not like aviators trying to drop a bomb on the deck of a warship. They simply dump overboard some of the new explosive of the German Government, these new chemicals having the property of setting on fire anything that they hit, and they sail on. They do not have to worry about hitting the mark. Consider the size of their target. They are simply throwing something at the City of London. If they do not hit Buckingham Palace they are apt to hit Knightsbridge. And remember that whatever one of the new German explosive strikes, conflagration begins. Such was the German dream. The cold fact is that the Zeppelins now avoid London out of a wholesome respect for its anti-aircraft guns, and that neither London nor Paris has been, in the military sense, in the least degree injured by their efforts.

Although recent happenings have clearly established the success of the anti-aircraft defences in such places as London and Paris, the Allies cannot afford to look on and shrug their shoulders while private property is being damaged and innocent civilian life is being taken, and further protective measures are now under consideration. The French authorities hold that the only thing to be done is to attack and destroy the Zeppelin in its shed before it has taken flight; and this view is now endorsed by the *London Times*. Another suggestion is that, as it is not feasible to place anti-aircraft guns in every little town and village, mobile guns should be placed on lorries and moved quickly from place to place as occasion required. There is general agreement on the two principles that the Zeppelins should, as far as may be, be prevented from reaching their objective, and that they should be given the warmest possible reception when they do arrive. In France there is a somewhat vigorous cry for reprisals in kind, but that would be both futile and indefensible. *L'Humanité* puts the position aptly and unanswerably when it asks: “How can the Allies claim a moral superiority over the enemy if they take to the same unpardonable savagery of killing women and children in their beds?” “We should not,” it continues, “even have the excuse of utility. The only result of these outrages is to provoke a more determined resistance. There lies the true and worthy vengeance. It is in the victory of the Allies that those who have made terror systematic will find their proper punishment.”

Notes

Self-Interest

The Holy Father's efforts towards peace have aroused opposition in somewhat unexpected quarters. A dialogue in an Aberdeen post office is recorded by the *Aberdeen Observer*: “First soldier's mother (drawing her allowance): “Ay, it's a gey help, this money.” Second ditto: “Aye, it is that; an' think o' that auld deevil the Pope trying to stop the war!”

Three Hills

A great deal of the war poetry that is printed is like the war itself—an infliction; but this cannot be said of the following simple but graceful and effective