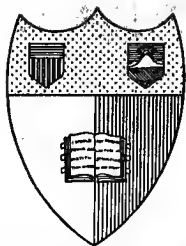


THE RUSSIAN
NAVY IN THE
RUSSO-JAPANESE
WAR



CAPT. N. KLADO



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**The Russian Navy in the
Russo-Japanese War**



CAPTAIN N. L. KLADO,
Of the Imperial Russian Navy.

Frontispiece.]

"After the Departure of the Second Squadron."

The Russian Navy

in the

Russo-Japanese War

BY

CAPTAIN N. KLADO,

of the Imperial Russian Navy,
Professor at the Naval and Military Academies of
St. Petersburg

*Translated, with Captain Klado's consent, from the French text of
M. René Marchand, by*

L. J. H. DICKINSON

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1905

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L

P R E F A C E

IN translating this work I have endeavoured to do justice both to the author and to the British Public.

I have kept to the author's text as much as possible, and though he has said many things about my country, which I as an Englishman do not agree with, I have, nevertheless, translated the bare, unpolished statements in order that my countrymen may know what is being said about them.

In one of his letters to me, Captain Klado frankly acknowledges that his writings may not be agreeable reading for an Englishman, but expresses the opinion that in a free country one ought to hear all the critics.

Putting aside the many disagreeable things he has said about us and giving an unbiased criticism of his book, I think we shall be forced to acknowledge that it is a remarkable work, and that the author has ably exposed the corruptibility of the Russian Government

and its inability to cope with the great needs which were demanded of it.

Many things predicted by Captain Klado have happened in quick succession, and this alone is a testimony to his value as a critic; and had the Russian authorities taken notice of him earlier, they might have spared their country many humiliating defeats.

These defeats will never be wiped out, or the land lost regained, unless Russia wrests the command of the sea from the Japanese; or, in other words, follows Captain Klado's advice.

L. J. H. DICKINSON.

PARIS, *March*, 1905.

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THE RUSSIAN NAVY IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

INTRODUCTION.*

A YEAR has passed since that tragic night on which, without a declaration of war, a flotilla of Japanese torpedo-boats attacked and torpedoed three of the strongest units of the Imperial Russian Navy, which were anchored in the outer roadstead of Port Arthur, thus rendering inevitable the terrible struggle between the white and yellow races—the old West and the young East! A year has passed. . . .

* This introduction appeared in the French edition.

France was surprised, and each day awaited with increasing anxiety the news of a victory which would definitely mark the arrest of the yellow invasion—the annihilation of the little Japanese by the Northern Colossus. This victory has not been achieved and we are astonished. We have not understood the cause of the Russian defeats in Manchuria, which is, however, very simple ; we have even ended—though most unjustly—in accusing General Kuropatkin. If our readers will kindly permit us, we will give here a short *résumé* of the events which have taken place during the past year, and we shall then be able to see on whom should rest the responsibility of the Russian defeats.

In the first place, for the war to be possible it was necessary that Japan should secure the command of the sea, without which she could not, of course, have landed her troops on the coveted territories. But the Russian fleet in the Far East was apparently equally as powerful as that of the Japanese, and a reinforcing squadron, under the command of Admiral Wirenius, was already sailing down the Red Sea, *en route* for Port Arthur.

It was necessary to act quickly. It was

at this period that the Japanese General Staff entrusted to Admiral Togo the carrying out of the first part of the programme, whilst they actively pushed forward the mobilisation of the troops. During the night of February 8th to 9th, Togo arrived unexpectedly before Port Arthur ; and, as the Russian squadron was not on the look-out, he succeeded in placing *hors de combat* for several months two of its best warships, the *Cesarevitch* and the *Retvisan*, as well as a first-class cruiser, the *Pallada*.

Some hours after, on February 9th, Admiral Uriu surprised in the little Korean port of Chemulpho a first-class protected cruiser, the *Varyag*, and a gunboat, the *Korieietz*, which were sunk by their crews after a brave resistance, so as not to fall into the enemy's hands.

The result attained surpassed the wildest hopes of the Japanese, and their transports at once set sail for Corea, having on board the troops which were to form the first army. A grave fault had been committed ; the Russian fleet ought to have prepared for action as soon as the rupture of diplomatic relations was officially confirmed, but did

not do so. What should have been the attitude of its commandant, Vice-Admiral Stark, at this moment ?

It was certainly no time for hesitation. Through his negligence he had lost two warships, two cruisers, and a gunboat. And he could no longer expect reinforcements, for, from this moment, it was fully evident that the complementary division of Admiral Wirenius, henceforth in danger of an encounter with the numerically superior Japanese squadrons, could not follow its proposed route. Therefore, Admiral Stark could not hope to see his fleet reinforced later on. In spite of everything, and even at the risk of losing his squadron, it was incumbent on him to have attempted to prevent the landing of the enemy—that is to say, to play the part which had from the first been assigned to the Russian fleet, and upon which Russia continued to count, in spite of the unfortunate affair of February 8th–9th.

He ought to have moved towards the Korean coasts, but he did not do so, and thus added to his first mistake another and perhaps still graver blunder. He remained

in Port Arthur, limiting himself to frustrating Admiral Togo's reiterated attempts to close up the channel to the harbour. In this way the first Japanese army was able to concentrate in Corea, and, under General Kuroki's command, was not long in commencing its forward march.

However, at St. Petersburg they soon understood the gravity of the faults which Admiral Stark had committed. And on February 20th a ukase (edict of the Russian Emperor) relieved him of the command of the Port Arthur squadron, and appointed Admiral Makharof, then in command of the Baltic fleet and ports, commander-in-chief of all the naval forces of the Pacific. On his arrival at Port Arthur (March 9th), Admiral Makharof immediately assumed the offensive, and resolutely led his squadron out. Togo, whose plan consisted above all in taking as much care as possible of the ships with which he had been entrusted, hesitated to accept a battle, doubtless decisive, and in any case very costly, but upon the issue of which he could not count. He therefore prudently withdrew before an adversary who was numerically weaker. Makharof, to exer-

cise his crews, first advanced towards Dalny, and then towards the Miao-Tao Islands; he finally reached the archipelago of the Elliot Islands, and continued to advance farther in the direction of the Korean coast. At Tokio there was great uneasiness, and the Japanese at once modified their plans. Kuropatkin rapidly sent the troops he had at hand to the Yalu, to face Kuroki; whilst General Mischtschenko's Cossacks had already deployed in Corea and commenced to harass the enemy.

This time fortune favoured the Japanese and put an end to their troubles by ridding them of their dangerous adversary.

On April 12th the terrible catastrophe of the *Petropavlovsk* occurred, which deprived the Russian squadron of another powerful battleship and, above all, of its chief, Admiral Makharof. While the command of the squadron was being taken away from the incapable Prince Ouchtomsky, to whom it had at first been given, and was being provisionally put into Admiral Withoeft's hands, Kuroki recommenced his advance. The Cossack detachments retired before him. However, Zassoulitch held out well on the

Yalu, thinking that by means of the support of the torpedo-destroyers and gunboats, which, as he supposed, would certainly come to his assistance, he would be able to prevent Kuroki from crossing the river, a plan which would allow him to await reinforcements and to then definitely destroy the first Japanese army. The terrible battle of Turentchen took place (May 1st). The Russian soldiers fought with prodigious courage, but to what purpose? No flotilla came to help them; on the contrary, the Japanese gunboats sailed up the river and commenced to bombard them, finally compelling them to give way before largely superior forces. This was Kuropatkin's first opportunity of proving his metal; he saved Zassoulitch's small force from irretrievable disaster, and managed to reform it after retreating for a short distance. But while the Russian reinforcements commenced to make their way slowly across the long stretch of the Trans-Siberian railway—alas! but a single-line track—the Japanese troops, no longer encountering any hindrance, landed in all directions with rapidity and success. A new army, under General Oku's command, landed

on the Liao-Tung peninsula and marched towards the south.

However, in Russia there was no anxiety felt. General Stoessel refused to believe that Port Arthur might find itself one day besieged ; his faithful lieutenant, General Fock, kept watch with the pick of the troops over the Kin-Tcheu fortress, which guarded access to the Kuang-Tung peninsula. The position was said to be impregnable, and would, as it was thought, certainly be able to keep back the Japanese.

On May 26th, Oku attacked Kin-Tcheu, and on this occasion Admiral Withoeft hastily sent a light flotilla to support General Fock. Yet it was not a small flotilla, but the whole squadron which was needed ! In spite of the brave action of the gunboat *Bobr*, which opened a murderous fire on the Japanese left wing, the Russian ships were obliged to retire towards Port Arthur before a strong squadron of the enemy, and from that moment the fall of that impregnable position was only a question of time. After a bloody combat of several hours Fock was forced to retire.

At St. Petersburg the excitement was con-

siderable, and Kuropatkin had to yield to public opinion. He sent General Stackelberg's corps towards the south, in order to drive the Japanese out from Kuang-Tung.

Then Oku marched towards the north, and an action took place at Vafangu (June 14th); but here again the Russian troops encountered numerically superior forces, and had to beat a retreat.

However, General Oku did not resume his march towards the south, but marched northwards to effect a junction with Kuroki, whilst the transports landed at Ta-Ku-Chan the nucleus of the present third Japanese army, placed under Nodsu's command, and at Pi-tse-Ouo the army which, under General Nogi's command, was to undertake the siege of Port Arthur. It was then seen that it was hopeless to think any longer of relieving that place, and whilst the indefatigable Kondratenko covered the peninsula with improvised fortresses, in order to delay the final investment as long as possible, General Kuropatkin was forced to take the only course left to him from the moment that he could not count on the co-operation of the fleet—to retire to-

wards the north, in order to draw the Japanese as far from the sea as possible ; that is to say, from their supply base.

But to carry this out, he had to abandon In-Keou and Niu-Chuang, and, once masters of the Liao, the Japanese were not long in making good use of it. In-Keou became one of their principal bases, and the possession of the Liao enabled them to continue to receive reinforcements much more quickly than Kuropatkin could receive his by the long single-line Trans-Siberian railway. For this new plan to have offered any real advantages, the retreat ought to have been continued far to the north, beyond Mukden and even beyond Kharbin. But then they would have been obliged to have abandoned Vladivostok, the second and last Russian naval base in the Far East, without reckoning that the possession of the maritime region practically brought the Japanese again near to the sea. That was certainly an impracticable plan, and so General Kuropatkin immediately rejected it, and decided at any cost to try and prevent the enemy from reaching Mukden. If we only think of the superiority in men and

guns which has never ceased to be on the side of the Japanese; if we call to mind that at Liao-Yang the Russians were on the brink of victory, we shall find ourselves forced to recognise Kuropatkin's genius, which has up to the present saved Russia from falling into the gulf into which the incapacity of Stark and Ouchtomsky fatally precipitated it. However, Admiral Withoeft, who had at first shown over-caution, at last decided to revert to the plans of Makharof; it was Admiral Skrydloff, the latter's successor, who urged him to do so. Unable to reach Port Arthur before the rupture of negotiations, he himself had gone on to Vladivostok. Owing to the efforts of the engineer, Shilof, the damaged ships had been repaired by the end of July, and then Admiral Withoeft resolved, as the squadron had not been able to fulfil the first part of its mission (that is to say, to save Port Arthur, which had just been invested) that it should at least effect the second. This was simply a question of a sortie by the fleet which should allow a part of the squadron, with the cruiser division and fast vessels, to reach Vladivostok. The Japanese were, unfortu-

nately for themselves, obliged to divide their naval forces, and to send a large part of their fleet to defend their coasts and their military transports, which, from this moment, might be at the mercy of the new Vladivostok squadron. As to the battleships and gunboats back at Port Arthur, they could attack the Japanese naval division which remained before that place, and, in raising the blockade, could secure the re-victualling of the fortress. The battle took place on August 10th, and was favourable to the Russians, who were helped by the indecision of Admiral Togo ; but once again fortune betrayed them. Admiral Withoeft was killed, and Prince Ouchtomsky, not only incapable of pursuing the plans made by his chief, but even of understanding their importance, could think of nothing better than to take the squadron back to Port Arthur, where it could only await its destruction. At this period the cruisers under the heroic Admiral Reitzenstein's orders successfully broke through the blockading squadron ; but, as they alone had sustained the whole brunt of the battle, they were obliged, as glorious wrecks, to seek refuge in neutral

ports. And thus ended with the history of the first Pacific squadron that of the first part of the war, lost to Russia because her fleet has been unable to perform the heavy task laid upon it. We cannot insist too much upon the fact that this war is not one to be carried only on land, and that if Russia desires to be successful, it is essential that she should regain the supremacy of the sea. The Imperial Government has, in fact, realised this, and a second Pacific squadron has been equipped at Libau. But this squadron was notoriously weaker than the Japanese fleet, and in spite of flattering predictions of the Russian Admiralty (by which it was sought to bolster up the "gilt-edged illusions" of the Russian people), Rodjestvensky sailed to an inevitable defeat. Thus the second part of the war was lost even before it had even really commenced.

It was about this time that one man had the courage to state boldly what the real situation was; he showed that all which could be reasonably expected from the second Pacific squadron as it was constituted, was a glorious defeat! He became troublesome and threatened to disturb the tranquility

of the high authorities at the Admiralty. They begged him to hold his tongue, but he did nothing of the kind. They then accused him of encouraging a dangerous agitation on the part of the Russian people. He replied that it was not by gilded lies that the tranquility of a people could be maintained, but by revealing to it the whole truth—by speaking to it in the plain language of figures and logic.* They imprisoned him, but he continued to write stirring articles, in which he ceaselessly set out the real truth.

Then public opinion was roused, and this man, who no fear of ruining his career had restrained from trying to serve his country, had at last the satisfaction of seeing the Imperial ukase appear, by which Admiral Birileff, then in command of the Baltic fleet and ports, was required to at once prepare for the dispatch of a third Pacific squadron to the Far East.

It is to Captain Klado that I have referred.

Nicolas Lawrentievitch Klado, captain of frigate, was born November 13th, 1861—that is to say, in the same year as the emancipa-

* See letter written by Captain Klado to Admiral Birileff and dated 10/23 December, 1904.

tion of the peasants. He comes from a family of gentlefolk in the Government of Tver, and was born at Mlevo (a village in the Vychnievolotz province of the Tver Government) on his mother's estate. His father, who was an officer on the General Staff, died in 1888, whilst holding the command at Vladivostok. As to his mother, Captain Klado still has the happiness of seeing her still alive. Educated at home, Nicolas Klado entered the Naval School at thirteen years of age, and was one of the officers to leave it on April 20th, 1881. He then made two cruises, one on board the battleship *Peter the Great*, the other on board the sloop *Askold*, and on both occasions he had the opportunity of visiting France.

In 1884 he entered the Emperor Nicholas' Naval Academy, and left it in 1886, when he was immediately appointed tutor at the Naval School. He made a cruise every summer, and always in the capacity of flag officer, first of all filling this position to Admiral Verkhovsky, and then to Admiral Nazimof. At the time of his nomination to the command of the Pacific squadron (Autumn, 1889), Admiral Nazimof made

him his direct assistant, the head of his staff, though Klado was then only a lieutenant.

It was thus, that for two years and a half, Nicolas Klado was able quietly to study Japan and China. He, in fact, took part in the voyage undertaken by the present Emperor of Russia, Nicholas II., who was then Heir Apparent to the Crown, and he was with him on board the cruiser *Pamiat-Azova*. He thus successively visited Saigon, Singapore, Batavia, Hong Kong, Hankow, Nagasaki, Kagosima, Kiobe and Vladivostok. The return voyage was by America, and on his arrival in Russia, Klado resumed his former position as tutor at the Naval School, to which was also added that of Mathematical Professor at this same school. Besides, he was shortly afterwards called upon to discharge the duties of aide-de-camp to Vice-Admiral Arsienieff, the director of the Naval School. Naval history was a subject then much neglected at the school, and the course of naval tactics had no existence. The development of the first was entrusted to the young tutor's care, whilst he was instructed to himself institute the second.

Nicolas Klado acquitted himself of this double task with a conscientiousness beyond praise, and he recorded his remarkable studies in two books, which are to-day standard works on the subject. On January 1st, 1896, there were founded simultaneously, both the School of Naval Warfare in France, and in Russia a section of the Naval Academy, in which the sciences relating to naval warfare (tactics, strategy, history, etc.) were to be studied—sciences of which the naval authorities in all countries then eagerly asked for some fuller knowledge. It was also upon Commandant Klado that devolved the heavy burden of developing in the new section of the Academy the two courses of history and naval tactics.

If we only remember that up to this period no courses of the kind had been given, and that as yet there existed no book in which these subjects had been treated, we can easily form an idea of the immense amount of work which Commandant Klado had to accomplish. However, though these new duties took up most of his time, Klado did not for a moment think of spending the summer months, during which he had

his leave, in idleness. On the contrary, this indefatigable worker sought abroad the work which his country temporarily denied him. Thus he embarked on board the French cruiser *Latouche-Tréville*, one of the ships forming part of the *War School Division*, and then commanded by Rear-Admiral Fournier, before whom (so strange is destiny) Commandant Klado now has to appear. It is, in fact, before Admiral Fournier, president of the International Commission of Inquiry, now assembled at Paris to give judgment on the Hull incident, that Captain Klado was summoned to read his evidence.

During his stay on board the *Latouche-Tréville*, Commandant Klado continued eagerly with his work and attended all the lectures given, having his share in all the practical work cast upon our officers and finally taking part in the important manœuvres directed by Admiral Gervais. Thus we see that Commandant Klado is no stranger to us, and, if he still recalls with pleasure the hours passed amongst the brave French sailors who "helped him to found the solid foundations upon which he had afterwards to build his scientific work,"

France has shown her appreciation of his eminent abilities by making him *officier d'academie* and *chevalier de la Légion d'honneur*, in recognition of the great value of the technical books which he has written.

From the year 1896, Nicolas Klado uninterruptedly carried on his work as a professor, and in 1900 he had to lecture both at the School of War, and also at the Tsarskoe-Selo School, which is set apart for the instruction of those officers who intend to join the marine (fortress) artillery.

During the years 1893-4, Lieutenant Klado gave lessons to the Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovitch, who, it will be remembered, was on board the *Petropaulovsk* last March, at the time of the catastrophe in which Admiral Makharof met his death. Finally, during the years of 1902 and 1903, Klado was asked to teach the science of naval warfare to the Emperor's brother, the Grand Duke Michel Alexandrovitch (Heir Apparent to the Crown until the birth of the Tsarevitch Alexis Nicolaievitch). As soon as the war broke out Commandant Klado (he had been Captain of Frigate since 1901) commenced a series of public lectures at St. Petersburg,

Warsaw, Moscow, Helsingfors, etc., in which he showed the great importance of the part which the fleet had to play, and insisted on the absolute necessity on the part of Russia of creating powerful squadrons. As the result of his strenuous efforts and unwearied activity, Commandant Klado was able to collect considerable subscriptions for the Russian fleet—an appropriate reward for his noble conduct. In April, Klado was appointed chief of the strategical section of Admiral Skrydlof's staff. At the time of the latter's nomination as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian naval forces of the Pacific, in place of Admiral Makharof, he left with him for Port Arthur, but communications with the fort having been severed as the result of the landing of the Japanese on the Liao-Tung peninsula, Skrydlof and Klado had to be content with going on to Vladivostok. There, again, Captain Klado did not remain idle, for he took an active part in the elaboration and drawing up of the plans for the sorties, which were so daringly executed by the division of swift cruisers, and as a reward for these services he received the order of

Saint Vladimir with the sword. At the end of August Klado returned to St. Petersburg in order to embark with Admiral Rodjestvensky, to whom he was instructed to communicate the plans and intentions of Admiral Skrydlof. He again left Russia on October 14th, on board the ship *Admiral Kniaz-Souvorof*, in the capacity of junior flag-captain to Vice-Admiral Rodjestvensky. But at Vigo Commandant Klado had to leave the squadron, and with several other officers was sent by Admiral Rodjestvensky to Russia, in order to offer before the Commission of Inquiry, which was about to assemble, explanations as to the Hull incident. It was then that he realised the part which this return to St. Petersburg permitted him to play. Temporarily deprived of his sword he seized the pen, and at once commenced to write those sensational articles, in which, endeavouring to stir the inactivity of the High Admiral, Grand Duke Alexis, he ceaselessly and boldly insisted on the dispatch of immediate reinforcements for the second Pacific Squadron, reinforcements unreservedly promised to Admiral Rodjestvensky at the time of his departure from

Libau. In the end, he pleaded the cause so well that the Admiralty had at last to give way, and the vanguard of the third squadron which, under Admiral Nebogatof's orders has just set sail from Libau, was the work—we can say it without being taxed with exaggeration—of Commandant Klado. If this squadron should be unable alone to restore the equilibrium between the Japanese and Russian fleets—to do which it would be necessary to bring out the powerful squadron, alas ! so unfortunately shut up in the Black Sea—it will at least be able, as we must admit, to increase the chances of victory of Admiral Rodjestvensky, in whose hands the fate of Russia has been placed. It is on him far more than on Kuropatkin that depends the result of the second part, now just commenced, of this war. The articles written by Captain Klado, for the most part published last November under the pseudonym of Priboj in the *Novoe Vremya*, fully revised and rendered complete, have been collected by the author and published in a book entitled, “After the Departure of the Second Pacific Squadron.” This work, of which we are pleased to be able to offer a



VICE-ADMIRAL Z. P. RODJESTVENSKY,
Commander-in-Chief of the Second Pacific Squadron.

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translation to the French public, which has always known how to value merit and self-sacrifice, is not merely the *résumé* of Commandant Klado's scathing criticisms; it is also a true history of the blunders committed by the Russian commanders during the first part of this war, and from which useful lessons must clearly be derived.

But, before submitting to our reader these pages, so terrible in their pitiless accuracy, we wish first to tell him—to reassure him a little, if indeed that be possible—a little about Admiral Rodjestvensky, who, as we have just shown, will decide the fate of Russia.

Z. P. Rodjestvensky was born in 1848, entered the service in 1865, and after leaving the Naval School at once specialised in marine artillery. He passed through the Michel Artillery School, which he left in 1873, and the same year was promoted lieutenant.

He took an active part in the Turko-Russian War of 1877–1878, and particularly distinguished himself in the affair of the *Vesta*, a small steamer carrying only very few guns, and which, under the brave

Commandant Baranof's command, did not hesitate to attack a powerful Turkish battleship. Rodjestvensky's brilliant conduct earned for him the 4th class cross of Saint George and that of Saint Vladimir, in addition to the war medal.

A short time afterwards his services were placed at the disposal of the Bulgarian Government, and for two years he sat on the special commission charged with the organisation of the navy of that country. Recalled to Russia, he was given the command of various ships, and subsequently went to London as Naval Attaché. From 1894 to 1896 he commanded in the Pacific the cruiser *Vladimir Monomakh*, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral Alexieff, who, it will be remembered, was at the head of the Far Eastern Russian Squadron at the time of the Chino-Japanese war. Then appointed to the command of the guardship *Pervéniets*, Captain Rodjestvensky was from 1899 to 1900 at the head of the service division of marine artillery, and then of that of the Baltic fleet during the two following years.

At the conclusion of the extremely brilliant naval manœuvres, at which the

Emperor of Germany was present, Rear-Admiral Rodjestvensky received from the hands of the Emperor, Nicolas II., his appointment as Rear-Admiral on His Majesty's personal staff.

At the death of Admiral Tyrtov, in 1903, Rear - Admiral Rodjestvensky succeeded Admiral Avellane as head of the general staff of the navy, when the latter was appointed Minister of Marine. And thus promoted Vice-Admiral only a few months before, he was placed at the head of the second Pacific Squadron, then in course of formation at Libau. Therefore this is not Admiral Rodjestvensky's début, and we are firmly convinced—for, if we cannot be certain of his victory, we can at least hope for it—that the old hero of the Turko-Russian war, the brilliant tactician of the Baltic, will do for his country all that can be looked for at the hands of a man of great genius and dauntless courage.

RENÉ MARCHAND.

February, 1905.

THE SECOND PACIFIC OCEAN SQUADRON.

(Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Rodjestvensky.)

First Division of Warships :—*Kniaz-Souvorof* (flying the flag of Admiral Rodjestvensky, actually in command of this division), *Emperor Alexander III.*, *Borodino* and *Orel*.

Second Division of Warships :—*Ossliabia* (flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Felkersham, in command of the division), *Sissoï-Véliky*, *Navarin*, and the armoured cruiser *Admiral Nakhimof*.

The Cruiser Division :—*Dimitri-Donskoi* (flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Enquist, in command of the division), *Aurora*, *Sviétlana*, *Almaz*, *Jemtchoug*, *Kouban*, *Oural* and *Terek*.

First Flotilla of Torpedo-Destroyers :—

(Captain Shamof in command), *Bodry*, *Boïky*, *Bystry*, *Bezoupretchny*.

Second Flotilla of Torpedo-Destroyers :—
(Captain Baranof in command), *Bravy*, *Bedovry*, *Blestiachtchy*.

Division of Military Transports and Auxiliary Ships :—

Military Transports :—*Kamtchatka* (repairing ship) and *Anadyr*. Auxiliary Ships :—*Koreïa*, *Malaya*, *Meteor* (condensing plant), *Kitai*, *Kniaz-Gortchakof*, *Jupiter*, *Mercury*, *Vladimir*, *Voronièje*, *Tambof*, *Yaroslavl* and *Kieff* (flying the flag of Captain Radlof, in command of the division), and *Orel* (hospital ship).

Complementary Division, which passed the Suez Canal in the beginning of January. (This division, of which Captain Dobrotvorsky was provisionally in command, has been distributed between the various divisions of the Second Squadron.) :—*Oleg*, *Izoumrout*, *Rion* and *Dnieper* (cruisers), *Grozny*, *Gromky*, *Prozorlivy*, *Pronzitielny**, and *Pritky* (torpedo destroyers).

* The torpedo-destroyers *Pronzitielny* and *Prozorlivy* had to remain at Algiers to repair damages, which port they left on Feb. 11th for Port Said.

The large military transport *Irtish*, of 10,500 tons, passed through the Suez Canal on January 15-28 on her way to rejoin Admiral Rodjestvensky's Squadron.

THE FIRST DIVISION OF THE THIRD SQUADRON, which left Libau February 2-15, 1905.

Emperor Nicolas I., squadron battleship (flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Nebogatof, in command of the division); *Admiral Sénia-vine*, *Admiral Ouchakof*, *General-Admiral-Apraxine* (armoured guard-ship); *Valadimir-Monomakh* (first class armoured cruiser); *Rouss* (second class cruiser, balloon ship); *Xenia* (repairing ship); *Ocean* (transport).



IN THE NORTH SEA.

Admiral Rodjestvensky examining the battleship *Emperor Alexander III.* from between the two stern guns of the *Knias-Souvorof.*

[To face page 30.

PREFACE.

WHEN I published these articles, a certain number of persons reproached me for their late publication, alleging that now they could no longer be of any use. That is why I desire to say a few words now in my justification.

The importance of the questions discussed in my articles ought indeed, under ordinary circumstances, to have been appreciated in those high naval spheres where matters having to do with the movements of our fleet are settled ; and in that case I should not have been obliged to raise my weak voice in a discussion of such paramount importance. But, like many others, I have awaited with daily-increasing impatience the accomplishment of that which I demand in these pages. I awaited it with the greater

confidence as the foremost admirals of our Navy, one after another, urged in writing the absolute necessity of reinforcing without delay our second Pacific Ocean Squadron with a third Naval Division. I therefore waited, but in vain. I have lost patience And now I will say no more.

N. KLADO.

Paris, 12/25 December, 1904.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE
SECOND PACIFIC SQUADRON.11-24 *November*, 1904.

A MONTH ago the departure of the second Pacific Ocean Squadron took place. It has since steamed about 5,000 miles, and the division which has to round the Cape of Good Hope has left far behind it the dangerous spots: the Belt, Cattegat, Skagerack, North Sea and Straits of Dover. These not only present the dangers of navigation for our squadron, on account of their sandbanks, their sunken rocks, their currents, their violent autumn storms and their fogs; that which renders them dangerous for us in a general sense is their proximity to the treacherous coasts of Sweden, Norway and England, where our bold foes, intent on the

execution of their plans and to whom any means seem fair, could easily conceal themselves. And, then, these waters swarm with fishermen of all nationalities, who earn their living at the price of inconceivable difficulties, and carry on a ceaseless struggle with the wild North Sea. They are all fearless men, excellent sailors, thoroughly inured to this unceasing battling with the sea ; and by paying them well it could not be difficult to convert them into auxiliaries and accomplices. Have not the Chinese junks, for relatively moderate rewards, faced far greater dangers in getting supplies into Port Arthur, and is it not owing to them that up to the present communications have been maintained with that place ?

The North Sea Incident and its Consequences.

The famous " North Sea Incident " which has just happened, and about which so much noise has been made, has, in fact, shown that our apprehensions were well founded, and we therefore offer our most sincere thanks to our brave sailors for the watchfulness which they have shown. We thank them because they were not afraid, at their

peril, to assume heavy responsibility by immediately opening fire on the unknown torpedo-boats, taking no account of the presence of the fishing-boats (so-called neutrals), dominated as they were by the one thought of the great mission with which Russia had entrusted them. But if the division under Admiral Rodjestvensky's command, now sailing in the open ocean, is henceforth free from danger, we cannot be equally reassured about that flying Admiral Felkersham's flag, and which is on the point of passing through the Suez Canal. I think that it is not only the passage through the Canal that we have to fear, although in Russia much noise has been made of a supposed Japanese project to sink a commercial ship of large tonnage in it, thus closing the outlet to our vessels. No, according to my mind, any such a project on the part of the Japanese is most improbable, because the blocking up of the Canal would cause great injury to the maritime commerce of all nations and particularly England. Thus strong measures will be taken to protect our vessels against any attempt of this kind. It only remains for Admiral Felkersham

to exercise a rigorous supervision over all foreigners who might be on board the many ships and small craft stationed at the two extreme points, Port Said and Suez, where, in case of need, we should be free to carry out any necessary repairs to our ships, and that without interfering with the passages of merchant vessels through the Canal. All these measures will, of course, be taken on board the Russian ships. But it is farther on—in the narrow Red Sea, with its desert shores over which no supervision is possible—that our enemies will be able, without hindrance, to carry out their reckless plans. And so we shall not breathe freely until our division has left far behind it the English possessions of Perim and Aden. It would, however, appear that England offered us her protection in the Red Sea, just as Denmark did in the Belt. The English may be supposed to have addressed us somewhat as follows: “You gave the Dutch Govern-
“ment notice of the passage of your squadron
“through its waters, and owing to the mea-
“sures taken by it you reached Skagen un-
“molested. Why did you not similarly
“equally advise us? We should have also

“done what was necessary in the North Sea and the English Channel.” But how could the English possibly have been ignorant of the date of the passage of our squadron through their waters, and what was there, if they had really wished, to have prevented them from taking the necessary steps in time? Our departure from Libau was a fact known to all the world. No, it is difficult to believe that England should have been so badly informed, and should have shown such ingenuousness! Far from us be the thought that the English Government took any part in the Japanese intrigues against us. Still, we are convinced that if, thanks to the complicity of their fishermen, these intrigues had had some real result, the English would have been found rubbing their hands with glee.

Unfortunately for them, and fortunately for us, on this occasion it proved to have been a mistake to have counted on the negligence and confiding simplicity of our sailors, who have always shown a distrust of the English fishermen. It has been seen that, just as the Russian sailors were found in no mood for a joke, the Imperial Govern-

ment, on its side, listened unconcernedly to the furious clamour of the English Press, and firmly refused to satisfy their ridiculous claims, obviously advanced only for the purposes of intimidation.

But if we could only catch the English acting with the Japanese in the Red Sea—a thing which could very easily happen, now that it has been shown that the Russian sailors do not sleep when on duty—it would mean a nice exposure for England. So she is found kindly offering us her good services ! We must not, however, forget the proverb that “From a bad payer one gets what one can.” Let us therefore accept these good services, and let us be on our guard in the Red Sea. As with the Japanese, so with ourselves, all means are good which may place our fleet in safety ; for the one thing essential is that our vessels should be able to continue their journey without hindrance. We need not be too squeamish as to the means which would bring about that result. The infernal clamour made by the English Press on the subject of the “North Sea Incident,” which has become celebrated throughout the world, has again shown that

there is never any evil without some good resulting from it. Without doubt this business was the cause of our passing several days in painful uncertainty, but it has unquestionably been fortunate for the squadron, by considerably increasing its chances of security in the future. In reality, this attempt having ended in such a lamentable fashion for the English fishermen, henceforth the Japanese will have great difficulty in finding accomplices whom they will be able to persuade that they do not expose themselves to any actual danger by agreeing to act with them, as the Russians are so unsuspecting, and, indeed, if they entertained any suspicions, would be prevented from acting energetically for fear of complication with neutral powers. But now everybody knows that it is not so, and people will in future be but little disposed, even though tempted by heavy bribes, to place any faith in the word of the Japanese.

The extraordinary difficulties with which the squadron will have to contend during its voyage.

Be that as it may, we shall not have much

longer to wait before we shall be definitely reassured as to the fate of Admiral Felkersham's division. In a few days it will probably enter the Suez Canal, and doubtless a week after it will have passed through the zone of danger. And after that, up to the moment of its arrival at the seat of war, which will probably be the Sunda Islands, our squadron will only have to battle with the obstacles (great indeed, and quite exceptional in character) which are due to the enormous distance which it has to travel. The naval authorities of all countries have been obliged to acknowledge that the sending of a fleet to the Far East from the coasts of Russia, and that, without finding *en route* a single coaling station, without ever being able to take supplies on board at the ports of call, without even being able to go into any docks or naval building yards to make good any damage arising on the journey, was a grand undertaking, presenting unheard-of difficulties, and one without precedent in the history of fleets of war. In order to give some idea of these difficulties, it will suffice to mention that the second Pacific Ocean Squadron, when

steaming at a low speed, daily consumes 3,140 tons of coal, while three times that amount will be required when going at full speed. Do not let us forget, either, that even during the time they are at anchor our ships have to use coal for several purposes : to keep up a pressure of steam in their boilers, to produce the electric light and to condense the necessary quantity of drinking water, and for these purposes the squadron uses an additional 420 tons of coal daily. At slow speed, about five days are required to sail 1,000 miles, at the end of which three days of rest have to be allowed for the transshipment of coal and for easing the engines. Thus we can easily see that to steam 1,000 miles means the consumption of 16,969 tons of coal. And when we think of the thousands of miles that our squadron will have to steam, we shall be startled at the number of thousands of tons of coal which it will be obliged to use. But coal is not all that vessels require ; the boilers of the present day require a considerable quantity of soft water, which the laws of neutrality prevent us from procuring at the ports of call. Besides this, the engines

consume large quantities of oil, the crews have to continually renew the stores, without taking into account the fact that the mass of machines with which we are provided continually oblige us to undertake partial repairs and regularly, from time to time, complete repairs. The loading of coal cannot be conveniently carried out at the ports of call, for here again the laws of neutrality compel us to have recourse to coaling vessels, and generally the transshipment is done in the exterior roadsteads, where the rough sea necessarily makes itself felt ; even if it does not take place in the open sea, where the water is never perfectly smooth, not even in the calmest weather.

Thus we are obliged to carry out all these complicated operations in our own way ; we must foresee everything, organise everything, give the coaling vessels the exact hour and place, and render ourselves able to do without them in the event of unforeseen events making it impossible for them to fulfil their engagements. And then, we cannot arrive at the seat of war with empty bunkers, because once we are there, we shall have no more coaling vessels, and if we did

manage to get some, we could not count upon them with safety, except at the risk of finding ourselves without coal if they were captured by the Japanese. And so, when we arrive at the seat of war we ought to have ample supplies of coal with us for the entire squadron. Such are the questions we must discuss, and which we must solve, if we desire to carry out this extraordinary enterprise, gigantic in itself, not only on account of the preliminary work necessary to give it any chance of success, but also on account of the enormous pecuniary sacrifices it has necessitated.

The great importance of the work which the squadron has to carry through.

Russia has decided to carry out this magnificent enterprise, and to expend the colossal sums of money which it involves. She has determined to attempt an unheard-of task—the dispatch to the Far East of an entire fleet of war, which, left only to its own resources, will have to traverse a distance of 18,000 miles, or 31,500 versts—for that is, in fact, the distance which separates Revel from the Korean coasts.

This, I think, shows the great importance of the part which has devolved on this fleet, and what Russia expects from it in the exceptionally difficult circumstances which it has to face. The day after the arrival of our fleet at Vigo, a Spanish newspaper, the *Fare de Vigo*, said in its leading article that :
“ The dispatch of the Baltic Squadron certainly constitutes the most astonishing effort and the most redoubtable deed as yet undertaken against Japan by the Northern Colossus.”

“ The Japanese fleet has played all its trump cards to make sure of the command of the sea, because the whole future of Japan depends on this one fact.”

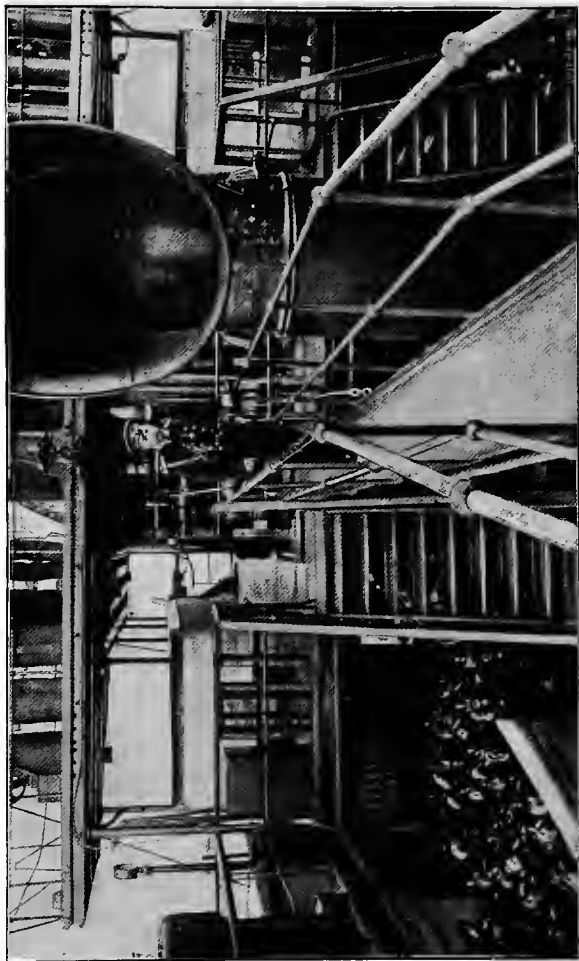
A German admiral wrote those words in the Berlin newspaper the *Post*, after our departure from Libau.

“ With all my heart I am with you and my dear squadron. All Russia looks to you with confidence and firm hope.” *

Such was the telegram addressed by His Majesty the Czar to Admiral Rodjestvensky, on his arrival at Vigo.

“ One common thought unites the squad-

* See No. 10295, *Novoe Vremya*.



THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS II.

Addressing the crew from the bridge of the battleship *Андрей-Богатырь* after the review of the ships of the Second Pacific Squadron at Reval.

[To face page 44.]

“ron to the throne of your Majesty,” replied the admiral, who, after having informed the crews of the Emperor’s gracious dispatch and his own reply, added: “Comrades! we will do all that our Czar commands. Hurrah!”

And the squadron pursued its journey, surmounting all kinds of imaginable and unimaginable difficulties, in order to carry out its Sovereign’s orders, and every one of its sailors knows that if the Czar has assigned to him a task that nobody ever before had to accomplish, it is because of its imperious need, because it is the only way of bringing this terrible war to an end honourably for Russia. And so the squadron will go to the very end of its long voyage, and will do all that is in its power to do.

CHAPTER II.

In a war with Japan all depends on the command of the sea.

The importance of the command of the sea is a fact now almost universally acknowledged. Unfortunately it was not so at the commencement of this war, and very many then held the opinion that "we should soon regain the upper-hand on land, and by so doing also regain that which we had lost." The whole series of our cruel and humiliating losses was necessary to prove how much our Manchurian army had need of the co-operation of our fleet, the defeat of which has entailed such disasters on our land forces.*

* If we explain at length the absolute necessity for our army to have the co-operation of the fleet, it is only that we may more clearly show the importance of the task confided to Admiral Rodjestvensky.

If we had had a stronger fleet in the Far East than that of the Japanese, the war would have been impossible.

It is unnecessary to remark that from the commencement of the negotiations with Japan, we ought to have concentrated in the Far East a fleet incontestably superior to that of Japan ; or, at the very least, to have put on a war-footing our naval forces at Port Arthur, instead of leaving them, as we did, in a partial state of "active service" only—for the sake of economy, in all probability. Doubtless events would have then taken quite another turn, and there are, in fact, strong reasons for believing that under such conditions the negotiations would have terminated peacefully ; and that, even had a war broken out, it would have soon been brought to a close, as the Japanese must have failed in any attempts made by them to wrest the command of the sea from us, and would consequently have found it impossible to have thrown their army on the Korean continent.

But what happened ? Our fleet, which, compared with the enemy's, was already too

weak, had, further, not made any preparations for fighting, though these were urgently needed. It thus allowed itself to be surprised during the night of February 8th, and saw three of its ships placed *hors de combat*. And then, instead of cruising along the Korean coasts—a plan definitely decided upon on February 9th—our squadron re-entered Port Arthur at eight o'clock in the morning. This disastrous blunder caused considerable detriment to our army, and it was, in fact, owing to this mistake that the Japanese were able to concentrate on the Yalu forces far superior to our own. From this moment the situation of our vanguard became a most anxious one.

Turrentchen, Kin-Tcheu, Vafangon and Liao-Yang were the direct consequences of the reverses suffered by our fleet.

In spite of the disproportion of forces, we should have been able to hold out, if a flotilla of ships of small tonnage, armed with quick-firing guns, had, by ascending the river, come to the assistance of our land forces. But in losing the *Petropavlovsk* and Admiral Makharof our fleet met with a fresh disaster ;

and thus not the Russian but the Japanese ships took part in the engagement on the Yalu! The battle of Turrentchen was the result. After this first fight the substantial losses sustained by our fleet, and, above all, the death of its brave chief, condemned our ships to inaction, and the landing of the Japanese on the Liao-Tung at once took place. Our army had again to suffer a cruel defeat, because the unfortunate position of our squadron prevented it from in any way co-operating with the land forces, and we were obliged to abandon Kin-Tcheu—supposed to be an impregnable position—to the enemy.

And why? Solely because the Japanese ships, drawing very little water, were able to bombard our troops on their right flank and attack them in the rear; and so, under the powerful protection of this flotilla, the enemy's infantry was able to advance by marching in the bed of the river in a parallel line to the mines which we had laid on its banks. And this is why, without the help of our fleet, such an inaccessible position was unable to be held by our troops for more than fourteen hours. This we shall easily

understand if we only take into account the fact that Kin-Tcheu was only unassailable or impregnable as long as its flanks, which are bounded by the sea, could be protected ; no trouble was taken as to this, and this the defeat proved. And what terrible consequences the fall of Kin-Tcheu had for us ! The Japanese were thus enabled to continue their forward march, to seize Dalny, which we had spent so many millions to convert into a large commercial port. There they created a base of operations admirable in all respects—as well for repairs as for coal supplies and the landing of troops and war *matériel*. In a word, from that day the definite and complete investment of Port Arthur was only a question of time. The first movement of our army was to march to the relief of Port Arthur, but again the engagement at Vafangon showed that the Japanese had been able to concentrate forces far superior to our own. Certainly the conveyance by a single-line railway of *matériel* and troops, which, in order to be brought to the seat of war, had to travel a distance of 10,000 versts, cannot in any sense be compared to the short voyage which the Japanese

have to make, even though their troops may have been encamped from 100 to 120 versts from the sea.

Our fleet could alone have prevented the enemy from obtaining such an overwhelming advantage. But the real situation did not appear so clear then as it does now. Were we not persuaded that, in taking the offensive, our army was going to raise the blockade of Port Arthur? But to-day these idle fancies begin to disappear.

“To relieve Port Arthur from the land side is considered by many people as an enterprise, at the very least, most difficult to carry out successfully, and it is not easy to question this opinion, considering that we are more or less badly informed, as much on the situation of the place as on the state of the besiegers,” recently wrote a military critic.*

The evacuation by our troops of Niu-Tchuang and their retreat towards Liao-Yang were the natural consequences of our inability to transport by the Trans-Siberian railway as many men as our enemies were able to land. The adoption of this new

* *Novoe Vremya*, No. 10,295.

plan of campaign in the first place enabled us to effect a concentration of our forces, and, in the second place, to draw the Japanese further from the sea. But to put it into execution we were obliged to give up to them the large River Liao, in the basin of which are situated the two towns, Liao-Yang and Mukden, as well as the railway, which in this country runs parallel with the river. The Japanese soon found their means of communication lengthened, but they also found them multiplied and made easier. We ought to have seen this at Liao-Yang, where they were again numerically superior to us, but we have since learned that it was by the River Liao that the greater part of their transports of provisions and stores were brought up.

The services which a gunboat flotilla should have rendered us.

None of these things would have happened if we had only had a gunboat flotilla at our disposal. In fact, I am strongly convinced that with a flotilla of lightly-armoured vessels, furnished with quick-firing guns, we could have prevented Kuroki from

crossing the Taïtse and have saved Liao-Yang. Thus, this plan which consisted in drawing the Japanese further from the sea, besides being in itself very doubtful, failed completely for the reasons I have just mentioned. For this plan to have had any advantages, the enemy should have been drawn much farther north, at least up to Kharbin, not taking into account that again we should have given him a great counter-advantage in permitting him to cut our communications with the coast and with Vladivostok. And in the event of the Japanese having successfully occupied this region, they would have been again approaching the sea, and with Vladivostok, our fleet would have lost its last point of support. We indulged in great hopes on hearing that a strong detachment from Vladivostok had invaded Northern Korea, and was preparing to attack the Japanese in the rear unawares, whilst our cavalry was carrying out its dashing raids. But this time, also, events happened which taught us that in thus sending alone a considerable force of cavalry into a mountainous country, sparsely populated and with little or no forage, we neces-

sarily were confronted by considerable difficulties, and in fact could obtain but mediocre results.

We cannot undertake a campaign in Corea without the co-operation of the fleet.

It was soon found that an expedition to the northern coasts of Corea was a most impracticable scheme without the co-operation of the fleet, which could alone insure the provisioning of the troops, because in this hilly country the roads are so few and bad, that it is absolutely impossible to carry by land transport provisions even for inconsiderable land forces at a distance from the sea. But the defeats sustained by our squadron prevented our being able to depend upon its support; and, moreover, we found ourselves constantly in danger, for the Japanese fleet, which definitely retained the command of the sea, was able to cover a landing at some strategic point of the Korean coasts—for example, at the end of one of the few roads which cross the peninsula—so that our detachments operating in Corea were exposed to the danger of being cut off at any moment from their base. It was then

recognised how intimate was the connection between our army and our fleet, and as the support of our fleet was wanting we had to give up this attempt. Then the invasion of Corea was given up, as also the formation of the army already named "The Corean Army"; and General Linevitch, who was intended to command it, has now been summoned to Manchuria to be placed at the head of our first army.

How, then, did these defeats of our fleet, which had such grave consequences for our armies, happen? Were they inflicted upon us as the result of some great battle?

No; they were simply the result of the two successive retreats of our fleet to Port Arthur; firstly, on June 23rd, and then on August 10th. This second retreat brought about the unfortunate engagement in which our Vladivostok cruisers were engaged on August 14th with Admiral Kamimura's division. And up to this very hour the reason for these two retreats has remained unexplained and inexplicable to us!

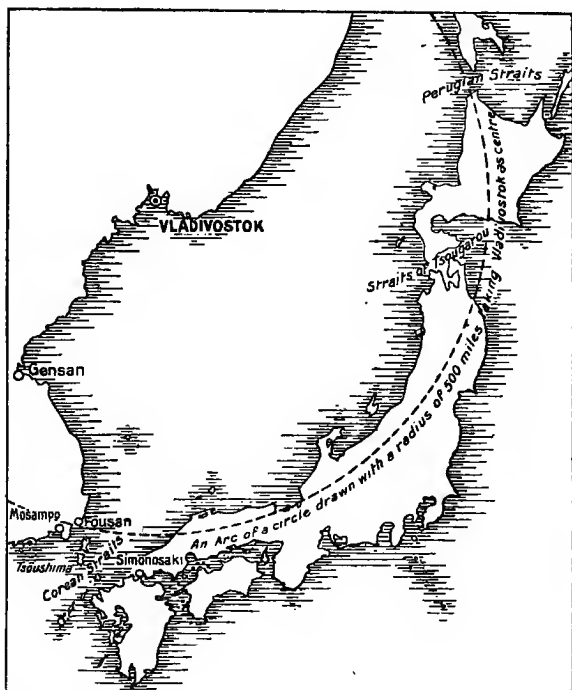
The advantages of Vladivostok as a naval port.

Our squadron should have been able to

reach Vladivostok, and, as we afterwards saw, the Japanese would not have been able to have prevented it (that is precisely why I have just described as inexplicable the second return to Port Arthur); and in this way Vladivostok would have become the new seat of the naval war, which would have rendered our enemy's position distinctly disadvantageous. Vladivostok is, in fact, a strategic place of the first rank; it is the centre of a circle of which the Japanese coasts form the arc of the circumference; and the whole Japanese coast as well as the Straits of Perugia, of Corea and of Tsougaru are situated in the radius of action of the fleet concentrated in this port.

Moreover, the configuration of the Vladivostok region also helps to make this town an ideal naval port, which especially presents the great advantage of offering to ships, not only a single channel, but speaking more exactly, several, because we can include in the number of these roadsteads the Bay of Love with its belt of islands, which are so many convenient points of observation, and which afford to vessels when going out or coming in a rich choice of various

channels. Therefore the blockade of Vladivostok could not be made effective from the sea without considerable difficulty—a con-



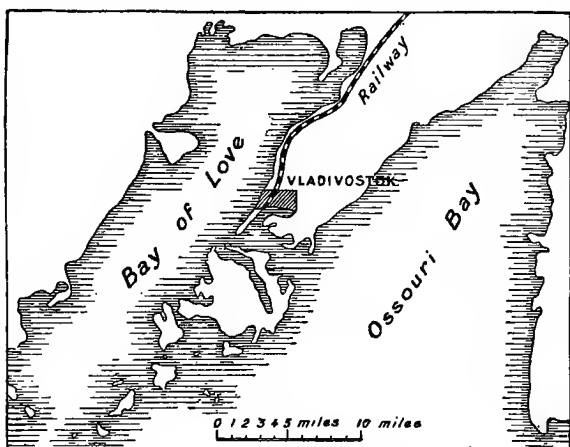
vincing proof of this I think is that up to the present sailing junks have been able to maintain the communications between Chefoo and Port Arthur, which latter port only possesses a single channel!

The blockade of Vladivostok would have therefore required twice the naval forces which the Japanese have actually before Port Arthur, without considering that not even then would they have been certain of not letting out or in, either ships operating separately, or detached divisions, or, in fact, our whole squadron.

And then, how would our enemies have been able to procure such considerable forces? At the commencement of the war they did not possess them, and far from increasing the number of their ships since, this must have decreased little by little. If our fleet had succeeded in reaching Vladivostok, the Japanese, in view of the continual danger of the sortie which it could then at any time have made, might have been obliged to have recalled from Port Arthur a very large number of their torpedo-boats and destroyers, before which they were all concentrated (as we saw at the time of our attempts to break through the blockade), in order to use them to defend their own coasts.

But to continue an effective blockade of Port Arthur, that is to say, to prevent it

from obtaining fresh supplies of provisions or ammunition, the Japanese would have been compelled to keep before the place considerable naval forces, without which they would be exposed to the danger of having their vessels attacked and dispersed



by the flotillas of destroyers and gunboats which remained in the port, and which, in spite of the presence of the enemy's entire fleet, had already succeeded in making several sorties, and raking the flanks of the besieging army. Thus the Japanese would have only been able to have concentrated before Valdivostok an inferior number of

ships compared to those which they would have been obliged to leave before Port Arthur, and consequently quite insufficient to establish an effective blockade of the port. We should have been able to strike our enemies at a vulnerable point; for the Straits of Corea, frequently studded with their military transports, would have been within the sphere of action, not only of several cruisers, but of a powerful squadron. No doubt, Vladivostok is ice-bound from the end of December to the commencement of April, and then from May to July it is visited by fogs of really phenomenal density, but the bay only is frozen over, and, with the help of ice breakers, access to the port is always possible. Besides, the violent winter tempests render a blockade extremely difficult, and the many fogs as we well know greatly favour the blockade runners. But the most important consequence of our squadron's arrival at Vladivostok would have indisputably been the splitting up of the Japanese fleet, allowing of our again entertaining our earlier hopes, as from Vladivostok our vessels would have probably been able to have supported the offensive movement

of General Linevitch in Northern Corea. But in returning to Port Arthur our fleet again put an end to our renewed hopes.

It was simply to capture our fleet that the Japanese made such a dead set at Port Arthur.

It is quite unnecessary to add that in the event of our squadron having succeeded in reaching Vladivostok, neither the fall of the fortress or the obstinate determination of the Japanese to capture it, would then have been a matter of any real moment. No doubt the national pride of the Japanese was involved, and they were compelled to take Port Arthur, but all the same I do not think that it was solely this pride which prompted them to make such enormous sacrifices in men and money ; above all I cannot bring myself to admit that it was for this reason alone that they so clogged the organisation and action of their land forces. Would it not, in fact, have been of greater importance to them to have had at Liao-Yang the army which they could not move from before Port Arthur, and would they not then have been able to have pushed

forward their advance more rapidly, and to have seized Mukden, without giving us the time to receive the reinforcements then coming up from day to day? No, if their pride was involved, they had also a distinct object in view; they wanted to take Port Arthur in order to capture the squadron which was shut up in this port, and so to deprive Admiral Rodjestvensky's fleet, which at the time was just leaving for the seat of war, of one of our two naval bases in the Far East.

This plan was fully made manifest in the proposals which they made to General Stoessel, when they were ready to allow the garrison to leave with arms and baggage, and to rejoin Kuropatkin's army at Liao-Yang. They insisted only on one condition, viz., that we should deliver up to them all the battleships then in the port. And in this manner they would have definitely secured their command of the sea, and they would have been able from that moment—such was at least their opinion—to have counted with all confidence upon eventual success, even in the case of the arrival at the seat of war of our second Pacific Squadron.

They knew only too well that it was not by victories on land that Russia could ever hope to worst them; their only danger, the only dark spot in their future was that some day they might see the command of the sea wrested from them by their foes. They feared the arrival of reinforcements from the Baltic, and it was to prevent this that they displayed that fierce energy which astonished the whole world. And to do them only justice, it must be acknowledged that they displayed a hundred times more energy than we ever did.

The second retreat of our squadron into Port Arthur definitely marked our loss of the first part of this war. To bring it to an honourable close we must unquestionably regain the mastery of the sea.

When we think of this situation we understand only too well the agony which the second return of our squadron to Port Arthur caused us, and the consequent exultation of the Japanese. Ah! why is our fleet not at Vladivostok?

The relative inactivity of the Japanese fleet—for it suffered from the constant

danger of having to face a sortie by our vessels in Port Arthur—ought to have had serious consequences for it. But alas! the contrary happened, for the Japanese succeeded in attaining their aim—which was to block up our squadron in Port Arthur until the fortress finally surrendered to the besieging army. Ah! what a calamity overwhelmed us, what agony we have suffered for nearly three months without taking into consideration all our bitter disappointments aggravated beyond measure by our humiliating reverses at Liao-Yang and Cha-Ho.

These great battles will certainly remain memorable for ever on account of the enormous losses sustained and the torrents of Russian blood which were poured forth. However, like my fellow-countrymen and the Press throughout the world, I speak of them as reverses and not as defeats, because they are certainly not defeats, and if one carefully weighs the question, they were not even reverses for our forces; they were in reality—considering the highly unfavourable conditions with which we had to contend—engagements tactfully and skilfully conducted. We should not utter a

word of reproach against General Kuropatkin, but, on the contrary, think of him with respect, and render homage to his skill, for he certainly showed consummate tact in extricating his army so creditably from a position of such almost hopeless peril.

Besides, there will not, indeed, be a trace of these disastrous fights from the day that our Manchurian army, reinforced and thoroughly organised (and we feel absolutely certain that this day will come), shall have recovered its liberty of action and assumed the offensive. But the return of our fleet to Port Arthur, which necessarily resulted in its ultimate destruction, has marked the complete loss of the first part of this campaign. To repair the errors committed, we must get back the command of the sea, and with that view, carry out to the very end without faltering or feebleness, the stupendous task before us; we must make gigantic efforts, worthy, indeed, of Titans. We have already made a step in this direction by sending on Admiral Rodjestvensky's squadron, and I am firmly convinced that we shall find that we possess the necessary zeal, and, above all, that we shall bring our-

selves to realize the situation in which we actually are placed so as to be prepared to take the necessary steps later, for, if we failed to go forward with them, we should doubtlessly only meet with fresh disappointments. Sombre thoughts oppress me, but I do not wish to give way to them now.

The reverses of our fleet have invariably reacted upon our land forces.

Let us fully recognise that all our reverses at sea have also been reverses on land. We may now usefully dwell, in a few words, on the great importance of the co-operation of our fleet with our army, and it should be made clear that if all our operations on land have failed up to the present, we must attribute the fact to the weakness of our fleet. Thus we are able to throw some light on this obscure question, and to ascertain the point to which our fleet, if successful, could be of assistance to the troops of General Kuropatkin. In his report of an interview with General Alexioff, the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Echo de Paris** writes thus :—

* See *Novoe Vremya*, No. 10,303.

“ If, at the commencement of this war,
“ the Japanese had immediately thrown
“ themselves on Port Arthur, they would
“ have easily captured it, because the works
“ for its defence were incomplete, and with
“ Port Arthur in the hands of the Japanese,
“ the campaign would have assumed quite a
“ different character. The heroic resistance of
“ the brave fortress prevented the Japanese
“ from marching northwards in time enough
“ to prevent the concentration of our troops.”
These few lines describe the whole situation.
Let us, limit ourselves to mentioning another
obstacle of an equally serious character,
which prevented the Japanese from attacking
Port Arthur immediately. I refer to
the squadron which we had brought together
in this port. As we are aware, it was only
three months after the declaration of war,
when our fleet had sustained severe losses,
and when, above all, the death of Admiral
Makharof had left it without an energetic
and reliable commander, that the Japanese
commenced landing troops in the Liao-
Tung peninsula.

And it was this three months' delay—
due alone owing to the presence of our fleet

—which enabled our army to begin to concentrate and Port Arthur to organise that resistance which was to immortalise it for all time, and to paralyze the advance of Marshal Oyama against our Manchurian forces. It is very difficult to form any real idea of the excessively difficult situation in which our army would have been placed if we had had no fleet in the Far East, and if the Japanese had been able to effect an immediate landing on the Liao-Tung peninsula, and march northwards alongside the railway.

That would have necessitated our evacuation, not only of the Yalu, but of all Manchuria, at least as far as Kharbin. Should we have ever been able to have regained the land then lost? This is a serious question, for in such event our communications with Vladivostok would have been severed. Such would indeed have been our plight if we had not had any fleet. Let us now consider how at the end of ten months' war matters stand. As yet, the Japanese have not been able to take even Mukden. This is not all, for our weak cruisers from Vladivostok have shown of what invaluable

assistance powerful ships would have been to us. In spite of their small numbers they have been able to seriously threaten the Japanese communications.

Everybody will remember their daring raid of June 15th, in which they sank two of the enemy's transports, the *Sado-Maru* and the *Hitatchi-Maru*, on board which there were several large siege guns intended for General Nogi's army; and the loss of these two ships materially delayed the operations against Port Arthur. In short, it is an unquestionable fact that the fleet ably seconded the heroic efforts of the garrison of the fortress. Did not our battle-ships on several occasions protect the exposed flanks of our troops with their guns of heavy calibre, and did not our vessels supply the defence works, with which Port Arthur was provided, guns, shells, and men to work the guns?

The part which the fleet will play in the further stages of the war.

But all this is ancient history. We should now think of the Second Squadron, and of its ability to influence the military plans of

campaign if matters should turn out favourably, and the Second Pacific Squadron should not, owing to unforeseen circumstances, be compelled to discontinue its voyage.

Our army will not easily gain a numerical superiority as long as we may only have the one-line Trans-Siberian Railway as our line of communication.

That eminent strategical expert, M. M. P. Michnievitch, who now is to-day director of the Nicolas Academy, has said: "To ensure the victualling of troops in time of war, European military experts estimate that an army consisting of 250,000 men and 60,000 horses, should have its own railway line." *

This estimate is based on the supposition that the battlefields would be in Europe, and that therefore the belligerents would operate within a relatively small area.

I believe that these words explain better than any conjectures which we may make, how it is that the reinforcements received up to the present by our Manchurian army

* *Strategy*, Book II., 247.

(and we have long been chary of admitting the fact) have not been able to bring its effective strength up to more than 200,000 men and 50,000 horses.

Indeed, by means of the Trans-Siberian single line we have been obliged to send little by little all our supplies, military stores, medical stores, and even railway material (rails, wedges, sleepers), and in addition we have also had to transport, together with the supplies and stores intended for our armies in the field, food and provisions to certain parts of Siberia threatened by famine, especially the Trans-Baikalian districts.

This same railway has been our only means of transporting to the seat of hostilities those troops, and their concentration has not yet been completed.

Thus, as we see, the Trans-Siberian has had to carry considerable quantities of *matériel* of all kinds, including even that which was required for our fleet (guns, torpedo-boats, special gear for the battle-ships, etc.).

We must convey our best troops, with as few reservists as possible, and our best guns, by means of the single-line Trans-Siberian Railway.

It will be only after our concentration has been completed—that is to say, when we shall no longer have to transport either men or horses, except those necessary to make good the losses caused by battle, that the resources of the Trans-Siberian Railway will be a little less over-taxed; but then there will be a much larger quantity of provisions and ammunition to be carried, without reckoning, too, that the transport of men and horses can never be wholly discontinued until the end of the war. Thus a very important question here arises—viz., shall we be able to concentrate in the Far East 400,000 men and the corresponding number of horses? I believe that this should be the strength of our three armies when complete.

We therefore necessarily ask ourselves whether, in this war, we shall ever be able to get the full benefit of our overwhelming

superiority in land forces, because there is every reason to believe that our enemies will certainly succeed in concentrating 400,000 at the seat of war. The only advantage that we shall be able to obtain in the long run consists in the fact that, to raise such a number of men, the Japanese will be forced to send to Manchuria reservists no longer young, and but indifferently trained, and perhaps also conscripts without either military training or sufficient familiarity with modern rifles and guns. On the contrary we shall be able either to call up no reservists,* or to mobilise but an insignificant number of them, and to muster 400,000 well trained men, all thoroughly accustomed to the use of modern arms, known to one another, knowing their commanders well and being equally well known by them. Besides, we should have enough officers on the active list to make up our losses, and we should not have to fall back on our reserve of officers at all. An army of this kind would be unquestionably superior to the Japanese army even if it were numerically inferior. But, for reasons

* As at the time of the Chinese campaign of 1900.

which I cannot possibly understand, we have found that it was impossible for us so to get together our Manchurian army, and we have done voluntarily that which the Japanese have had of necessity to do. Under these conditions we need not be surprised if up to the present our army has not proved superior in military qualities to that of the enemy, and that it has always been inferior to it from a numerical point of view. In fact, our foes have throughout had over us the great advantage of possessing rapid means of communication, and of only being a short distance from Japan; and the result has been that we have constantly been forced to remain on the defensive. .

I do not intend here to examine closely into the question of communications, which, as we have just seen, is a very serious one for us. I only ask to be allowed to offer, in a few words, my protest against one of the clumsy errors that we have committed in that matter in this war. A protest is made against the dispatch to the Far East of *all* our naval forces, and it is urged that this would be a grave indiscretion, because Russia would find herself defenceless as

against European Powers in case any fresh complications should arise. This argument appears to me to be quite characteristic of the regrettable misunderstanding which has always prevailed in my country, and which even now exists.

We insist on looking upon this war with Japan as a quite secondary and trifling affair, and on anticipating far more serious conflicts into which we could be drawn. Once for all, we must drop this fallacy. It is not a mere secondary colonial expedition, but a life-and-death struggle for Russia, her commerce and her prosperity, which is at this moment being fought out on the Far Eastern battlefields. This war should entirely absorb our thoughts, and we ought to leave out of consideration any complications which might arise on our other frontiers. I even say that we ought not to hesitate, if it became necessary, to make the greatest sacrifices and the most cruel concessions to avoid all conflict with our European neighbours. Owing to the resources and qualities of our foes, this war presents great difficulties for us, and we ought to unite in one common effort to break down the power of

Japan. All our efforts should be directed towards this one end.

I am not one of those who are satisfied with the composition of our present Manchurian Army, and I would ask those who may be the supporters of its organisation to say if they consider the Japanese army inferior in any way to the best European armies.

It is in no respect inferior to them, either in the arming or in the training of the men, their discipline or their powers of endurance ; and it is very much superior to them in the " moral strength " which helps the Japanese soldier to face without flinching enormous losses, and, without once shrinking from them, to overcome the most extraordinary difficulties.

Up to the present our military authorities thought that this " moral strength " was peculiar to the Russian Army,* but to-day we are obliged to acknowledge that the Japanese are running us a close race in it. Under such conditions is it reasonable to hold that, because we can foresee eventual complications with European Powers, we

* According to Michnievitch, 1st Bk., p. 59.

shall require all our picked troops at home, all our best war *matériel*, to contend with our European neighbours, while against the Japanese, who are superior to them all, it is sufficient for us to send our troops suitable as reserves and our more or less defective *matériel*? These blunders cost us dearly enough at the battle of Liao-Yang, where General Orlof's division was almost entirely composed of reservists!

But let us leave aside this question of the composition of our troops, and return to that which ought to engross our attention. Can our army itself achieve any decisive results if it cannot count on the support of our fleet, and whilst Marshal Oyama continues to confront us with ever-increasing forces? I think the chances are strongly against our army ever again taking the offensive, for the old maxim that "strategy demands the offensive, but tactics the defensive," applies especially to mountainous countries, if we mean by taking the offensive a turning movement against the enemy, because for that an overwhelming numerical superiority is necessary, on the supposition, of course, that the two armies are of equal value from

a military point of view. It is, therefore, impossible to anticipate what may be the result of our land operations.

However, let us suppose that we succeed in obtaining the numerical superiority, that is to say, that our army is in a position to assume the offensive and its advance meets with uniform success. Our turning movement would oblige the enemy obviously to beat an uninterrupted retreat to the south—for which we could not readily hope if we consider the ability of the Japanese generals and the perfect knowledge they possess of all our movements, thanks to the Chinese, upon whom we, on the other hand, could never rely. Thus the Japanese would retire before us, finding themselves in danger of being cut off from their base. But they would have been careful to provide against such an eventuality and to have secured themselves a line of retreat. They would fall back little by little towards the sea, first in the direction of the Korean Gulf, and then, after re-crossing the Yalu, would entrench themselves in Korea, where they have just completed the Seoul-Fusan railway. Naturally, the nearer they got to the

sea, the more their position would be improved, whilst our army would be the more likely to encounter the gravest difficulties. But let us suppose that we could overcome all these difficulties, that our troops succeeded in re-occupying the whole of Manchuria, from In-Keu to the Yalu, and even advanced into the Liao-Tung peninsula, as far as the position of Kin-Tcheu. Such a position would be the result of many weeks' fighting, for if the Japanese have required seven months to get as far as Mukden, we should take at least the same time to drive them back on the Yalu, and to get into position before Kin-Tcheu. Personally I see nothing which need prevent our doing this when our three armies have been formed at the end of December. This advance would extend to the month of June, 1905, or thereabouts.

But then a fresh question arises—when we were before Kin-Tcheu, what should we do? March upon Port Arthur to raise the blockade? It is hardly probable that the place could hold out so long. Pursue the Japanese into Corea? This would be absolutely impossible without the co-operation of a fleet, and so, if we succeeded in

bringing up to 400,000 men the effective strength of our forces at the seat of war—a position which could in fact not be counted on—we should be able to retake Manchuria and to advance as far as the north of the Liao-Tung peninsula.

But there the work of the army would end, and this would be the limit of our successes, for I unhesitatingly declare that it would be absolutely impossible for us to advance further if we had no squadron to support our land forces.

We shall never be able to capture Port Arthur without the help of a squadron.

In fact, to retake Port Arthur (for by that time the place would probably have fallen into the enemy's hands), we should be obliged to detach a force of 70,000 to 100,000 men from our main army (as the Japanese have been compelled to do), and this would clearly mean a great sacrifice on our part. But let us suppose that it would not force us to draw back. First of all, we ought to capture Kin-Tcheu, a position which we not only looked upon as impregnable when we possessed it, but as even unassailable,

and yet the Japanese, owing to the support given them by their gunboat flotilla, forced us to abandon it in fourteen hours. But shall we, when attacking it, have, as the Japanese had, the support of a flotilla? Shall we not run the risk of finding Kin-Tcheu really impregnable? In any case, the seizure of this position would require much time and would be the cause of great loss of life.

Then we ought to lay siege to Port Arthur. The heroic resistance that General Stoessel and his men, intrenched in the citadel, have made up to the present, has already clearly proved that the place is impregnable as long as it has a sufficient garrison and can obtain the necessary supplies of food and ammunition. Therefore, we should indignantly repel any suggestion of a capitulation, if the besiegers had not in their powerful fleet such an overwhelming advantage, and if the fortress were in a position to renew its supplies; but this is precisely the position in which the Japanese would be when the day arrived on which we could lay siege to Port Arthur. We may feel sure that we should meet at their hands with a resistance which

would be in no sense weaker than that of which we have had proof. I do not look upon those who affirm the contrary as really seriously meaning what they say. And as the place, owing to the support of the Japanese fleet, could not be shut off from the sea, our land forces could never succeed in recapturing Port Arthur.

The success which our Manchurian armies could achieve in Corea without the help of a fleet.

Let us now see what our troops could do in Corea if they were left to their own resources. To attack this peninsula they would be necessarily forced to leave the railway, which they would have previously closely followed, and we should have to send them their provisions and ammunition for a distance of 300 or 500 versts over hilly and broken-up roads.

It will be said that the supplies required would be considerably reduced, on account of the relatively small number of men we should be sending into Corea. But no matter how limited the quantity of provisions which they would need might be, I

greatly fear that the chances of their receiving them would be very slight. The roads leading to Corea follow the coast very closely, and in several places they skirt the banks of large rivers accessible to ships of small tonnage armed with quick-firing guns ; and of course the flotillas of light ships which went up the Liao could easily ride to their anchors in the Gulf of Liao-Tung.

Our foes, masters of the sea, would constantly threaten us with the sudden landing of 20,000 or 30,000 men on the continent, with a view of piercing our lines of communication, and would thus oblige us to detach for a rear-guard very considerable forces to prevent their doing so.

Under these conditions it would be impossible for us to hope to hold our own against a strongly intrenched Japanese army, resting on the Seoul-Fusan line on the one side, and on the sea on the other. And so, unable to rely upon the support of our fleet, our army would certainly not advance into Corea.

How the war must end, if we do not regain the command of the sea.

How will this war end—for it cannot last for ever—if the two belligerents resolve to remain in their respective positions? It will end with a treaty which will leave in the hands of the Japanese Kuan-Tung, Port Arthur and Dalny on the one hand, and on the other the whole of Corea. And even if before the treaty of peace the Japanese, to secure greater advantages, should have occupied Sakhalien, Kamtschatka, and the Commander Islands (so valuable to them on account of their game and fisheries), we should be forced to leave them in their possession, as they would have retained command of the sea.

Thus we see that it would be absolutely useless for us to dream of any compensating advantages after this long and terrible war, because to obtain anything at all, we should at least have to be in a position to capture some small Japanese island, which, however, we should be quite unable to do.

It seems to me that a peace of this kind

would be most distasteful to Russia, while it would offer most satisfactory conditions to Japan. I therefore beg those of my fellow countrymen, who pose as advocates of peace, of the immediate conclusion of this war, and of the recall of Admiral Rodjestvensky's fleet, to reflect a moment on the conditions on which it would be concluded, as long as we had not succeeded in recovering the command of the sea. And it is precisely to re-establish our naval superiority that the second Pacific Squadron has set sail. On the other hand, the situation would be at once reversed as soon as we could wrest the command of the sea from the Japanese.

In the first place, a naval victory would be of immediate advantage to our army ; its effective strength would certainly not be increased, but the Japanese troops, thoroughly worn out and discouraged, would lose confidence. This would be a terrible blow for our foes, because their food supplies and ammunition come for the most part from England and America. And again, instead of sending off their thousands of sick and wounded to Japan, the Japanese would be obliged to construct immense hospitals in

Corea for them. As to our army, it would be able to obtain much more easily than previously all the provisions and *matériel* it needed, for, the Japanese having lost command of the sea, we should then be able to place our orders in England and America. Moreover, we could have recourse to military transports in order to reinforce our troops more expeditiously, and this would also relieve the pressure on our single-line Trans-Siberian railway, besides making our means of communication with the Far East as rapid by sea as by land.

It will still be remembered that in 1900, at the time of the Boxer rising, the troops which we embarked at Odessa arrived at Port Arthur six weeks after their departure.

Port Arthur cannot be relieved except with co-operation of a further squadron.

The Trans-Siberian line being no longer overtaxed, the action of our Manchurian army would no longer be paralyzed, as is the case at present. We should be able to cherish fresh hopes, and perhaps Port Arthur could be relieved if it managed to hold out until Admiral Rodjestvensky's arrival.

Certainly, our squadron would not make straight for Port Arthur, even if it did not meet with any opposition from the Japanese. The place would not be saved by the mere fact of the arrival of our ships in the roadstead ; the number of ships in the port would simply be increased without reckoning that the entrance to the channel would be protected by numerous submarine mines ; and it would be simple foolhardiness on our part to allow a fleet, intended to recover the command of the sea, to run such great risks.

The preparations required for the relief of Port Arthur when our second squadron reaches the theatre of war.

The second Pacific Ocean Squadron will not relieve Port Arthur, but only make the relief possible, by forcing the Japanese fleet to abandon the blockade so as to meet our squadron in battle. This will allow the fortress to receive a considerable quantity of provisions, ammunition, all kinds of *matériel*, and even reinforcements, because nothing can prevent our either getting military transports ready at Vladivostok, or

sending them with Admiral Rodjestvensky. They would follow him at an interval of two or three days, and would await a favourable opportunity to rush to Port Arthur at full steam, in the event of our squadron succeeding in crushing the Japanese fleet and obliging what might be left of it to seek refuge either at Dalny or in a Japanese port, according to the point at which the battle might take place.

That would be the time for us to send considerable reinforcements to the heroic garrison; and for this we should make active preparations at Vladivostok without further loss of time. Moreover, we should be free to land our troops according to circumstances, either at Port Arthur or In-Keu, or even at Ta-Ku-Chan; that is to say, speaking generally, in General Nogi's rear, unless, indeed, our Manchurian armies had already then got to the north of the Liao-Tung peninsula.

On the other hand, it is very probable that as a result of the battle between our squadron and the Japanese fleet, a certain number of our ships might have received very serious damage, and be unable to regain

Vladivostok. Then, in the event of the Japanese fleet having sought refuge at Dalny, we should be compelled to choose some Korean port, which would also permit our squadron to remain in the neighbourhood of the Yellow Sea ; in this way we should no doubt be able to complete any necessary provisional repairs. As to the ships which might, after such partial repairs, still remain unseaworthy, we should have to take them to Port Arthur, after having carefully taken up the mines protecting its channel and after having driven the Japanese from the positions which they at present occupy before the place, and from which they are now bombarding the docks, etc. Therefore, I repeat, that Port Arthur can only be relieved from the land side. The squadron can only pave the way for this relief ; but without its help it is quite useless to think of raising the blockade.

It is in exactly the same situation as that of Gibraltar in the eighteenth century ; this fortress could not be taken by the investing army, because the English fleet continued throughout to regularly supply the place. Even if at the time of Admiral

Rodjestvensky's arrival at the seat of war Port Arthur should have already fallen into the hands of the Japanese, still a fleet would also be necessary to us, for, as we have just shown, our troops could not retake the place by assault without the help of a squadron. There is reason to believe that General Kuropatkin would confine himself to sending an investing army towards Port Arthur whilst marching towards Corea with the main body of his forces, in order to fight a decisive battle with the principal Japanese army. In my opinion he would be acting very wisely in so doing, because then he would not be obliged to push on at all costs with a difficult and sanguinary siege, as the Japanese are now doing, fearing, as they do, the loss of the command of the sea through the arrival of Admiral Rodjestvensky.

This is why the Japanese have been, and still willing to make such heavy sacrifices in men and treasure, and if we only followed their example we should have the same reward. They have no choice but to do what they are now doing at Port Arthur; our position would be quite a different one

to theirs, for, having just gained and definitely secured the command of the sea, we should not have to fear its being wrested from us.

Any advance by our forces into Corea must be supported by a fleet.

Our fleet would be an equally valuable aid for any advance into Corea. Owing to its presence our army would not have to pass round the hills occupied by the Japanese, following impracticable roads, and to run the risk of having its base cut off as a result of one of those decisive strategic movements which often decide the fate of battles, or of having to deal with the landing of strong Japanese forces in its rear. Such a landing might, for instance, be carried out in one of the numerous bays by which the western shore of Corea is indented, and near which the Seoul-Fusan railway passes.

And, indeed, not only would the Japanese find themselves unable to transport troops from Simonosaki to Fusan and Masompo, but, further, their army would be in a very awkward fix. It would be compelled to beat a precipitate retreat, which, in my opinion, would rapidly degenerate into a

rout, or end in a surrender. Our advance army in contact with the enemy could be sensibly weakened when once the command of the sea had passed into our hands ; and we could leave strong rearguard divisions behind us, which would protect our lines of communication from any surprise by Japanese troops, and which would enable us to receive supplies regularly and safely to send away our sick and wounded.

If by any chance the Japanese ships got together again at Port Arthur, we should immediately blockade it and force it to remain inactive. If, on the contrary, their ships sought shelter in the southern ports of Sasebo and Kure, we should take one of the southern Korean ports (an island by preference) as our base of operations, so as to be secure from any land attacks, because we should not have the time to sufficiently strengthen this new position so as to enable it to beat off the attack of a hostile army ; and also because the Japanese would make superhuman efforts to capture our naval base. Throughout, they have looked upon our fleet as their principal, I will say even their only, source of danger.

In the event of Kuropatkin not being able by the time to reach the coasts of the Yellow Sea, Admiral Rodjestvensky would necessarily be hard put to it to find a convenient base on his arrival at the seat of war. If he failed to seize some island which could not be made the object of an attack by land, he would be obliged to concentrate at Vladivostok and make that port a base for further operations—that is, of course, if the first battle with Admiral Togo had not proved decisive, and the mastery of the sea were still in question.

CHAPTER III.

13-26 November.

There is ground for hope of a victory by Admiral Rodjestvensky, but it could not be looked upon as absolutely certain.

We have shown that in this war everything is subordinate to the possession of the sea ; and we must, therefore, not feel astonished at Russia's having based her greatest and fondest hopes upon Admiral Rodjestvensky's Squadron ; and whilst this fleet is on its way to the Far East we are obliged, even in spite of ourselves, to put the following questions : Can we absolutely count on Admiral Rodjestvensky's victory ? Have we done all that depended upon ourselves to ensure his success, and have we completed all the necessary preparations

for at once reaping the benefit of a naval victory? After all that I have just said, my readers may well feel sorely distressed at the prospect of our Pacific Squadron not being able to gain a victory, and, after having sustained heavy losses, being forced to shut itself up in Vladivostok!

It is certainly not without deep sorrow that such questions are put; however, we must do it, and we must courageously face the truth: I shall therefore try to solve, in all sincerity, and as carefully as my limited powers will allow it, this important and painful problem!

As to the arrival of our squadron at the seat of war without serious damage in spite of the enormous distance she will have had to sail when entirely dependent upon her own resources, we can place absolute trust in our sailors; but we must not suppose that we have done all in our power to ensure the victory of our fleet, for much remains to be done, if we desire to give it complete liberty of action in carrying out its further work after its probable first success over the Japanese. To justify my remarks I will limit myself to now giving a list of the ships

forming the squadron of Admiral Rodjestvensky, and of those with which Admiral Togo will be able to confront him.

The composition of the Japanese fleet.

The main strength of the Japanese fleet lies in its four battleships — *Mikasa*, *Asahi*, *Shiki-Shima* and *Fudji*, as well as its eight armoured cruisers—*Iwate*, *Izumo*, *Azuma*, *Yakumo*, *Azama*, *Tokiwa*, *Nissin* and *Kassuga*. Besides these, our enemies possess another warship, the *Za-Shima*, which struck a submarine mine at the same time as the *Hatsouze*, and received such serious damage that we can look at it as being definitely unserviceable. According to recent information this ship sank whilst it was being towed towards a Japanese port. As, however, up to the present, we have not received any official confirmation of the loss of this vessel, I include it in the list, so that, whatever may happen, we may not have any unpleasant surprise in store for us with reference to it.

Let us finally add that beyond these ships there are two old warships, one of which, the *Chin-Yen*, is armed with four 305 mm.

guns (certainly a little antiquated, but still not to be wholly ignored)* ; and protected by excellent armour-plating of 355 mm. thickness. Then there are from twelve to fifteen first and second class cruisers with armoured decks, with modern guns and with a good turn of speed. As to the torpedo-boat flotilla, it is very difficult to say anything very definite about it. During the last ten months of war it has met with very considerable losses, and it will probably meet with more before the arrival of our squadron at the seat of war.

At any rate, I shall not ignore those ships which our enemies may have been able to complete since February, 1904, as well as those which have reached them from abroad, and I reckon that we ought to be prepared to encounter a flotilla of fifty-six or even sixty torpedo-boats of various types and classes. To all these let us still add ten or fifteen gunboats, as well as several submarines, and we shall have a fairly exact record of the forces with which Admiral Togo would be able to confront us.

* If we can believe certain rumours on this subject, the Japanese have lately added to them 4 pieces of 125 mm.

Our second Pacific Squadron.

Our second Pacific Ocean Squadron, first of all, comprises the warships, *Kniaz-Souvorof*, *Emperor Alexander III.*, *Borodino*, *Orel* and *Osliaibia*; next to this powerful homogeneous division we may place: the *Sissoi Veliky*, an old battleship, furnished with modern guns, and another, the *Navarin*, of equally obsolete type, although with up-to-date guns. Admiral Rodjestvensky has only one armoured cruiser (the *Nachimof*, an old ship with antiquated guns); he has further under his command, the *Oleg*, an excellent protected cruiser of recent construction, and five first and second class cruisers with armoured decks, amongst which is the *Dimitri-Donskoi*, which, although provided with modern guns, is itself of an obsolete type. Finally, the squadron has but twelve torpedo-boat destroyers with it.

As to the division which is at present at Vladivostok, it consists of two armoured cruisers, the *Gromoboï* and the *Rossia* (of which the first alone is furnished with

armour-plating of sufficient thickness); a protected cruiser of the same type as the *Oleg*, the *Bogatyr*, and of several old sea-going torpedo-boats.

Admiral Rodjestvensky cannot count on the Port Arthur Squadron.

Without doubt, our squadron, blockaded in Port Arthur, still comprises a relatively considerable number of ships (5 squadron battleships, 1 armoured cruiser, 1 cruiser with armoured decks, as well as a flotilla of torpedo-boats, torpedo-destroyers, and gunboats); but what can its precise strength at present be? Can Admiral Rodjestvensky seriously count upon it on its arrival? It would be more than rash to say so. In my opinion it is better to ignore the Port Arthur squadron altogether, and so act that our second squadron might of itself alone be able to regain the command of the sea. Indeed, as everybody knows, at the time of the sea-fight of August 10th, our ships had left Port Arthur with a very small number of guns; many of their best pieces had of necessity then already been taken for the purpose of reinforcing the armaments of

the forts defending the fortress. This had been necessary, as at the commencement of the war the defensive works, having been of a provisional character, had been hurriedly armed with guns of very faulty construction ; and so, in addition to the pieces of ordnance of small calibre, we were obliged to also take about half of the total number of pieces of 75 mm. and a quarter of the 152 mm. guns from each of our vessels. Not only had we thus deprived our ships of a great part of their best guns, but we had also taken from them ammunition, men, and officers. Under these conditions, every ship of our squadron had been deprived of about a third of its original strength.

But as the enemy's assaults and attacks against the different forts constituting its defensive works have multiplied since August 10th, General Stoessel has been compelled to take from our vessels a constantly increasing number of guns, shells and sailors, and it is absolutely impossible for us to know, even approximately, what is the present strength of our squadron ; perhaps is is, in fact, totally deprived of guns, and has only retained the heavy pieces

which could not be transhipped! Recently I have seen some extracts from the *Novi Krai* (reprinted in the *Novoe Vremya*), in which mention was made of "batteries of naval artillery and the arrangements for firing them, of special corps of sailors commanded by naval officers."

Even before the battle of August 10th, the Japanese had taken a strong position before the place, and during their bombardments, they were able to send into the basin and roadstead a very considerable number of projectiles, sometimes causing fairly serious damage to our vessels and losses to their crews.

For example, Admiral Withoeft (who was afterwards killed in the battle of August 10th) was slightly wounded on board his own ship, as well as several of his staff officers, in consequence of the explosion of a shell fired by the besiegers. Others also fell in the docks and building-yards, which caused much damage, and afterwards rendered the task of repairing our vessels a very difficult one.

The Japanese batteries were then much farther off, and our foes did not yet possess

the large siege-pieces, which they only landed in September ; but, nevertheless, they already rained projectiles on the port and the roadstead, because, as we must bear in mind, the capture of Port Arthur meant for them the possession of our fleet, and the bombardment of the fortress meant also above all for them crippling our ships with their fire. Ah ! what can be the present state of our squadron, when, for example, we know that the hospital ship *Angara*, struck by several shells, has sunk in the inner roadstead. Of what use could these unfortunate vessels, more or less damaged, and without guns, and almost without crews, be to us ? How could we repair them in ruined docks, within the range of the enemy's guns ; and, besides, what could be the good of repairing them when their coal supplies must be diminishing from day to day, the greater part being used for the preparation of drinking water, for since the water supply was cut off, our garrison has naturally had to find a means of providing their own drinking water. And then, have not the dredging ships, which are indispensable for taking up mines before our fleet could make a sortie, been destroyed

in the harbour, and have not our enemies taken advantage of the opportunity to mine at their ease the approaches to Port Arthur from the sea. It is, in my opinion, foolish to count on that which must be nothing but the ruins of our squadron ; and we should really place a cross, as we do in the case of the dead, before the names of the glorious vessels of which it was formed.*

The part played by our Port Arthur Squadron should be considered as at an end. It has been sacrificed for the defence of the fortress from the land side.

The time when it had a part to play has passed—we should frankly recognise the fact—passed beyond recall ! The best chance which it had was on the occasion of the sortie on June 23rd, and finally of that on August 10th. On June 23rd, as also on August 10th, it returned to Port Arthur, thus clearly condemning itself to play a purely passive part—that of helping with its guns the very precarious defence of the land works. Although it has thus rendered

* Fortune, which continues to be so much against us, has just confirmed, alas ! sooner than I should have thought, my theories and assertions.

appreciable services, this is not a part worthy of a large squadron, which should have played to the very end a principal and active part in the events of this war.

Port Arthur naturally recalls to our minds the story of Sebastopol—in fact, the position was identical; then, too, we sacrificed our fleet for our fine Black Sea fortress. It is also in the same manner that we defended Petropavlovsk; one after the other our ships came to anchor at the entrance of the port, and landed their guns, which went to reinforce the land batteries, and then the crews and officers joined the garrison.

It would be easy enough to find further analogous cases. I will, however, confine myself to recalling how the ship *Rossia* defended Sveaborg, by obstructing the channel and setting up a triple row of guns against the enemy. All these cases show how badly we understand the part which a fleet should play in warfare, and how little we know how to turn our ships to the greatest advantage, because we will not, in times of peace, do what is necessary to enable our ships to develop their full fighting strength.

It is owing to this that we are powerless to appreciate—I will not say the use of a fleet, but its most natural and best sphere of work, and that we are looked upon as being far more of a Continental than a Naval Power. Neither Sebastopol nor the Berlin Congress has taught us adequate lessons, and this war with Japan will confirm those which, up to the present, we have drawn only from history! It is indeed difficult for us to familiarise ourselves with naval questions! What were in fact our plans as to the Port Arthur fleet? We have again thought that we ought to sacrifice our fleet for the naval fortress, blinding ourselves to the fact that, without the fleet, the latter could no longer be of any real use. Is not the object of a naval fortress to shelter a fleet before it puts to sea; to serve as a place of refuge for it, when, after a battle, it returns to renew its supplies and to repair its damage in order to sally forth again to attack the enemy?

Port Arthur had not been rendered a proper base for our fleet.

We had organised a line of defences on

the land side, which we had not even had the time to complete, and which, indeed, were so weak and so incomplete that, from the beginning of the siege, as soon as the Japanese appeared before our advanced works, they were able to fire upon the naval ship-building yards and docks. How, from that time, was it possible for our ships to have found in a place in such a condition a safe haven in which they could continue to take in their supplies and execute their repairs ? Indeed, nothing was ready ; there were not sufficient engineers, or *matériel*, or guns, and, of course, when the war broke out, we had not sufficient time to send to Port Arthur everything required there ; and this is not to be wondered at if we remember that the distance which separates us from our Far Eastern citadel is not less than 10,000 versts. We had not even a sufficient number of investment torpedoes, and the special machinery for laying them was almost entirely wanting. Ought we not to have stored up a large quantity of mines and torpedoes at Port Arthur, and why was it not understood that such neglect terribly minimised the value of our squadron as an

offensive force. We have had to choose between the loss of this fortress in an imperfect state of defence and that of our squadron ; we have not hesitated to sacrifice the latter, and in an attempt to save the town we have disarmed our ships. It was necessary, in the plight in which we were, to take this course, for it was, in fact, imposed upon us. It was a painful resolution ; but we had, if possible, to save the fortress at any cost, and thus try and save our ships from the destruction with which the enemy menaced them if the place capitulated. But should not our squadron have done something for itself, and instead of being content, as I have just said, to play a purely passive part, ought it not have run the risk of a sortie, have engaged the enemy in battle, and have sought to have inflicted upon him, even at the price of its own loss, irreparable damage ?

The sacrifice of the fleet at the time of the siege of Sebastopol cannot be compared to that which we have just made of our first Pacific Squadron.

This is what our sailors of the Black Sea

wished to do at the time of the siege of Sebastopol, but we did not allow it, and in my opinion we were right, for what would our poor sailing ships have been able to do against the steamships of the Allies? There was no hope, and it was useless to send our sailors forth to certain death. The naval resources of France, and especially of England, were far superior to ours; and, even in the event of our Black Sea fleet having succeeded in causing some loss to the Allies, we should not have reaped the slightest advantage by the sortie, because the ships, which we might have rendered unserviceable, would have soon been replaced. And we, on the contrary, could not count upon any reinforcement. If a squadron of steamships had been able to leave the Baltic and to raise the blockade of Sebastopol, or if the Allies had had no naval division in reserve, then the sortie of our Black Sea Squadron would have been necessary. It would have been incumbent upon it to have made an attempt at any cost to weaken as much as possible the squadrons of the Allies in order to have facilitated the task of the fleet, which, leaving the Baltic ports,

would have gone to the relief of Sebastopol. But that was not our position, for the port of Sebastopol could not have had any hope of transforming in its dockyards our sailing frigates into warships propelled by steam ; moreover, the fortress was badly defended from the land side and its garrison was but small. At this date Sebastopol was not really a properly constructed naval fortress, and the one end to which our efforts should then have been directed, was to have defended it at any price against the attacks of the Allies, in order to be able to afterwards make it the great military port of the powerful squadron which was one day to cruise in the Black Sea.

This is what we did, and our sailing ships, which could be of no use to us in future wars, rendered us the only service of which they were capable ; they were sunk, and thus obstructed the channel and prevented the enemy from getting into the inner roadstead. As to their guns, ammunition, supplies, these were all landed to be added to the resources which the fortress already possessed, and the crews joined the army. This was, I repeat, the only course open to

us, and Sebastopol fell, because on the land side, where our line of communications was difficult, we could fight at a disadvantage with the Allies who possessed rapid communications by sea. And it was the fall of Sebastopol which at this date put the end to our Black Sea Squadron, and not, as might be thought, the destruction of the ships of which it was composed.

Let us now return to Port Arthur, the position of which is not at all identical.

A second Pacific Squadron has just set sail to join the first, and Japan has no reserve fleet. It is therefore quite clear—nobody, in fact, can dispute it—that if Port Arthur were not able, until the arrival of the reinforcing fleet, to offer absolute protection and an inviolable refuge to our first squadron, the latter would have necessarily to make for another port where it could wait in safety—Vladivostok, for example. And if the Japanese tried at all costs to prevent this, it would have to accept battle, and maintain it with the utmost obstinacy, until its last gun had fired its last shot. Even at the price of its own existence it ought to have inflicted such considerable losses on

the enemy that he would have found it impossible to fight the second squadron, which in this manner would have been able to ensure, without a shadow of doubt, our command of the sea. This plan has not been carried out, and now it is too late to adopt it ; and therefore we will say no more about it. We will leave to history the task of discussing the wisdom of that which we have done.

We will limit ourselves to remarking that if we had really had this project in view, we should have been unable to have deprived our squadron of a single gun before the decisive battle which it had to fight with the enemy.

The part which naval fortresses ought to play.

But the insufficient armament of our forts, the incessant losses of men and *matériel* which we have sustained, obliged us to draw on the resources of our fleet—a thing which ought never to have happened. Naval fortresses are intended to be arsenals for the fleets, and, in no case, have they the right to ask of the squadrons, which they shelter,

supplies and ammunition, which under ordinary circumstances they ought not to require.

And so, when we hear of the fall of Port Arthur—which cannot be long delayed—we shall be constrained with grief to admit that we have deliberately sacrificed our fleet, and that Admiral Rodjestvensky will find himself opposed by a Japanese squadron, of which the fighting power will have hardly been weakened in any way. And then, another question, full of peril for us, arises, viz.: When the defenders of Port Arthur consider that it is impossible for them to resist any longer, what shall we do with our ships which are bottled up in this port? The roadsteads are so shallow that we shall not be able to sink them completely. Some say that we could blow them up with dynamite, but this operation is not so easy as they seem to think. We doubtless could, without the slightest difficulty, make rents in the hulls of the vessels by the aid of explosives, but these damages would not be irreparable, and it is not thus that a warship of several thousand tons can be rendered unserviceable like a small merchantman.

I maintain that to render all repairs absolutely impossible at a future date we must have a large quantity of explosives at our disposal, and I do not think that, when this memorable siege comes to an end, the defenders of Port Arthur will have sufficient explosives for the work.

This is the suggestion of absolute despair. The forts, which can no longer be occupied, can be blown up, and the docks and ship-building yards, which are threatened with capture by the enemy, can be destroyed. But the Japanese confidently reckon on being able to use some of the vessels which they will take from us when they take the fortress. And so, I say again, would it not be far better, even now that all is lost and that we have no longer any chance on the sea, would it not be better at the last moment that, whatever their condition, our ships should leave the port and—if they should be unable to damage a Japanese unit—succumb to the enemy's fire as the *Rurik* did, instead of being blown up in the roadstead?

If our ships suffered excessively from the plunging fire of the Japanese we could adopt the last means left of preserving them until

the arrival of the reinforcing squadron, which would consist in submerging them as far as the shallowness of the inner roadstead of Port Arthur would allow ; the water would, in fact, protect them from the enemy's fire and would cause them damage of a kind which could be repaired ; for we could pump out the water and afterwards undertake the necessary repairs. We could also take a certain number of our vessels into the outer roadstead, where the enemy's fire would cause them less damage, but where, on the other hand, they would, however, be exposed to the attacks of the Japanese torpedo-boats. We could take a certain number of our ships there, sheltering them behind the hulls of the fire-ships which the Japanese sank there when they tried to block up the channel. But if I discuss here the measures to take at the last moment, it is not that I do not cherish still the hope that Port Arthur will hold out until the arrival of the second Pacific Ocean Squadron. It is simply because I promised to speak the truth that I have desired not to ignore the hypothesis of the capitulation of our stronghold ; and it is also to show that I was right

in saying just now that it was truly foolish to still count upon the *débris* of the squadron which is shut up there. If the ships which we still have there attempted a sortie and managed to cause the Japanese fleet some damage and to effect a junction with Admiral Rodjestvensky, certainly the task of the latter would become a very great deal easier ; but it is absolutely necessary that under existing conditions he should be placed in a position to fight the enemy single-handed.

CHAPTER IV.

14-27 November, 1904.

Admiral Rodjestvensky could not count upon the cruisers at Vladivostok.

After having spoken at such length of the part which the Port Arthur Squadron might still be able to play, we must now say a few words on the help which we could expect from our Vladivostok cruisers. Without doubt, there is a possibility of their effecting a junction with the second squadron. I do not say that they cannot, but here again the assistance is most unlikely, and one on which we could not at all reckon.

The difficulty of a junction of the Vladivostok cruisers with the Second Pacific Squadron.

The difficulty does not lie precisely in the

sortie ; in fact, I even believe that if the Japanese were now blockading the port our cruisers would still be able to escape, because it would always be easy for them to elude the enemy's watch during dark, stormy nights. But the difficulty would lie in making the necessary arrangements with Admiral Rodjestvensky, and in agreeing on the precise date and place at which to meet. These would have to be kept absolutely secret, as otherwise our Vladivostok squadron would run the risk of being surprised and destroyed in the meanwhile by superior forces.

Moreover, Admiral Rodjestvensky would not be able to alter at the last moment either the date or the place of meeting agreed upon ; he, in fact, might have to do this owing to unforeseen circumstances, which might have unexpectedly arisen during his voyage. Our Vladivostok cruisers could take their coal on board, either on the open sea, or by putting into some islands having no connection with the network of submarine cables. It is, therefore, most rash to predict now that the junction of the Vladivostok division with our second

squadron would be able to take place at any specified date.

Besides, at the time when it should be on the point of taking place, Admiral Rodjestvensky would have already entered the sphere of active naval operations, and would consequently run the risk of coming into collision with the enemy and of having to attack him, because he would not be able to make his choice as to the place and time of the fight, but would have to be guided by Admiral Togo's movements.

And, lastly, it must be noted that we ought, in case of need, to be in a position to communicate by telegraph with the Vladivostok division ; and that (even admitting that our cruisers might be able to touch at a telegraphic station on their voyage) the Far Eastern cables belong either to our enemies or to the English, who would obviously not regard tampering with our dispatches, or intercepting them, or even communicating the purport to their allies as any breach of neutrality. Have not analogous cases occurred in time of peace, owing to the kindly feeling shown to us by the English ?

There is little ground for hoping that the Vladivostok cruisers would be able to effect a junction with Admiral Rodjestvensky.

To effect a junction with the second Pacific Squadron our Vladivostok cruisers would be obliged to get round the Japanese fleet, which would, of course, take up a position on the way between them and Admiral Rodjestvensky ; but in order to evade the enemy our cruisers would have to be kept accurately and constantly informed of all that Admiral's movements ; but there is reason to think that the exact opposite would happen. They will know nothing, whereas the Japanese will be fully informed of our plans by their English friends, as well as by the numerous spies they have in the towns of the Far East.

And in this manner our Vladivostok division would run the risk of being beaten by a superior fleet, and perhaps even of being destroyed if the battle were fought at too great a distance from its port of refuge. In such case its ships would be forced to seek refuge in neutral ports ; unfortunately, we have already been frequently obliged to

have recourse to this humiliating method of disarmament.

It is extremely difficult to keep the operations of the Vladivostok division secret.

However, let us suppose that our cruisers could not be prevented from forcing the blockade. It would be very difficult, if not indeed impossible, to keep their sortie secret, because at Vladivostok there are many Chinese, whose services we unfortunately cannot do without in the camp, and who are only so many disguised spies in our midst.

In spite of the most careful and rigorous censorship over the telegraphic dispatches, when on August 14th, at six o'clock in the morning, our cruisers sailed out of Vladivostok to meet Admiral Withoeft's squadron, the news of their sortie was actually published the very same evening in the London newspapers! Of course, some spy had sent to an address not calculated in itself to raise any kind of suspicion, a pre-arranged dispatch which was not likely to attract the notice of the censor. We certainly are in a position to put an end to all

this kind of thing ; we could stop all telegrams at the time of the sortie of our cruisers. But even this might be of no real advantage to us, because the whole universe would at once understand the meaning of the sudden rupture of communications with Vladivostok.

It follows, then, that it is totally impossible for us to prevent the Japanese knowing of the movements of our cruisers. Our enemies, indeed, will be able to redouble their vigilance in their own way, and at the proper time, so as to keep strict watch over the three Straits of Perugia, Tsougaru and Corea, thus preventing our ships from getting out of the Japanese Sea. Indeed, the Japanese will have ample time in which to take these precautions, because, to reach one of the three straits which I have just named, it would take our cruisers two days.

We can no longer hope that our Vladivostok cruisers will succeed in drawing off a strong Japanese division.

If, therefore, for some reason or another, the Vladivostok division should not succeed

in effecting a junction with the second Pacific Squadron, there would still remain an important part for it to play ; it ought to divert a Japanese detachment from Admiral Rodjestvensky by drawing their ships upon itself, as it did on August 14th. In fact, on that day our three cruisers alone neutralised a Japanese squadron of seven ships, amongst which were four armoured cruisers—that is to say, a force about three times stronger than themselves. In this manner they rendered an unquestionable service to Admiral Withoeft, and it was not their fault if Prince Ouchtomsky did not know how to turn this to good account. Besides, if Admiral Jessen had been more capable, and if he had not allowed himself to be cut off from Vladivostok, the *Rurik* would certainly not have been sunk, and we should have had one brilliant feat to our credit. But the loss of this ship which, in my opinion, could have been avoided, added one more sorrow to the dark list, which on the sea began for us at the commencement of the war.

Would it not now be folly to suppose that Admiral Jessen will succeed in effecting a

junction with Admiral Rodjestvensky, when he was unable to do it on August 14th? We can and ought to hope for it, but we have no right to count upon it, because the Japanese will be able to put themselves, as I have just remarked, between the Vladivostok division and the second Pacific Squadron. They will thus be in a particularly favourable position, by which they will be enabled to attack both simultaneously. In fact, if the Japanese were forced to detach some considerable time in advance one of their divisions against that of Vladivostok, they would run the risk, in the event of their not having sent enough ships, of having a blow inflicted upon them by our cruisers which would place them in a very serious position for the decisive battle which they would afterwards be forced to fight with Admiral Rodjestvensky. And, on the other hand, if they detached too strong a division, would they not weaken themselves for the decisive hour of the arrival of the second squadron? I do not believe that they will do anything of the sort; they will rather try by means of their fast ships to draw Admiral Jessen as far as

possible away from Vladivostok, and to force him to fight the bulk of their forces some little time before the arrival of the second Pacific Squadron. They would then be able to deal with him definitely, and afterwards concentrate all their strength against Rodjěstvensky.

Will the main body of the Japanese force go south to meet Admiral Rodjěstvensky?

As we see, our cruisers will have to choose between two equally difficult situations: remaining near Vladivostok, for example, in the Korean Straits, and, as a consequence, abandoning all idea of a junction with the relieving fleet; or else following the fast-going Japanese ships sent against them—that is to say, rushing into conflict with the bulk of the enemy's forces at too early a period, and going forward to certain destruction. That is certainly a difficult question, and I am not able to find any satisfactory solution to it. However, perhaps the Japanese may have a good reason for detaching a comparatively strong division against our cruisers. Indeed, they might fear that the latter, whilst their fleet advanced to meet

the second Pacific Squadron, would act vigorously on their communications by sea—particularly by seizing and sinking, as these cruisers have already done, their military transports in the Corean Straits—or else might go to the relief of Port Arthur, if that place still held out.

But when I reflect upon it, I also see many reasons why the Japanese would not act in this manner.

In the first place, it would unquestionably be difficult for them to send their principal ships far towards the south ; whilst, on the contrary, they would gain a material advantage by waiting for our squadron in the Yellow Sea. They would not be going to a great distance from their base, and this would allow their ships, when damaged, easily to return to ports where they could undergo the necessary repairs.

And why should they sail south to meet Rodjestvensky and offer him battle, when by remaining near their base they would have a great advantage over him ? They would be able, by means of small squadrons composed of auxiliary cruisers and torpedo destroyers, to constantly threaten the safety

of the transports which would accompany him, and thus paralyse all his movements.

Further, we must remember that, at the time of the arrival of our second squadron at the seat of war, the Japanese would have been able to accumulate in Corea such large quantities of stores that they would be able to temporarily suspend further carriage of them by sea, a thing which they will clearly not fail to do at the time when they are compelled to concentrate their forces in view of the decisive struggle. And if, in addition, Port Arthur should be in their hands, they would be quite free to advance leisurely with their whole fleet towards the China Seas well before Admiral Rodjestvensky can get there.

Can the Russian Press properly discuss the probable operations which will take place in the Far East.

Ah! I see at once the objection which nervous people will not fail to raise to my suggestion.

“Why do you thus open the eyes of our enemies, and prevent them from falling into the errors which they would probably com-

mit? Why do you disclose our plans to them? Why do you reveal to them the strength of our forces and our resources?"

I do entreat those who use this language to me to cease looking upon the Japanese as altogether destitute of intelligence; for, I think, they have proved sufficiently from the commencement of this war their high qualities and capacity. Is it to be supposed that they are not weighing the arguments which I have advanced to you? Assuredly the facts upon which I have based my arguments are both undoubted and fully intelligible to all? I have never spoken of our plans, if I remember rightly, and I have never betrayed our war-secrets. I am only saying here that which any man acquainted with this war could state equally well: I limit myself to giving a summary of the criticisms and discussions which the foreign newspapers are continually publishing. Why should I not too discuss the same matters? Believe me, the Japanese are not gravely waiting for our advice!

In debating these questions I only desire to place the Russian people in the position of being able to follow the course of the war,

of which it does not appear to have, as far as I have been able to judge, a very clear notion. Your objections will not, therefore, prevent me from continuing, as long as my strength permits, the task which I have undertaken and which I hold to be indispensable, because the Russian public is ill-informed on the war, and especially so on the naval operations which are of such vital importance for us! In revealing all the facts which I have published in this way I do not open the eyes of the Japanese, but only those of my fellow-countrymen.

We have wished not to think of this war, and even now we only reluctantly believe in its existence. What harm is there, I ask, in discussing our want of foresight and its fatal effects, since they are now universally known?

The Japanese knew our real position in advance, and fully, too, and in its most minute details. They knew that it was in their interest to commence hostilities. And to-day they are reaping the benefit of their wise forethought.

If we had been able to have revealed our defects earlier, and to have made them

known to the Russian people, our attitude would have probably changed, and this war would not have had so disastrous a beginning for us. And this, let me state to those who imagine that they keep secrets which are public property, would have been really useful to our country.

But, allow me to tell you, rejoins one of them, that at the time of the battle of August 10th, the Japanese detached from their chief squadron relatively powerful forces against our Vladivostok cruisers, and according to you they thus committed a fault. Why should you explain it to them now, when most certainly your doing so can be of no kind of use to us ?

Did the Japanese make the mistake of dividing their naval forces at the battles of August 10th and August 14th ?

It ought not to be a matter of wonder if I consider it necessary briefly to explain what I mean. First of all, I should remark that my arguments cannot be taken as any authority for saying that the Japanese made a mistake at the battle of August 10th. Our squadron set sail on August 10th at

eight o'clock in the morning, and immediately afterwards the torpedo-destroyer *Reshitelny* set out for Chefoo; she arrived there the next day, August 11th, at dawn, and immediately informed our consul there of Admiral Withoeft's sortie.

The news reached Vladivostok the same evening at six o'clock, and twelve hours after (the time required to get up steam), that is to say, on August 12th, at six o'clock in the morning, our cruisers left Vladivostok, and sailed towards the Corean Straits, where they arrived on August 14th at dawn, and almost at once encountered Admiral Kamimura's division. But, as I have just pointed out, the news of the sortie of our Vladivostok cruisers was published in the evening of August 12th by the London newspapers, which consequently had obviously been informed of the sortie at the same time as the Japanese admirals, Togo and Kamimura. That case well shows the difficulty with which we hold our communications, and the great facility with which the Japanese obtain information of our projects. It is thus clear that the Vladivostok cruisers went out after the battle of August 10th

had been fought, that is to say, when Prince Ouchtomsky had already returned to Port Arthur, when the warship *Cesarevitch* was at Kiao-Tcheu, and the cruiser *Askold* had arrived at Shanghai.

Besides, the Japanese received immediate information as to all these events, whilst we, on the contrary, to cite only one example, did not learn at Vladivostok until August 16th of the loss of the *Rurik*, excepting of course through uncertain rumours which were circulated the day before the official confirmation. Similarly, it was only after August 14th that we commenced to receive news relative to the results of the battle of August 10th, and it was not until the 24th of the same month that we received Admiral Reitzenstein's report respecting the *Askold*, and that of Prince Ouchtomsky on the subject of the squadron which had returned to Port Arthur. Thus, as we see, the Japanese were able to send Admiral Kamimura against our cruisers immediately they had knowledge of their sortie, and when they already knew that they had nothing more to fear from Admiral Withoeft's squadron. And when Admiral Jessen en-

gaged Admiral Kamimura in the Korean Straits he did not then know the result of the battle of August 10th !

Before the sortie of our cruisers Admiral Kamimura, with his division, was probably a very short distance behind the forces of Admiral Togo. The two admirals, indeed, communicated with each other uninterruptedly by means of the wireless telegraph ; and in the event of the battle having been a little doubtful, or of our Port Arthur squadron having continued its voyage in the direction of Vladivostok, Kamimura would have doubtless gone at full speed to reinforce Togo's fleet. So that the supposed blunder of the Japanese, in having divided their forces, is far from being indisputably proved. And if it did really happen, we may rest assured that it will not occur again, because our enemies who follow the most insignificant events in the war with care and intelligence, know how to put at once into practice the lessons which it teaches them. We cannot, therefore, seriously count upon the errors that the Japanese may commit. Let us rather think of henceforth building up our plans on more solid foundations.

CHAPTER V.

15-28 November, 1904.

*Admiral Rodjestvensky can only reckon upon
his own squadron.*

I beg the reader to kindly excuse the lengthy disquisitions into which I have allowed myself to be led away, and which I could not possibly put on one side ; of this I now propose to offer some explanation.

My only object in the course of my arguments has throughout been to make it clear to everybody that the second Pacific Ocean Squadron will have to fight with Togo the great battle which should end in giving us the command of the sea and ensure it to us for all time, and that Admiral Rodjestvensky will only be able to positively count on his own ships. If Admiral Rodjestvensky

does not expect any help, either from our ships at Port Arthur or our cruisers at Vladivostok, he will be giving proof of the fine spirit of a great admiral, and nothing can afterwards upset his plans, based as they will be upon reliable calculations.

Do not think that this definition which I have just given of him is an expression of my own, for long ago General Leer gave it, in a standard work, when speaking of Moltke*. "He had," he said, when eulogising the genius of this great German soldier, "the excellent method of subjecting
"all his arguments to an implacable logic,
"and thus his plans were always founded on
"admitted facts and never on fantastic and
"false estimates ; when he elaborated a plan
"of campaign he always took care to suppose
"his forces to be in the most unfavourable
"position, and to give every advantage to
"his enemy. The man who anticipates the
"greatest difficulties is indeed prepared for
"anything.

"With Napoleon III. it was just the
"opposite. The war of 1870, so fatal to

* "Strategy," 5th Edition, 1st Part ; General Operations. (See pp. 379, 380, 390 and 391.)

“France, into which he allowed himself to be
“drawn, seems like the unreasonable anger
“of a violent character, like a strategic mad-
“ness ; no plan, no logical scheme ; self-
“delusions, and nothing more.

“We must not fall into this error—one
“to which we should ceaselessly point—
“because, with few exceptions, men in general
“have a fatal tendency to give themselves
“up to the illusions of Napoleon III., instead
“of making the close and careful calculations
“of Moltke.”

A precious lesson which, alas ! we have too often forgotten ! Let us at least try to profit from it now ; better late than never. To begin with, let us ignore what remains of the first Pacific Squadron, or, in other words, let us not set against the Japanese fleet anything but the second squadron.

*A comparison of the ships of Admiral Rodjest-
vensky with those of Togo.*

I have already shown the composition of the Japanese Navy, and so I will not return to the subject. I will limit myself to saying that, as regards cruisers with armoured decks, Togo possesses at least twice as

many as Admiral Rodjestvensky. As to the disproportion which exists between the torpedo-boat flotillas, this is manifest and indisputable; and, besides, the Japanese will have the enormous advantage of being rapidly and accurately informed of all our movements. I have already explained this, and this it is which, up to the present, has so amply protected our enemies against all surprises. The definite result of the battle—that is to say, the command of the sea—cannot be decided except by the battle between the two divisions of battleships and armoured cruisers.

Battleships and armoured cruisers necessarily compose the real strength of every squadron.

Before this war it was the fashion with us to laugh at these monsters of the sea,* and try to make-believe that a few torpedo-boat flotillas and submarines were sufficient to sink them. I hope that we have now given up such delusions. I do not say that the torpedo-boats and submarines

* We ought to add to the battleships the armoured cruisers which are in general of equally heavy tonnage, but which, on account of their considerable length and their relatively small beam, tack about with less ease.

could not succeed in destroying some battle-ships, because, if that were not so, they would indeed be of little use, and it would be quite unnecessary to build any ; but I repeat that light flotillas will never be able to contend with squadrons composed of armoured ships ; and that in a naval battle a decisive victory will never be obtained without a squadron of battle-ships and armoured cruisers.

If, during the battle, our second squadron should happen to be destroyed and to lose its battle-ships, we should have no right to suppose that it had been beaten by the light Japanese flotillas ; we should be simply forced to acknowledge that our squadron was too weak to contend with success against the powerful armoured ships of the Japanese Fleet, and that the slightest loss suffered by it had placed it in a state of obvious inferiority by which it had been prevented from that time from maintaining the struggle with any chance of success. We should be obliged to attribute the defeat to the want of auxiliary ships—I mean of cruisers, torpedo-boats, and torpedo-destroyers, necessary to cope with those of the enemy. Let us, indeed, for

the moment suppose that the Japanese had only their light squadrons and possessed no large ships. Our armoured division would doubtless meet with losses in the attacks made on it by these little, fast-sailing ships, but still it would secure, beyond all doubt, our command of the sea ; and from the date of its arrival at the seat of war the enemy's armies would be cut off from Japan and, consequently, be hopelessly condemned to inevitable defeat.

The armoured division of the second squadron is only about half the strength of that of Togo.

As against the seven battle-ships of the second Pacific Squadron we find that Togo has thirteen (battle-ships and armoured cruisers); that is to say, to give it in coefficients—the term used to measure the relative strength of the ships in two fleets—we find 334 for the armoured division of Admiral Rodjestvensky and 613 for that of Togo ; or, in other words, our squadron is not half as strong as that of the enemy. These figures, in my opinion, may well afford us food for serious reflection. . . .

Let us now suppose—that we ought, as I have just shown, to be upon our guard against such fallacious hypotheses—that the Vladivostok cruisers managed to draw off four Japanese armoured cruisers; then Togo's fighting co-efficient will be 451, or an inferiority for us which would be represented by 1.3.

We must not speculate only on Admiral Rodjestvensky's victory, we must make sure of it.

This is why I was right when I said that, while we might hope for Admiral Rodjestvensky's success, we cannot make certain of it; and in a case of such paramount importance, in a position of such a serious character, we must not rely upon uncertainties, but upon certainties.

Are the co-efficients sure indications?

I must now meet the objections with which I am sure to be faced and deal with such as may be of real importance. In the first place, I may be asked what our co-efficients mean, and up to what point they should be actually relied on. As a matter of fact they ignore

all question of the moral element, which cannot be included in a mathematical formula, but which could not properly be ignored.

I admit that this objection is well founded. The system of gauging the mean value of a fighting unit (made up of so many elements—the artillery, thickness of the armour-plating, speed, etc.) has certainly nothing idealistic about it, and I do not claim to introduce anything of the kind now into my calculations.

But still, I feel compelled to put down in black and white upon paper the approximate value of our battle-ships, and if some other method were tried it would be found that the result would be figures practically identical with those which I have brought out in dividing the fighting co-efficients.*

The faultiness of this system of co-efficients has not escaped my notice, and it is precisely to avoid its defects, namely, the aggregation of elements so dissimilar—as,

* The practice of reckoning fighting co-efficients in comparing fleets of war also prevails in foreign navies ; but the system of the pure and simple comparison of the various elements, which should be considered in estimating the value of a fighting unit, has quite as many partisans. I have adopted here the system of co-efficients adopted by our naval academy, and accepted as being the best of all those suggested for the use of terms recognised up to the present time in naval parlance.

for example, the speed and the strength of a man-of-war—that I have not employed it when cruisers with armoured decks and torpedo-boats were in question, and that I have limited myself to indicating their respective number in the two fleets. Besides, in any matter relating to these ships of light burden, the numerical superiority of the Japanese may well be sufficient for us.

But here it is not the same case, for I have only compared the men-of-war with each other—that is to say, ships of the same type—and so the result, which the system of co-efficients has given me, cannot differ from that which I should have obtained if I had successively compared the guns, speed, thickness of the armour-plating, etc., etc., for all warships, being constructed with the same end in view, are all found in the same way.

As to the moral element, I will only say one word about it. To be reasonable on this point we must take it to be equal in both belligerents, and this is what I have done.

There is a second objection very commonly raised in Russia. It is asserted that we

cannot institute a true comparison of the guns, the speed, the armour-plating, etc., of our ships with those of the Japanese vessels if it be based on the state of things which existed at the commencement of the war, that is, before the trying work through which their ships have had to pass subsequently.

“Our squadron,”* said M. K——, in one of his excellent articles, “is mostly made up of entirely new ships, its crews have been well trained, and its guns are excellent. On the other hand, the Japanese fleet had some ships seriously damaged in the battles of August 10th and 14th, and at least six months will be required to complete the necessary repairs to them; besides, they will no longer be able to utilise her guns of heavy calibre. It cannot be doubted that we have really a great chance of securing the victory. To be convinced of this, it is only necessary to take into proper consideration, as I have just pointed out, the condition in which the enemy’s ships and guns must now be.”

I respectfully beg to differ with M. K——.

* See article in *Novoe Vremya*, No. 10,308.

I am wholly unable to accept these views, and, indeed, his words singularly recall those fallacies of which I have already spoken, and against which General Leer has energetically combatted.* I will first say that the engines on which we can least depend are precisely those which have just left the hands of the artificers and which we have not yet had the time to test ; they may well cause difficulties which it is impossible to foresee, as, in order to be sure that engines will work satisfactorily, they must have been subjected to proper trials.

The Japanese have not only been able to put the engines of their vessels to proper tests, but, further, instead of remaining idle in their ports, as ours have done, their ships have remained at sea and prepared themselves for further fighting. Their engineers have thus been able quietly to satisfy themselves as to the proper working of their engines.

It is an established fact that, with the exception of entirely new engines, such as

* Unfortunately Admiral Bireleff has been bold enough to give his sanction to these views. Cf. No. 10,333 of the *Novoe Vremya*. In doing this his object was, no doubt, to still the anxiety of the Russian people, but this, indeed, was no time for anything of this kind.

those of which we have just spoken, damage is less likely to result from the machines themselves than from the inexperience or carelessness of the engineers.

It is thus clear that, under these conditions, the Japanese have a manifest superiority over us, which only the long voyage, which our squadron has to accomplish, can diminish.

We cannot rely upon the bad condition of the Japanese boilers.

The situation is exactly the same as regards the boilers and steam pipes. Indeed, the boilers wear out much more quickly than the engines, and require to be replaced every ten or twelve years. They could hardly have become unserviceable at the end of a single year, and I do not believe it could be so, as I know that the Japanese are most careful in the way they use them.

No, I do not intend to seek consolation in baseless illusions. Let us rather remember that, at the time of the engagements of August 10th and 14th, the Japanese attained and kept up a speed superior to our own, and for all that all our vessels

were as newly-built as theirs. What then was it? In my opinion we ought not to seek the cause in anything but the prolonged stay of our ships both at Vladivostok and at Port Arthur, especially before the war broke out, when, instead of cruising about, they lay idly riding at anchor in the harbours.

As the Japanese had long been getting ready for war and knew exactly the date on which it would begin, they had naturally put their boilers in perfect order and had replaced all those which had been found not to work satisfactorily. When it is a question of water-tube boilers this work does not present any real difficulty, and it is precisely with water-tube boilers that most of the Japanese vessels are provided.

It is a dangerous fallacy to look upon the Japanese Squadron as having been materially weakened.

Let us now specify which Japanese ships were lost and which were damaged during the battles of August 10th and 14th.

I was able to see with my own eyes our cruisers *Gromoboi* and *Rossia* at the time of

their return to Vladivostok after the battle of August 14th. What struck me most was to find that these two ships, which for five hours had fought a desperate battle with an enemy three times as strong, had only been damaged and that the damage was such as would make a great impression on those who might know nothing about ships, but in the eyes of a sailor would seem quite unimportant; and one of these vessels, the *Rossia*, had armour-plating of so slight a character that she could hardly be compared to the armour-plated cruisers of the present day. I saw tin-plating wrenched off and hanging from the funnels, the ventilators riddled in hundreds of places, ship's boats reduced to mere heaps of fragments, gaping holes in the decks; I saw the officers' quarters and the admiral's cabin quite disfigured, and also in several places traces of fires which had broken out in the hulls of the ships. At first sight all that produced the impression of a dreadful wreck, but after a minute examination I was forced to declare that in reality there was no damage of a very serious character. The relatively thin armour-plates which protected the vital parts

of our cruisers, that is to say, their boilers, engines, rudders and powder magazines, had not been pierced in a single place; there was not a hole made below the water-line; all were above it, and amongst the number of them there were only a few through which the water could come in in any quantity. Under these conditions it was quite possible to carry out at sea all the temporary repairs required.

Out of sixty-four boilers on our two cruisers, three had received slight damages, accidentally caused by metal plates being detached from the interior of the funnels through the explosion of shells. None of the fires which broke out on board took any very serious hold; the most dangerous one had burst out in the armoured part of the fore-part of the cruiser *Rossia*, and this had actually been extinguished in three minutes. It is true that the guns suffered a great deal—especially on board the *Rossia*—but we ought to remark that all the damaged pieces belonged to the unprotected guns, and on the cruiser *Gromoboi*, whose principal pieces are all protected by armour, not a single one had been rendered unserviceable.

On the whole our cruisers only sustained very slight damage, and a month after the battle all the repairs were completed, and that, too, with the poor resources which Vladivostok possessed. The damaged parts were either repaired or replaced, and our vessels were soon ready to fight a further battle, there being absolutely no difference between their condition when repaired and that before the engagement of August 14th. We cannot then help putting the following question :

“ Why should Admiral Kamimura’s cruisers have been rendered weaker by the battle, when they also had fought only for five hours, but under more favourable conditions, because they had the advantage in numbers, enabling them to fire more shells than they could have received ? ” Besides, all the four had much better armour-plating than that of the *Gromoboï*. Leaving the *Rossia*, whose guns are unprotected, out of the question, it is, therefore, self-evident that those of our shells which struck them caused them less damage than their shells caused to our cruisers.

There is a general idea, and many people

still give expression to it, that our guns and our ammunition are of a superior quality to those of the Japanese. There can be no facts to support any such view, seeing that, to begin with, we do not even know the result of our shots on the Japanese vessels.

In my opinion, which is based on the facts already mentioned, the Japanese cruisers must have suffered much less than our own; and that, in view of the fact that they had ports, admirably furnished with all *matériel* required for repairs to their ships, they must have been ready sooner than our own could have been, to have returned to duty and resumed their places in their squadron.

The same could be said of the Japanese vessels which took part in the much less obstinate engagement of August 10th. Whilst that of August 14th involved an uninterrupted cannonade for five long hours,* that of the 10th was no more than a simple artillery duel, lasting three hours and a half, with several intervals which I do not even take into account. It is, moreover,

* See the Reports of Rear-Admiral Jessen and Prince Ouchtomsky.
“Report of the War with Japan,” vol. 23, pp. 437 and 438.

to be observed that during the first engagement, which, according to Admiral Ouchtomsky's report, only amounted to a simple skirmish, in which the firing was at long distance, our ships did not sustain any serious damage.

As for the second part of the battle, it was certainly of a character rather more obstinate, when the fleets drew nearer to each other ; but we only suffered damage of much the same kind as that done to the Vladivostok cruisers. During a battle the crew, employed on different duties, are dispersed all over the ship. However, most of them are either working in the engine-rooms, or at the furnaces or magazines ; others are at the guns, or at some of the numerous machines with which battleships are provided. In short, most of them are in one of the vital parts of the ship, and we can consequently calculate approximately, by the number of the killed and wounded, the number of shells which have taken effect ; that is to say, penetrated the armour-plating or struck the unprotected parts of the ship.

On the six ships which returned to Port

Arthur, five of which were squadron battle-ships, we had 357 men killed and wounded ; and out of these 357 there was a total of 23 officers, or an average of 4 officers and 45 sailors for each ship. The cruiser *Askold* also sustained some light losses, having 4 officers and 54 sailors disabled, and as she took the lead, the Japanese ships must have concentrated their fire upon her. If, on the other hand, the losses of the Vladivostok cruisers are taken into consideration, we shall find that apart from the *Rurik*, which was sunk, there was an average of 9 officers and 221 sailors per ship ! Consequently we are justified in supposing that the Port Arthur squadron sustained much less damage than that of Vladivostok, and I have already shown above that the injuries of the latter were insignificant. We can thus estimate the damage done to the Japanese ships in the engagement of August 10th. It was certainly not greater than that done to our own ships, and must have been quickly repaired. Some people still say that the Japanese guns of large calibre are worn out and are now of little (or even no) further use. This is even the opinion of M. K——. As

for me, I am entirely opposed to such mistaken views.

We must not count upon the bad condition of the Japanese guns.

It is the case that large guns of 10 or 12^{po} calibre, roundly speaking, only fire eighty to a hundred shots, and it is quite possible that the large Japanese guns may have reached about that number. But it is scarcely accurate to say that a gun cannot exceed this maximum.

In reality, a gun is composed of a thick external casing, and of a thin internal tube into which the shell slides ; and it is this interior tube alone which can become worn out in course of time. However, it is quite easy to replace it, and, indeed, even the construction of the gun lends itself to its being replaced. As to the external casing and all the mechanism for regulating the firing of the gun, these would not, under ordinary conditions, require to be renewed.

Under these circumstances, can we for an instant suppose that the Japanese, fully aware of the paramount importance of their victory over Admiral Rodjestvensky's squad-

ron, would be so foolish as not to take the trouble to replace the internal tubes of the large guns of their ships? It is no doubt the fact that the Japanese vessels do not carry guns made in Japan, but those made abroad, and particularly in England. But as long as our enemies retain the command of the sea, who could prevent their getting internal tubes from abroad, and any number even of guns of the latest pattern which they might choose to order?

For example, the Armstrong manufactory does not even conceal the fact that it is at this moment overwhelmed with Japanese orders for tubes, armour-plating, etc., for use in the repair of the damaged parts of the armament of their ships.

The Japanese have sufficient time for all necessary repairs.

The Japanese have more time than they require to complete these repairs. For nearly four months now our first Pacific Ocean squadron has been shut up in Port Arthur; and, little by little, we have disarmed the principal ships to reinforce the armament of the forts which defend the

place. Why, then, should the Japanese vessels not regain their ports, one after the other, and there quietly complete their repairs ?

We have lost the only means we had of preventing the Japanese from doing their repairs.

There was but one way of preventing our enemies from completing their repairs as they liked, and that was to threaten their communications with England and America—these two countries, in fact, furnish the Japanese with all the *matériel* required for the repair of their ships. To do this our squadron ought to have left Port Arthur and gone to Vladivostok. But it is better that I should say no more on this subject. What is the use of re-opening a wound which has caused us so much suffering ? I will limit myself to merely saying that even to-day it is uncertain whether we, Russians, understand the great and disastrous influence which the double return of our squadron to Port Arthur has exercised and will continue to exercise on our military operations !

The crews of the second squadron cannot be better trained than those of the Japanese fleet.

M. K—— confidently asserts that our crews are better trained than those of Admiral Togo. On what is this flattering confidence based? I know not; but what I do know very well is that on board the squadron of Admiral Rodjestvensky there are many reservists quite unused to service. And then, I have a perfect right to suppose that our sailors are far from knowing their new vessels, as these have only just been built.

Undoubtedly a great deal will be learnt during the long voyage that our squadron is on the eve of undertaking; but why should it be better trained than the Japanese squadron, when its stay of more than twelve months at the seat of war must have thoroughly inured its crews? I am unable to appreciate any such view.

Before believing the Japanese fleet to be weakened and worn out we must have some real proof of the fact.

I again repeat that it is most unwise of those people, numerous indeed in Russia, who minimise at will the forces and advantages of the enemy—to multiply, on the other hand, without any kind of proof, our forces and the means at our disposal. If only they would remember the lessons which history has taught us and be careful !

Everybody must remember the stories of the newspapers published before the endeavours made by our Port Arthur squadron to sally out. Throughout the universe the only talk was about Japanese vessels being damaged or rendered unserviceable. We only spoke of vessels in dry dock, or of large ships being sunk. It was even said that the Japanese, not having any more battleships, had, to frighten us, concentrated before Port Arthur merchant ships to which they had given the appearance of men-of-war, etc.

Of course, the Japanese did not deny these fine fables. And must we not in a certain

measure attribute to these fantastic stories, to these unfounded rumours, the fact that we were too ready to treat as intelligence worthy of credit the news of the return to Port Arthur of our squadron, which came back discouraged after having ascertained the presence of the entire Japanese fleet, as well as a numerous torpedo-boat flotilla? In fact, to only cite one example, did we not find Admiral Ouchtomsky in his report declaring that there were as many as 60 torpedo-boats with the Japanese?

Perhaps it was a mistaken hope which produced on our squadron and its commanders such a disastrous impression!

As General Leer says, it is better to prepare ourselves for the worst, so as to be ready for anything.

And so I maintain my view that Admiral Rodjestvensky's squadron is more than one and a half times weaker than that of Admiral Togo, and that we ought no longer to depend only on the first Pacific Ocean Squadron for help. If I have made any mistake in these calculations, it is rather in our favour than that of the Japanese.

The position of the Japanese ports gives a very great advantage to the Japanese fleet.

When first comparing the forces of the armoured squadrons I left out the Japanese battleship *Chin-Yen*, as she is of an obsolete build and has guns of 12^{po} of an old type; but it should, however, not be forgotten that the remainder of her guns are quite modern, and that her boilers have recently been replaced. In the second place, I have not taken into account another disadvantage for us; which is, that in awaiting our squadron, the Japanese will have time to clean the bottoms of their ships. Our ships will, on the other hand, arrive covered with a thick coating of seaweed and barnacles, which will doubtless reduce their speed.* Finally, there is a third cause of inferiority which I have not taken into account: the Japanese will have behind them—that is to say, in the direction which their foes will have to face—a whole series

* When at sea the submerged part of vessels gets covered with a thick bed of barnacles, and in order to preserve their speed, which may, in this way, be diminished from two to three knots, it is necessary to place them in dry dock about every six months for a thorough cleaning.

of ports perfectly equipped, at which they will be able to carry out all necessary repairs. On the other hand, our squadron will be without shelter of any kind, as its principal base, Vladivostok, will be before it ; or, in other words, will be separated from it by the enemy.

This last consideration will have special importance after the battle to be fought with Admiral Togo, and the result of which will doubtless afford us fresh data for our future calculations. In any event, this last disadvantage will not be one of an insignificant character, since it must greatly hinder Admiral Rodjestvensky by paralyzing his liberty of action ; not being in a position to repair any serious damage which his vessels may sustain, he will be forced to be much more prudent and much less venturesome than Admiral Togo.

CHAPTER VI.

The absolute necessity of reinforcing Admiral Rodjestvensky's squadron.

Now that, at the end of this long and careful argument, I have proved, as far as my weak powers would allow, the manifest inferiority of Admiral Rodjestvensky's squadron as compared to the forces with which the Japanese would confront him—now that I have shown the supreme importance of the work entrusted to our fleet—I cannot, really, for a moment, believe that we have not already taken or have not determined to take all possible steps, to do all that mortal men can do, to send immediate reinforcements to our squadron, and subsequently further reinforcements, so as to give it the power of carrying out fully the work

which the command of the sea will have placed within its reach because—and that is our fond hope—it must emerge successful from the decisive battle in which it will be engaged with Admiral Togo.

Could it be otherwise? And then, if not? No! no! this is impossible; let us drive such sombre thoughts away, and let us rather consider the question of reinforcements.

First of all let us examine how we can at once reinforce our fleet, or in other words, let us consider of what ships a third Pacific Ocean Squadron could be made up, for that squadron is absolutely indispensable. Clearly no one who has been unable to refute my arguments will be able to deny the necessity for its departure.

It is impossible to base our calculations on idle fallacies, and it is madness to accept as facts the tales told by certain newspapers.

Newspapers, and especially those published abroad, have, from time to time, given currency to vague and wild rumours as to our having purchased battleships from some

insignificant Republic, and as to such ships having lately reinforced our squadron through having joined it at some unknown point in the ocean, and so on

Personally, I can place no faith in such fables. No! our hide-bound bureaucracy (and this especially applies to the War Department) is not exactly fitted for carrying out successfully a difficult matter of the kind, requiring as it does both fearlessness and considerable tact. I do not believe that our officials would have the requisite initiative, ability or versatility for, as a rule, they seem glued to their principles and scarcely to know how even to take advantage of favourable circumstances.

Of course I should be only too pleased to admit the fact, and should be the first to rejoice at its being the case. But then, would it not be exceedingly foolish to count seriously on these phantom vessels? These would be calculations after the manner of Napoleon III. and not after that of Moltke. If these ships could join our squadron so much the better, but, if otherwise, we must so arrange matters that our plans will not be jeopardised by their absence—even if we



ON BOARD THE ARMoured CRUISER *GROMOBOI*.

A 75^{mm} gun after the battle of August 14, 1904.

[To face page 162.]

have taken these phantom vessels seriously into consideration.

The Russian is naturally a dreamer, for this is a failing which is characteristic of our race. Do we not see numbers of our educated classes buying wretched lottery tickets with their last pound, and then wasting their lives in dreaming that they will win the first prize? They fold their hands, buoying themselves up with idle hopes; and thus they fail to see how much they miss which would be for their good, and which they could easily—so very easily—secure. They should now abandon their dreams and set seriously to work!

In military matters, at any rate, it is absolutely impossible that we can give ourselves up to dreams of the kind, and, above all, when we are actually at war.

Do not let us, therefore, fall into any such error, or further trouble ourselves about these imaginary vessels. If I have spoken of them it is simply because of the persistent rumours which were circulated on the point, and also not to lose the opportunity of once again declaring that I do not in any way base my arguments on any such vain delusions.

Which ships of the Baltic Fleet should form part of the third squadron?

I do not wish to speak of anything but the resources which we actually possess—anything but the ships which we actually have. In the first place let us see if we can draw any reinforcements from the Baltic fleet! For this purpose we will take the *General Navy Annual* (I) for 1904 and open it at page 234. Let us leave out of consideration the battleships *Emperor Paul I.* and *Andrew Pervozvanny*, which are not yet launched, and with which we will deal later on. We then come to the battleship *Slava*, launched more than a year ago, and which has recently made the voyage from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt. This fine and powerful ship is of exactly the same type as the *Kniaz-Souvorof*, the *Emperor Alexander III.*, the *Borodino* and the *Orel* which, as everybody is aware, form the main strength of the second squadron. The *Slava* should unquestionably take a first place in the third squadron.

*Why the battleship Slava did not form
part of the second squadron.*

I know positively that the authorities at the dockyard at which the *Slava* was being built, offered last February to get her ready to sail with the reinforcing fleet. Of course, to do that, the number of workmen employed on her must have been increased, and this would naturally have added slightly to the cost for which provision had then already been made. But these were still the days when we only worked in a half-hearted fashion at the formation of a new squadron, for we had not then become satisfied of the urgent necessity for its despatch to the Far East; and so nobody took the trouble seriously to consider the proposals made by the superintendent of the dockyard with reference to the *Slava*, and two months afterwards, when we commenced to work energetically on the preparation of the second squadron, there was probably not sufficient time to have got the *Slava* ready for sea. Besides, about this time that unfortunate accident happened to the *Orel*, when she

mysteriously went to the bottom in Cronstadt Harbour. Some of her machinery was so much damaged by water that, in order to get her ready for sea without delay, we had to replace it by new machinery taken from off the *Slava*, with the result that all work on this latter vessel had to be temporarily suspended. But that is a long while ago, and if we were forced to give up working on the *Slava* for the time being, in order to devote exclusive attention to the ships which went to make up the second squadron, why was not work recommenced on the *Slava* on August 14th (the date at which the second squadron commenced its manœuvres at sea), as the time might well have then been found in the yard to have completed this ship? If we have still failed to do what was then necessary, the work should now immediately be put in hand. But this was not then done, for the dockyard authorities paid off thousands of workmen, as the *Novoe Vremya* recently stated in an able article specially devoted to this subject. Recently, M. K—— stated that this battleship could easily be got ready for commission, and I give full weight to his

statement because nobody is more competent to form an opinion on the subject.

The Alexander II. and the Nicolas I.

If we continue to peruse the *Annual* we shall next meet with two battleships, the *Emperor Nicolas I.* and the *Emperor Alexander II.* To be exact, they do not date from yesterday (they were respectively built in 1887 and 1889), and their guns are not of the latest pattern ; still they are powerful ships (10,000 tons each). But then, after all, the Japanese fleet does not wholly consist of recently constructed ships.* To give one example only, the *Chin-Yen* (7,500 tons) dates back to 1882 ; and further, there are a certain number of guard-ships of even older date. Indeed, several of the Japanese cruisers, which all carry a 12-inch gun, were launched in 1889, but that would not, in any way, prevent their taking part in a fight at sea. Why can we not do what our enemies do ? Does the effective force of our fleet allow of our disdaining the use of important fighting units ? No ! in my opinion, a thousand times no ! Besides, have we not

* The edition of the Grand Duke Michaelovitch.

sent the battleship *Navarin* out with the second squadron? The *Navarin* is quite as antiquated as the two battleships with which we are now dealing, and her guns are quite as obsolete. In my judgment the presence of this ship in the same squadron as our most powerful battleships is something almost alarming; and its place should be given to the *Slava*. But if we combined the *Nicolas I.* and *Alexander II.* with the *Navarin* we should form a homogeneous division fully capable of engaging the second or third-class Japanese ships in battle and of helping, after the great battle, to maintain our supremacy at sea. After this great decisive battle the real value of the reinforcements on whose departure I here am now insisting, would indeed be realised. Our squadron would not then require further battleships; the smallest war-vessels would be able to render the most valuable services to our fleet, as M. K—— has so pointedly said in one of his articles.

Many people pretend that the *Nicolas I.* and the *Alexander II.* are not in a fit state to undertake so long a voyage, but it is not difficult to find an answer to this objection.

I will do no more than to recall the fact that these very same two battleships have already been to the Far East. It is also said that the boilers of the *Nicolas I.* are in a bad condition* and that the armament of the *Alexander II.* is largely defective. But as it is now more than ten months since the war broke out, I am fully justified in supposing that these defects have long been made good. At all events, if, by any chance, I am mistaken, and if such be not the case, I will only say that it is never too late to mend—even now we could make up for lost time and are bound to do it. And so, if this be the reason given by those who oppose the departure of these ships, they are again mistaken, because that is not any real reason.

*
*The three armoured guard-ships of the Admiral
Séniavine type.*

Let us continue our study of the *Annual* ; we now come to the three armoured guard-ships *General-Admiral-Apraxine*, *Admiral Séniavine*, and *Admiral Ouchakof*.

* According to reliable information which has been furnished to me, the boilers of the *Nicolas I.* are in a perfect state of repair.

Here, the opponents of our arguments have found it difficult to advance reasons why these ships should not be dispatched. They are three warships of recent construction (1893-1896), furnished with excellent modern guns and in perfect condition. The three represent a total of eleven 10^{po} guns, a matter of no small importance; besides, owing to the arrangement of their turrets, they can all fire on the same tack.

Moreover, their engines work perfectly and their maximum speed is 16 knots, being precisely the same as that of the battle-ships *Sissoi-Veliky* and the *Navarin*, which sailed with the second squadron.

The gunboats Khrabry and Grosiachtchy.

However, some people have succeeded in finding an objection, and they say that these ships, in their character of armoured guard-ships, can carry but a limited amount of the coal which they require. That is true, but why do they raise this objection? It is with a view of showing that it is impossible to make them to undertake a long voyage! Do they then forget what ships were included in our first Pacific Squadron? Have

they already forgotten that the gunboats *Gremiachtchy* and *Otvajny* formed part of it? And these gunboats are three times worse off in the matter of bunkers for their coal-supply than the ships of which we are now speaking; and the fact of their being notably inferior as fighting units is not taken into consideration. But nevertheless they have made the voyage and are now in the Far East to which, in fact, they sailed with the torpedo flotillas. The *Otvajny*, indeed, encountered one of those terrible autumn tempests which rage in the North Sea, and yet sustained no damage. In addition, a third gunboat, the *Khrabry*, cruised for several years in the Mediterranean, where she had to face the violent winter squalls which are as dangerous as any tempests, and out of which she came safe and sound.

As I have just spoken of the *Khrabry*, it would perhaps be as well to remark in passing that she is the best of our gunboats and the only one which is supplied with modern guns (two of 8^{po} and 6^{po}, 45 calibres in length).

Under these circumstances we cannot help

asking why our second squadron did not take her with it when going through the Mediterranean. She could have rendered valuable services; and the Japanese have not a single ship of the kind, of which the tonnage and armament are equal to the *Khrabry*'s. Therefore we should include the *Khrabry* in the third squadron, as the second squadron failed to take her with it, and the *Grosiachtchy*, a gunboat now at Cronstadt, ought also to go with it to the Far East.

I see nothing that can be urged against these suggestions. But how is it that such serious acts of forgetfulness have been committed? Let us now close these parenthetical remarks, and return to the subject of the guard-ships.

The *General Naval Annual* informs us that their maximum provision of coal does not exceed 400 tons, that is to say practically the same amount as that of the *Novik* and the cruisers *Izoumroud* and *Jemtchoug*, and yet we have sent these latter to the Far East without the slightest hesitation!

I really cannot refrain from quoting from a letter which I received from an able officer,

at present on board one of the above-named battleships, the following paragraph :

“ We cannot understand why the *Admiral Ouchakof*, the *Admiral Seniavine* and the *General-Admiral-Apraxine* have not received orders to go to the war. They can steam 1,800 miles at 10 knots, and it is true that, as a set off, they have the disadvantage of being able to carry but a small supply of fuel. But is not the squadron accompanied by a flotilla of torpedo-destroyers which has frequently to renew its coal supplies ? And then what if the presence of these three ships might have the effect of lengthening by a week the voyage of our fleet, from obliging it to take in supplies three or four times more ? We are not, I imagine, in any difficulty as to a week in a voyage of three months or three months and a half ; moreover we could slightly increase their coal supplies, for nothing would prevent our piling it in the cabins and on the decks. These ships are excellent fighting units as their trials in the Baltic have sufficiently proved, and recently we were able to prove that, out of the eighteen

“ships in the reserve of which Admiral
 “Birileff’s squadron was composed, they
 “proved the most seaworthy, and they had
 “to face really bad weather.”

And a little further on the author of this letter, who really understands the subject, asks in what respect the *Nicolas I.*, which has remained at Libau, is inferior to the *Admiral Nakhimoff*, which has been despatched to the Far East. Certainly I cannot understand how a torpedo-boat can get through the voyage of 1,800 miles when a cruiser of the *Jemtchoug* type is incapable of doing it; yet cruisers and torpedo-boats go to the Far East, whilst the battleships, which must play so important a part in any naval fight, remain uselessly in our harbours. Can anybody imagine anything more unreasonable?

And so, whilst our dreamers are lost in conjectures as to the phantom ships which have probably never existed, we have already by a casual perusal of the *Naval Annual*, happened on the considerable total of six battleships and two gunboats, all of which ought at once to be sent to reinforce Admiral

Rodjestvensky's squadron. But this is not all, and if we care to continue the perusal, we shall easily find a seventh battleship, the *Peter the Great*, no doubt very old, but thoroughly sound and provided with armour plating of an excellent character—as much as 14 inches in thickness in some places. The naval battles, which have hitherto taken place, have, I believe, thoroughly shown the great importance of armour-plating. Besides, her engines, renewed in 1881 in England, are of so first class a character that we have constructed many more on their plan, especially those of the cruiser *Admiral Nakhimof*, at present forming part of the second squadron. The complete remodelling of the *Peter the Great* was commenced a year ago, and her old guns have been replaced. She can easily take all the guns with which it is desired to arm her, as she has a displacement of 10,400 tons, and is, moreover, a thoroughly good sea-going ship. I can speak from experience, as, when I was on board her, I went through a terrible autumn gale in the gulf of Biscay, so well known for its stormy weather. Even though she may not have been intended for active service,

but for use as a training ship and for gunnery practice at sea, I do not see any reason why she should not fire as well in the Far East as at a target at Libau ! The work on her should now be finished unless it has been expressly neglected to prevent her sailing for the Far East. In this case the work must be put in hand at once, because we must not forget that this battleship is, with her modern guns, far more powerful than the best of the auxiliary Japanese battleships, the *Chin-Yen*, of which we have already spoken. And now that we have done with the battleships, let us pass on to the cruisers.

The cruisers Pamiat-Azova and Vladimir-Monomakh.

First of all we find in the *Naval Annual* the two armoured cruisers *Pamiat-Azova* and *Vladimir-Monomakh*. It is true that their armour-plating, and, above all, that of the latter ship, is insufficient ; but still the cruiser *Dimitri Donskoï*, which is of exactly the same type, forms part of the second squadron. No doubt the *Dimitri Donskoï* has just been furnished with more powerful

modern guns (six pieces of 152 mm. and ten of 75 mm. instead of five pieces of 152 mm. and six of 120 mm. for the *Vladimir-Monomakh*), but we must also take into account the unquestionable advantage which the *Vladimir* has over the *Dimitri*, with its two screws instead of one. Why, then, should we have sent one to the Far East and have kept back the other in Russia? I am at an utter loss to understand it. As to the *Pamiat-Azova*, it is totally impossible to understand why she should not have been commissioned, seeing that she is of more recent construction than the *Dimitri Donskoï* or even than the *Admiral Nakhimoff*! Her guns are certainly not of the latest type, but to this objection my reply is that they are identical with those of the *Admiral Nakhimoff*.

The cruiser Admiral Korniloff.

Among the protected cruisers we find the *Admiral Korniloff*, built in 1887—that is to say, indeed, even more recently than the *Admiral Nakhimoff* and armed with guns in exactly the same way. It is to be observed that the dimensions of all these three

cruisers exceed those of all the Japanese cruisers with armoured decks, and that their inferiority lies only in their guns, which are 35 calibres in length, whilst those of the Japanese, which are of not more than 40 calibres, have a longer range and can be fired about twice as quickly.

The use to be made of our old ships.

All these old ships could be used to attract the enemy's fire and consequently diminish the number of projectiles which might otherwise strike the modern ships which we have already sent on ; they would also fire on the enemy's ships, and some of their shots would tell. Besides, circumstances would not always enable the enemy to take full advantage of the superior range of his guns, for on many occasions we should be in a position to assume the offensive.

Take, for example, the Japanese transports with troops and stores, escorted by several cruisers, and of less speed than our cruisers charged with their destruction. In fact, merchant ships, whose speed does not exceed 10 or 12 knots, are very often employed, especially for the transport of

supplies. Of course, the Japanese would open fire at a longer range than our cruisers could do, but as they would not be able to abandon their transports, they would be compelled to fight at a distance of the length of a few cables. In this way, the advantage would be on our side, as the number of the guns, the relative strength of the ships, and the character of the armour-plating would count for more ; and from this point of view our cruisers would have an indisputable superiority, without even taking into consideration the fact that two of our ships have vertical shot-proof plating, which no Japanese cruiser possesses.

All the ships suggested for the third squadron were, in 1895, opposed to the Japanese ships taking part in the present war.

I have now only to call to mind an historical fact to further prove the reasonableness of my proposal. In 1895, when the Japanese had brought their war against China to a successful issue, the main strength of their fleet was composed of cruisers with armoured decks : the *Yo-Shino* (which recently sank after colliding with the cruiser *Kassouga*),

Hasihdate, *Matsu-Shima*, *Itsuku-Shima*, *Takachi Ito*, *Naniwa*, and other cruisers of lesser tonnage. They had then the same armament as they have now, which up to the present time has been looked upon as modern, and which has not yet been replaced on any of the Japanese ships. Further, the battleship *Fu-Soo* and the two armoured cruisers *Kongo* and *Hi-Yei*, which were then already considered antiquated, also formed part of the squadron. All these vessels still exist and are taking an active part in the war. For instance, the *Naniwa* and the *Takachi* were the ships which caused the loss of the *Rurik*, when damaged, as the result of her engagement with these two armoured cruisers, her crew had no option but to sink her. More of these old cruisers took part in the fight on August 10th, fought by Admiral Withoeft, when they formed a special division of the Japanese fleet.

As to the battleship *Fu-Soo*, it formed part of the detached squadron which defended the straits of Tsougarou. In 1895 we were, in fact, on the eve of war with Japan; we had refused to allow her to

retain Port Arthur, at the time of the conclusion of peace with China, and our squadron at Chefoo was prepared to attack her fleet. As is well known, Japan did not then care to fight, but preferred to yield. Why? What was she then afraid? The construction of the Trans-Siberian railway had then only just been commenced, and at the time was to go on to Vladivostok. Consequently, the Japanese had no need to fear the small number of troops which we had in Siberia, and which, moreover, to meet theirs in Southern Manchuria would have but to have marched an enormous distance over a country without any proper roads.

In 1895 our fleet alone prevented the Japanese from declaring war against us.

What was it which prevented their doing so then but our fleet, which, if victorious, would have threatened to have cut their army off from Japan; and subsequently, with the command of the sea, to have covered the landing of our troops from Odessa. That is why Japan yielded. And of what ships was our squadron then made up? It comprised the battleship *Emperor*

Nicolas I., the cruisers *Admiral Nakhimoff*, *Pamiat-Azova*, *Admiral Korniloff*, *Dimitri Donskoï*, *Vladimir-Monomakh*, the gunboats *Gremiachtchy* and *Otvajny*, as well as several small ships scarcely to be considered as of any real importance, and a small flotilla of torpedo-boats, very inferior to those of the Japanese.* All these ships were armed with the old guns which they still have, with the exception of the cruisers *Vladimir-Monomakh* and *Dimitri Donskoï*. And that was the squadron which the entire Japanese fleet dared not face, though she had the undoubted advantage of the experience which she had just acquired in her battles with the Chinese squadron. Why then now, if these ships form part of our fleet, cannot they hold their own against their old foes? These Japanese vessels are all at the seat of war (with the exception of the cruiser *Yo-Shino*, which has been sunk), and they go to make up more than half the cruiser division with armoured decks which Japan at present possesses. If the old Japanese ships can

* As we do not possess the official list of the ships of our Pacific Squadron in 1895, possibly a mistake may have been made as to the names of some vessels, but any such mistakes can in no way affect our arguments.

take part in the war, why cannot our own do as much? In fact, if I am not mistaken, the battleships *Nicolas I.* and *Alexander II.* and the cruisers *Pamiat-Azova* and *Admiral Korniloff* have only fifteen years' service, and according to the rules in force in the German Navy the length of service is 25 years for a battleship and 20 years for a cruiser. Further, we could also add to our vessels the battleships *Slava*, *Emperor Alexander II.*, *Peter the Great*, *Admiral Séniavine*, *Admiral Oushakoff*, and *General-Admiral Apraxine*, which are nearly all armed with modern guns. Would not this be a powerful addition for Admiral Rodjestvensky's fleet? If it depended on me I should also add the cruiser *Minine*; it is true that her speed is not sufficient for a cruiser, but, on the other hand, her armour-plating is first-rate, and the Japanese possess nothing equal to her amongst their auxiliary vessels; besides, she has powerful and modern guns, especially six of 152 mm. and six of 78 mm. There is no doubt that this vessel could be made to do real service.

Let us remember that every ship, no matter of what kind, could give valuable assistance

to Admiral Rodjestvensky. For we cannot forget the great services rendered to the Japanese by their old gunboats, which, strictly speaking, are utterly useless for fighting purposes—as, for instance, the *Musachi*, the *Katsaragy*, the *Kaimon* (built between 1882 and 1886). We read of their cannonading our positions, taking part in the blockade of Port Arthur, and seizing, not only Chinese junks, but also large merchantmen such as the *Negretia*, on board of which some of our officers were captured. Such old ships should surely be employed on the less important work, while the powerful fighting ships were exclusively occupied in defending and maintaining the command of the sea against all possible attacks by the enemy's fleet—prepared to have recourse to every imaginable device for wresting it back. Assuredly, the secondary ships of small tonnage can never be too numerous, but, in spite of this fact, we apparently ignore the many services which they can render, and seem to consider it preferable to let them remain idle, with their machinery rusting in our ports. How grave a mistake! I cannot be at the pains of

seriously discussing such questions. Let us rather consider what gunboats are ready to go with the third Pacific Squadron. First of all we shall find the *Abreck*, the *Voievoda*, the *Possadnick*, and the *Lieutenant Iline*. These are large torpedo-destroyers which, though admittedly not of the latest type, could, from their size, take with great advantage the place in our squadron of the small cruisers which we do not possess. Out of the thirty-two destroyers which belong to the light flotilla of the Baltic, twelve only sailed with the second squadron ; six are still under construction, and six more were in the Far East at the commencement of the war. Therefore the third squadron could take at least eight with it—or, speaking more accurately, as many as fourteen. Indeed, the *Annual* states that the six which are on the stocks were commenced in 1903—that is to say, more than a year ago—and they should unquestionably be ready for service, particularly, after ten months of war, for even supposing that this was not foreseen, we have certainly had sufficient time since February 8th, 1904, in which to have completed them. Furthermore, a mine-

laying vessel, the *Volga*, has been recently launched, and although up to the present we may have failed to push forward its construction, I believe that it would not be difficult for it to be made ready so as to sail with the third squadron, considering the very simple character of a ship of the kind.

Repairing ships and Hospital-ships.

The *Ocean*, a fast-sailing transport of quite recent construction, could very well accompany the third squadron as a repairing-ship, and if by any chance it may not yet have the necessary outfit, we ought to commence upon the work at once. Indeed, this work will be neither long nor difficult, and we could, in fact, buy the necessary materials ready made. Then His Majesty's yachts *Polianaja - Zvezda* and *Standart*, easily convertible at a pinch into hospital-ships, ought also to sail with the reinforcing squadron.

Indeed, with the exception of that used as a hospital, these three ships could render valuable services as scouts to our fleet, having regard to the fact that Admiral

Rodjestvensky is sadly in need of fast-sailing modern cruisers. Just consider what a powerful reinforcing squadron we have been able to get together : seven battleships, two armoured gunboats, four cruisers, four torpedo-gunboats, fourteen destroyers, a mine-laying ship, a repairing-ship and two hospital-ships. Then too we ought at once to take steps for the purchase of colliers and ships with condensing plant. We could easily buy colliers with complete cargoes. In this manner we should have nothing to buy later on, and besides the matter would, as we know, present no difficulties from the numerous offers which have been constantly made to us.

*Our building yards have dismissed workmen.
What does this mean ?*

If thousands of our workmen are being dismissed from our dockyards, it is no doubt because the third squadron is ready to put to sea at once. In my judgment, there is no other interpretation to be put on the act.

We have had ten months for our work—that is to say, sufficient time not only to

carry out the necessary repairs and to complete the building of any ships on the stocks, but to also substitute new guns for all those which are old and obsolete. In the case of our factories being unable to bring our naval artillery up to date, we have merely to send our orders abroad, as to which, as hitherto, there would be no difficulty.

If we have done nothing, we should at once set about the work, carrying it on night and day, so as to have our ships at once in a condition to go to sea.

This is, indeed, what we should have to do if the phantom ships, with which we have already dealt, were not a pure myth, and if they had actually joined our fleet; we should not, indeed, have to bring them to Russia in order to arm them with Russian guns; we should leave them just as they might have been handed over to us—that is to say, with their foreign guns. This, indeed, we were obliged to do with the auxiliary cruisers *Don*, *Kouban*, *Terek*, etc., the armaments of all of which came from abroad.

Thus the third squadron should be ready to sail, for were it otherwise the conduct of our dockyard officials, as I have just said, would be absolutely inexplicable. How can it be maintained that Admiral Rodjestvensky's squadron could be considered to be in a position to encounter that of Togo on advantageous terms, and to carry out successfully the extremely heavy task imposed upon it ?

Yet such is the error into which we have fallen. Well, we must absolutely repair it, pull ourselves together, abandon our empty dreams, and from to-day give ourselves wholly up to a bitter and desperate task. As yet nothing is lost ; we have still the time in which to act.

Now that our second squadron is already far away we can send on to it the reinforcing ships in perfect safety, and without any fear of their being overtaken by the enemy. Do not let us wait until we can form them into a third squadron, but let them be sent on, one after the other, just as each one may be got ready. First of all the three armoured guard-ships of the *Admiral Séniavine* type should start—to-day even. They are

perfectly seaworthy, and their presence is absolutely essential to Admiral Rodjestvensky ; it would allow of his accepting battle at once without any risk of his division of battleships being by nearly a half inferior to that of the enemy. They therefore should leave at once, and any other ships able to do so should at once follow them ! As to the laggards we should see that they are got ready to join Admiral Rodjestvensky's fleet as soon as possible, and to that end let us work and work, night and day, without a breathing space, because it is only by a strong determination and strenuous energy that we shall be able to achieve our aim.

As I mentioned in the preceding chapter, my opponents have raised two main objections. In the first place they have insisted that it would be useless to attempt to send to the Far East ships incapable of going such a great distance and that of the vessels for whose dispatch I asked, some were too old, others had not the necessary speed, and others could not carry a sufficient supply of coal.

The contention that the vessels in question were not in a fit state for so long a voyage is altogether idle.

Strictly speaking I have already shown the idleness of these objections, when I discussed in detail the merits and defects of all the ships to which I was drawing the attention of the Admiralty. But the better to refute these arguments I will return to the subject, for I cannot rest satisfied with having only shaken them, and I want to pulverise them once for all because they are the miserable ramparts behind which idleness and thoughtlessness intrench themselves. Is there, in fact, any excuse both more specious and convenient, for those who wish to do nothing than to say: It is useless to embark upon an undertaking which we know beforehand to be impossible.

No, you are mistaken, for everything which I have proposed is perfectly feasible; I have distinctly proved this by sound and solid arguments, but you, on the contrary, have refused to give me a hearing.

I further say that, even if we had to face

impossibilities we could not withdraw. No ; from the moment that the very existence of our country is at stake we cannot be satisfied with doing that which is in our power ; we must even attempt that which apparently is not.

All our ships, no matter of what kind, should set sail, and we should not dream of their being incapable of accomplishing their task until their boilers burst or their engines refused to work, or their worn-out carcasses, unable to further battle with the waves, sank beneath the waters. But I know very well that none of these things will happen, and that not one out of a hundred will fail to do the work required of it.

The lessons taught by history.

Moreover, history will support my arguments and prove that I labour under no mistake. Look at the innumerable instances which it offers to us.

In 1854 the first armour-plated warships were built in France and were then styled floating batteries.

They were flat-bottomed ships, a sort of shapeless boxes covered with iron plates,

and were so unstable that even in the calmest, possible sea, they were in danger of heeling over. However, at the time of the Crimean War the French resolved to send them to the Black Sea; the voyage presented incredible difficulties and dangers. The engines of these ships were so weak that they had to be towed, and the English made fun of them in their comic papers, nicknaming them the "diving batteries." But to everybody's astonishment these clumsy things reached their destination and the fall of our fortress of Kinburn was due to their presence.

An analogous case occurred during the Confederate War with the *Monitor*, the first armour-plated ship of the Northern States. It was of the same type as those famous vessels which we were unable, without danger, to sail in the Gulf of Finland, and even in its capacity as the first of the monitors it was much more faulty than our own and yet it faced the Atlantic Ocean. The armour-plated *Merrimac* which the Southern States had just purchased, and which was about four times larger than the *Monitor*, threatened to cut off the army which the Northern States had landed in the Monroe peninsula.

Everybody scoffed at the *Monitor*, and on all hands its certain destruction was predicted. But paying no attention to these jeers it set out, went through a violent tempest, in which it nearly sank, but happily did not, and having finally reached the end of its voyage obliged the *Merrimac* to retire. The *Monitor*, be it remembered, arrived just at the nick of time, for if it had been delayed for a single day, the *Merrimac* would have destroyed, without the slightest difficulty, half of the fleet of wooden ships of the Northern States, which were then covering the landing of their troops.

Finally, let us call to mind that in 1880, when Admiral Chestakof, so well known for his enterprise, was Naval minister, we decided to send to the Far East the *Kreml*, a floating battery which was no more perfect in its way than its venerable French ancestors! This time the experiment was not successful because the *Kreml* came into collision with a merchantman in the Gulf of Finland, and received damages so serious as to prevent the completion of its voyage. However, this case is significant, and the fact of having decided to send this vessel

to the East serves to prove that when they find themselves faced by necessity, men of action are prepared to battle with apparent impossibilities and do not give up until the occurrence of some event shows them that the projects are really impracticable.

It would be easy for me to give many other instances of the same kind, but those who desire to know more on the subject need only to consult the records of history.

We absolutely must wake up, as otherwise we run a risk of being actually beaten in this war. Listen to me, you sickly dreamers ; you must bestir yourselves, throw aside your apathy, and recognise that the glory and prosperity of our country are at stake. To accomplish the impossible, it is only necessary to possess courage enough to undertake it ; but this courage we must have.

The objection that the Baltic Sea will be unprotected is one destitute of all common sense.

There is a second objection which has been made to my proposals. I have been reproached for proposing to denude the Baltic and strip it of every warship. What does

that mean ? Is it then meant that we should look forward to European complications ? In this event this objection is nonsensical. Who, indeed, could menace the Baltic ? In my opinion only either England or Germany. And I further, then, say that, if we anticipate trouble with one of these Powers, it will do us no good to keep the old obsolete ships in reserve in the Baltic, as they are quite incapable of defending themselves ; they could only take refuge in our ports.

In view of such complications surely it would have been wiser to have kept back the whole of the second Pacific squadron ! Is it reasonable, when we have a war on hand, that we should be making provision for others which might break out ? No, nobody can fight against the whole world.

If these old vessels be not in a condition to allow of their defending the Baltic, they would still be of great use to Admiral Rodjestvensky. Why create fresh troubles for ourselves ? Why look for insuperable difficulties on all sides ? No doubt as a matter of fun only *Athanase Ivanovitch Toustogonbe* liked to frighten *Pulcherie*

Ivanovna.* But *Pulcherie* was a landed owner at Poltawa in the old days while we are reasoning and educated people. And, instead of acting we argue falsely ; it is to our shame. *Pulcherie Ivanovna* at least understood that a joke was being attempted on her and, in her displeasure, was constantly saying, "I know well enough that he is jesting, but still it is disagreeable to hear him say such terrible things which, in spite of ourselves, cause us fear."

As to you, there is nobody making fun of you or trying to frighten you. No, you yourselves are, on the other hand, trying to find reasons for being afraid ; you, with your own hands are raising up ridiculous scare-crows.

* *Athanase Ivanovitch* and *Pulcherie Ivanovna Toostogonbe* are well-known characters in Gogol's novel, entitled "Landowners of the Olden Times."

CHAPTER VII.

*The Black Sea Squadron must sail for the Far East in spite of all treaties.**

In addition to the few vessels which we still have in the Baltic and with which we have been able to get together a whole new squadron, we have a fine fleet in the Black Sea, intact and ready for battle. Of this fleet not a single ship has as yet set sail for the Far East. Has not this fact already struck my readers ?

Let us try, for a moment, to get away

* This chapter is, beyond doubt, the most important one in the whole book, being that in which the most serious questions which Russian diplomatists have to settle are considered, and in which the humiliating position in which a great Power has been placed (sooner or later, she must emerge from it) is dealt with. Captain Klado deserves credit for having spoken out to his Government and to his Emperor fearlessly and frankly. This is another proof of his loyalty. He has discharged his duty, and in doing so has gone to a point almost dangerous to himself ; it must now be for the statesman to determine what the action of Russia is to be at the present juncture.

from the heavy and crushing atmosphere of humiliating treaties which were forced on us, when worsted, by merciless victors, and which need no longer, therefore, to be respected by us, if we can but feel strong enough to treat them with contempt. I will simply put the following question and leave it to you to supply the answer : Is it possible that a great Power, fighting for its life (for the result of the Japanese war means life or death to Russia) and having at its command a force capable of itself dealing a death-blow to its foes can be denied the use of it ? I am sure that without a moment's reflection your answer will be that the suggestion is one alike absurd and impossible. I seem to hear you at once crying out : " Give us the use of this force ; we want it at once. We must have it because our brothers at Port Arthur are growing weaker day by day in a struggle beyond their powers—because on the mountains of Manchuria Russian blood is being poured out without intermission, and above all because, during the ten months that the war has lasted, the Japanese have not for a single hour stayed their advance, while our

army has never once been in a position to assume the offensive.

And how is it that the Black Sea Squadron has thus been condemned to inactivity? The reason is simply this: we have to lament an evil time in our past life when we were worsted in an unequal war and had to yield to the unreasonable demands of our victors. First of all, we had to bind ourselves never again to keep a fleet in the Black Sea, and, when we were able to obtain some modification of these terms, we had to agree never to take our fleet out of the Black Sea without the special permission of the Sultan. But are we, therefore, to stand defenceless before our enemies? Certainly not! I cannot now and never should be able to fall in with anything so utterly absurd. What! to respect such shameful treaties! They should be ruthlessly torn to shreds; that is my view, and I am certain it is also that held by thousands of my fellow-countrymen.

The opposition of our diplomatic corps on this point must be beaten down.

None but diplomatists could have agreed

to the terms of so shameful a treaty, and, indeed, there are some members of that body who would from the first have shrunk from acquiescence in them. Our diplomatists, who have been brought up in a school where they are taught to view matters in quite a different light to that vouchsafed to ordinary beings, are quite satisfied with matters as they now stand, and obviously only a man of real genius in this profession can hope to preserve his common sense. And where, in this hour of trial, are the men of genius at Russia's command to be found? Our diplomatists, like fish, swim about in an ocean of treaties and conventions; they have grown accustomed to treat them with all seriousness, to uphold clauses of the most absurd character and implicitly follow the most ridiculous instructions. This is the sort of work to which they devote their energies in their conventions and diplomatic notes. In these times of mediocracy the really able diplomatist is indeed a rare being. Well! our Russian diplomatists go the length of declaring that a war with England would be the result of our fleet's leaving the Black Sea. We suspected that

they would go these lengths, and now they roundly tell us: "If you make any move at all, there will be war."

An agreement with England could be made on the subject.

When shall we learn to appreciate English bluff at its real value? Is she not having fine fun as she looks upon us so panic-stricken? Has she not a very easy game to play? It is surely to her advantage that our fleet—and, indeed, any other fleet—should be decimated and permanently weakened. In so far as we are concerned she has had the same aim since that day when Peter the Great, convinced that Russia ought to be made a naval power, undertook to give her a navy.

Did not England rejoice at every one of our naval reverses? Will they not rub their hands with glee when they hear that our first squadron must clearly be destroyed. If we cannot grasp the point, they at any rate can appreciate the fact that Admiral Rodjestvensky's fleet, even if he should regain the command of the sea, is far too

weak to allow of his keeping it, unless he should receive strong reinforcements.

Whatever the end may be, Admiral Rodjestvensky will certainly strike a heavy blow at the Japanese fleet, and this is exactly what England desires ; for the Japanese fleet must get what it wants from English workshops, and for this reason England would much rather see Togo's fleet badly damaged than totally destroyed.

Does this mean that they would declare war against us ?

Would the English be so very simple, when aware of the timidity and exaggerated fears of our diplomatists, as not to get all they could, so far as correspondence might serve, out of treaties of no real value, and not to raise, by way of words, innumerable obstacles to the passing of our fleet through the Dardanelles. But is it supposed that this would mean a declaration of war by the English ? This is hard to believe, when we consider the various incidents which they have let pass, for neither the Malacca affair nor the celebrated " North Sea Incident " has provided them with a sufficient

pretext for war. The fiendish clamour which they raised about the latter event had only one end in view, namely, to impede the voyage of our second squadron. However, on this occasion—in this respect an exceptional one—their tactics failed, owing, I am glad to say, to the firm attitude taken up by our Government.

What was their next move? As they had no desire to fight, instead of declaring war, which would have only been too easy, they preferred to let the matter pass into the hands of an International Commission of Inquiry. This incident will thus be settled in the most peaceful manner, because they failed to arrest the progress of our squadron, as they hoped to do. As they have throughout done, they will seize the earliest opportunity of renewing their clamours and threats. This game has its advantages, for it costs nothing, and may, in certain cases, produce excellent results; but England will never go to war unless her commerce or her industries be imperilled. No doubt the reinforcement of the fleet of Admiral Rodjestvensky by that of the Black Sea would be most annoying to England. She has been

anything but pleased to watch the growth of our navy, and her views have been the same with regard to the fleets of France, Germany and America ; but as she could not make war with the whole world, and particularly, too, at the same time, she has had to let things take their own course, and has been powerless to prevent the increase of the navies of foreign nations. Truth to tell, she never loses an opportunity of seeking, at any rate, to postpone such increases.

And now let us return to the question of our position. We must needs get our Black Sea Squadron through the Dardanelles ; and, as at the present time any fresh complication would be most inopportune, it will be best to settle the matter amicably with England, and to say to her : "If you agree to cease your protests, we will make you certain concessions ; if you refuse to come to an understanding with us, our fleet will leave the Black Sea all the same ; but in this case we shall owe nothing, and we shall give you nothing." Since the English are an eminently practical race, they will readily understand our way of reasoning, and they will be ready to come to terms with us,

unless they really wish to enter upon a war with Russia.

It is for our diplomatists to deal with these questions, for they ought to know more about them than myself. I am, however, sure that the matter could be settled in the way which I have suggested. If the English Government wholly refused to come to an understanding it would be because it really wanted war, and in this event it certainly would be able to find a pretext for it, sooner or later. Surely it would be wiser to give them one at once, and have the whole thing out with them. There is every reason to believe that they would not choose to go to war. Let us not forget the objection which, in 1870, we raised to the clause in the treaty binding us not to maintain any fleet in the Black Sea ; let us remember the battle of Koushka, in 1885 ; or, lastly, the " North Sea Incident " of to-day. On these three occasions we showed the necessary firmness, but to-day on the question of our fleet passing through the Dardanelles, our diplomatists can only see difficulties, reminding us of *Pulchérie Ivanovna*. Under these circumstances we ought, perhaps, to ignore

our diplomatists, for if we find a *Pulchérie* here, we can also see an *Athanase* represented by England making herself merry over our fears.

Putting England on one side, what would be the attitude of the other Powers? Turkey would be only too happy to be rid of a fleet built for use against herself, and Germany would rejoice at seeing our power consolidated in the Far East, for she would then be free from all further obstacles to her project of getting a firm hold at Constantinople.

*We must sacrifice our interests in the East
for those in the Far East.*

Doubtless, in establishing ourselves in the Far East we should weaken ourselves in the East. This is inevitable, and we must not attach too much importance to it, for it would most likely prove but a temporary matter. We must remember the old proverb, that "One must not have too many irons in the fire at a time." I will, therefore, not stop to meet this second objection which has been raised to the sailing of the Black Sea fleet. We are constantly taxing our ingenuity to

discover complications which might eventually arise. I make the same answer now which I made a short time ago to those who condemned me for stripping the Baltic of its naval forces.

If Admiral Tchouknine's fleet set sail for the Far East, we should be absolutely sure of snatching the command of the sea from the Japanese—that as far as one can make sure of that which has not actually taken place—and this would mean that the war would end in the total defeat of our foes.

Which vessels of the Black Sea fleet are in a condition to go to the Far East.

In my opinion the eight squadron battle-ships which form part of the Black Sea squadron and are ready to set sail can be sent on to the seat of war. If we refer again to the *General Naval Annual*, at page 240, we shall find that each of these vessels carries, under ordinary circumstances, a sufficient quantity of coal for a voyage of from 2,000 to 2,400 miles, and that this supply, indeed, could be greatly increased.

*The battleships Kniaz-Potemkin-Tavritchesky,
Tri-Sviatitelia and Rostislaw.*

Suppose that we do not take into account the five battleships armed with obsolete guns, there would still remain three (*Kniaz-Potemkin-Tavritchesky, Tri-Sviatitelia and Rostislaw*), which in themselves represent a powerful squadron, and when added to our third squadron would render it absolutely invincible. These ships should, in fact, be immediately dispatched to reinforce Admiral Rodjestvensky's squadron, as it would be very difficult for him to fight his first engagement without more battleships. If they cannot leave at once they should, in any event, sail with the three guardships of the *Admiral-Seniavine* type, which, as I have already shown, are in a condition to leave the Baltic at once, but would require six weeks to reach the Suez Canal. Thus the three battleships in the Black Sea would have a good month in which to get ready. They ought not, indeed, to require any refitting, as we have now been at war for ten months, and I should imagine that the

Black Sea fleet was long ago made ready to meet any contingencies. It is difficult to imagine that the authorities have not long foreseen the possibility of its being sent to the Far East.

One of the three modern battleships (the *Rostislav*) has liquid oil fuel, and I suppose that, in view of the difficulty of obtaining sufficient petrol everywhere, any necessary alterations, etc., will have been already made in her boilers. As has already been stated, such modification presents no difficulty, being, in fact, a matter of from four to six weeks' work only. If this necessary alteration has by any chance been neglected, the work must be put in hand at once, and the two other ships which are ready to sail should be sent off in the meantime. If it is impossible to alter the *Rostislav* in time to let her go with the three guardships, she would have to wait the sailing of the next division of the Baltic fleet. It must be clearly realised that there is no time to lose ; that the work must be pushed on in feverish haste and not a second be lost ; for it is impossible to imagine the many favourable chances which delay might cause us to lose.

We must remember that in time of war, time is the one essential thing to consider.

The cruisers Kagul and Otchakof.

If we continue our search in the *Annual* we shall find two perfectly new cruisers, the *Kagul* and the *Otchakof*, of precisely the same type as the *Bogatyr* and the *Oleg*. The *Kagul* was launched a few months before the *Oleg*, which has just set sail, and the *Otchakof* a few months before the *Kagul*. Both these ships must, therefore, be ready to put to sea. If I am mistaken in this, clearly with powerful means at our disposal both at Sebastopol and Nicolaïef, nothing could prevent our pushing forward with the work as rapidly as possible and completing these cruisers in a very short time. Meanwhile, I hope that they are in a position to join the first division; that is to say, to leave the Black Sea with the *Kniaz-Potemkin-Tavritchesky* and the *Tri-Sviatitelia*; though it may well be for the reasons already given that the *Rostislaw* may be unable to sail with her sister battleships. The *Kagul* and the *Otchakof* may be looked upon as being the best fighting ships, and better

than the best Japanese cruisers with armoured decks—viz., the *Chitose*, the *Kasagi* and the *Takasago*. And it may be useful to mention here that besides these ships the Japanese possess no up-to-date cruisers, with the possible exception of some very small ones.

But all their old cruisers will be held in check by our obsolete battleships and cruisers belonging to the Baltic fleet, they will in cruisers lose the advantage both in superiority of numbers and in fighting power; for our Pacific squadron will by that time have included five modern cruisers, four of which, the *Bogatyr*,* the *Oleg*, the *Otchakof* and the *Kagul*, make up an excellent homogeneous fleet of scouting ships.

As to battleships, when Admiral Rodjestvensky has been reinforced by the *Slava*, the three guardships, and the three armoured ships from the Black Sea, his squadron will have a marked superiority over that of Admiral Togo.

Torpedo-gunboats.

Furthermore, the detachment from the

* The *Bogatyr* belongs to the Vladivostok squadron.

Black Sea could be accompanied by a useful flotilla of vessels of light tonnage, comprising three torpedo gunboats (the *Gridène*, the *Kasarky* and the *Captain-Sakène*), which owing to their dimensions could, for short distances, take the place of cruisers, and thirteen destroyers of the newest type. These last ought to be in a position to put to sea according to the *Annual*. Nine of them were in course of construction on September 1st, 1903, while the four remaining ones were then already going through their trials.

Accordingly the flotillas belonging to the second and third squadrons would comprise seven torpedo gunboats and thirty-nine destroyers. Admiral Rodjestvensky would, therefore, have nothing to fear from the Japanese flotilla ; for although it is numerically superior (fifty to sixty torpedo-boats), we should bear in mind that it comprises, as I have already said, a certain number of old and obsolete vessels.

A great number of small fast steamers should be bought at once.

To tackle the destroyers and torpedo-boats

(a fight which will prove to be of a desperate character when we attack the Japanese shores), it is necessary at once to purchase a large number of small steamers, swift yacht-like vessels to be armed with two or three quick-firing guns and with torpedo-tubes. This kind of boat is much more seaworthy than the torpedo-boat, and its engines are not so easily thrown out of gear. The Americans adopted this plan with excellent results in their war with Spain. It was, in fact, one of these boats, the *Gloucester*, if my memory serves me aright, which fired on and sank the large Spanish destroyer *Pluton* during the battle of Santiago.

Hospital Ships and Coaling Ships.

There are two excellent military transports in the Black Sea—the *Prout* and the *Dniestr*, and also two ships for laying mines—the *Baug* and the *Dunaï*. As for ordinary transports, we could always make use of the ships belonging to the “Russian Society of Commerce and Navigation,” and we need feel no anxiety on this subject, as we could always buy some, if necessary.

Repairing vessels should promptly be purchased and be sent on immediately.

I see no reason why we should not convert one or two of our transports into repairing ships. To avoid loss of time we only need take the fitted machinery from the workshops at Nicolaïef or Sebastopol, which could be easily replaced, either by manufacturing it afresh or by buying it abroad. In any case one or two repairing vessels should be sent on to Admiral Rodjestvensky, for at present he has only one, the *Kamtchatka*, and if this one were damaged (this nearly happened to her in the North Sea), he would experience much difficulty in carrying out the necessary repairs, and after a first fight it would be of material importance that our ships should themselves be able to carry out as quickly as possible any necessary repairs. Success depends on the rapidity with which repairs are effected. If it were difficult for us ourselves to alter one of our transports into a repairing ship, we should only have to get this done for us abroad, as we did in the case of the auxiliary cruiser *Rouss*, given to us by Count Stroganoff.

Thus we need not dream about phantom cruisers ; we have quite enough of our own and have only to use what we have.

When once our Black Sea fleet has sailed for the Far East, victory will be assured.

Let us ceaselessly work to make up for lost time. Of course, as I know, it is pleasanter to dream dreams and do nothing, but we must sacrifice our own inclinations at such a crisis in the history of our country. When our duty has been done, it will be a great solace to us ; we then have no fear of further reverses, and our bitter anguish will be changed into resolute faith in our cause. We shall, indeed, have the joy of anticipating certain victory.

I repeat that I am firmly convinced that the Black Sea question will be amicably settled, and only hope that Admiral Tchouknine's ships are ready for battle, and that not a moment will be lost when once the negotiations have been brought to a conclusion. The more one gives the matter thought the more it seems impossible that any hitch should occur to prevent the Black Sea fleet passing through the Dardanelles. If there

were a canal from the Baltic to the Black Sea, or if we could carry our Black Sea fleet by rail to Vladivostok, no objection could be raised against their presence at the seat of war. Why, then, should there be an objection to their passing through the Dardanelles? No! our country cannot be sacrificed to maintain such a treaty; it is absolutely out of the question.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vladivostok must at once be made a naval base.

It is not enough to send reinforcements to Admiral Rodjestvensky and to place him in the position of being able to overcome Togo ; a strong naval base must also be made ready for him. Since it is impossible to foresee whether Port Arthur will hold out till the arrival of the fleet, Vladivostok must be made a fortified port ; in which not only a few of his cruisers, but also the whole powerful fleet could take shelter. It will be borne in mind that quite early in this work I declared that Vladivostok is, with regard to Japan, a strategic position of the highest importance. We must also remember that the lack of a well-equipped naval port with strong defensive works is a source of weakness for any fleet. Let us not repeat the

old mistake ; we have paid dearly enough for it at Port Arthur !

We must, therefore, send at once, either by sea or by the railway while it remains intact, enormous quantities of coal, machine oil, ammunition, supplies of all sorts, and ship provisions. Thousands of workmen must be sent on there, and for their superintendence we must appeal for help to our ablest engineers, for it would never do to rely wholly upon such as might have gone in a chance fashion to such distant parts. Machinery must also be sent out in great quantities, so that it may be possible to establish workshops there too. Finally, we must make every effort to finish as quickly as possible the dry docks on which work was begun, but which of late have been quite neglected. This is, indeed, but a matter of money. We should, if necessary, be able to secure competent workmen from among the Chinese for this work.

All the submarines and torpedo-boats fit for service should be sent by rail to Vladivostok.

After the departure of the third squadron, even if it be, as I anticipate, composed of

certain ships of the Black Sea fleet, seventy-seven torpedo-boats and seventy-five gunboats furnished with torpedo-tubes* will be left behind in the Baltic and the Black Sea. No doubt a number of these little gunboats are obsolete and in bad repair, and it might not do to count upon them for service in this war ; still, I estimate that at least fifty of them could be usefully employed. It may be observed that the Japanese are using all their old torpedo-boats, even those of the oldest type, in their present operations. Among those which are actually at Vladivostok there are some which were built between 1886 and 1887, and yet they have rendered useful service. They were quite good enough to use in raids on the Northern coasts of Japan, and even on one occasion got as far as Gensan, and on their return voyage encountered violent gales in the Japanese Sea. Fifty torpedo-boats must be sent off at once, for we must not allow so many vessels to be idle, when the command of the sea means so much to us, and when Rodjestvensky would find every single vessel of so much use.

* Pages 266-271 of the *Annual*.

It seems to me, however, that this question permits of a ready solution ; we have only to send these torpedo-boats by rail, and those of large dimensions ought to be immediately taken to pieces in sections. The objection made against this suggestion is that it is useless to send the torpedo-boats in sections, as there would be neither the time nor appliances at Vladivostok to refit them, and that in this way we should lose the use of them both in the Far East and in Russia. It is urged in a hopeless way that though possibly foreign workmen might manage to put the sections together, yet it is quite useless to discuss the question further, as we should not send the sections on to Vladivostok, for the reason that the cost would be far too great ; as to forwarding from the present moment provisions, workmen and engineers such a project would be absolutely impracticable, as we might well spend a great deal of money only to find, later on, that there might, at a given moment, be no need for all the ammunition or for so great a quantity of *matériel* ; and further, too, that the War Office would never consent to our taxing in this fashion

the already over-burdened Trans-Siberian railway.

It is criminal to refuse to send material under the pretext that at some particular time there might be no further need for it.

I call your special attention to these words : “ Perhaps, at a given moment, we might have no need for them ”—words which stun me as if I had been struck some violent blow, and which freeze up the very blood in my veins. I understand what you mean—you do not suppose that our fleet in the Far East can successfully accomplish its task, if you will not at once take the steps which I have specified. No ; what you really mean and what, in fact, reveals your true thoughts is that whatever may happen, one day the fleet will end by suffering such losses and being so weakened that it would be useless to try to go to her help.

Yes ; I now understand your whole conduct. You fold your arms without attempting to find the means of renewing the fight ; unmoved you simply await news of fresh defeats and bloody disasters ! Yes ; your abominable objections have no other

object than to prove the impossibility of a successful termination to a war which you have not even seriously tried to carry on and to justify your inaction !

Allow me to make a suggestion : these torpedo-boats are of no service to us here, and supposing that we could only refit half the number at Vladivostok, would this not be of great advantage to us ? Again, if you do not wish to overtax the railway, take out the engines and accessories and only send them on. As to the hulls, let them be built at Vladivostok.

But it is useless to discuss the subject further, as one cannot reason with idlers, and much less with those who are determined not to be convinced. In my opinion, everything that I have proposed is perfectly reasonable. We need only to throw aside our system of routine, and to hand over the work to some energetic man who would not shrink from complete responsibility in the matter. But, on the other hand, he must be invested with absolute authority, so as to be able to ignore the series of stepping-stones represented by our hide-bound bureaucracy, and to overcome all the obstacles with which he

would be confronted. You would then see the speedy realisation of all that I have claimed at your hands.

We should also send all our submarines on to Vladivostok, which has an excellent roadstead, in which our crews could manœuvre at leisure and gain all necessary experience. Then, should the opportunity arise, these small craft could be used against our foes. I do not really see why we should conceal the fact that we possess submarines. That the Japanese suspect it is clear from the fact that a correspondent who recently reached Nagasaki stated, if we are to attach credence to a Reuter dispatch, that there were submarines actually at Vladivostok. I do not know if he stated a real fact or not, but the Japanese clearly accepted his statement. They must, of course, count on our having submarines, so as not to be taken unawares, and we, for our part, must act as though they had themselves had some. We have, as a matter of fact, to take serious steps in this matter, and one of the most important is to provide a large number of fast sailing vessels of small tonnage.

Under these circumstances would it not be better to overcome the difficulty to which the dispatch of these vessels might give rise, rather than to tax one's ingenuity for reasons against their dispatch ?

Vladivostok should be provided with a movable base for the use of the fleet.

Vladivostok should possess a movable naval base which could be placed on board transports and thus be ready to leave at the shortest notice. I would ask you to bear in mind that which I have already pointed out to you. Admiral Rodjestvensky might be forced to use as his base some port or some island on the Korean coast, and in such case ought we not to have the means of at once sending all the necessary *matériel* out to him ?

I again emphasise the importance of having all this *matériel* ready loaded on the transports. There is not the smallest doubt that it will be urgently needed, and it would be really criminal not to make provision for it until Admiral Rodjestvensky should have asked for it.

We must have, in the first place, several

transports laden with coal, oil, ammunition, and miscellaneous stores. We should then get ready a large number of harbour mines, together with all the necessary gear for laying them, and, in addition, we should have an up-to-date work-shop with skilled workmen and engineers. Then would come a special transport carrying naval guns, ammunition, and all accessory appliances for getting them quickly into position at any given date, and also the specially-trained staff required for a vessel of the kind. Here, again, we have not far to go to find what we want, for we have all that is necessary at Odessa. It has only to be taken to Vladivostok. Lastly, Vladivostok should be furnished with a large number of troops ready for embarkation, with provisions and ammunition for six months, and capable of forming the garrison of the place which Admiral Rodjestvensky might select as the base of his fleet. As an escort for these three transports and to securely provide for the defence of the coast in the neighbourhood of this base, a strong flotilla of submarines and torpedo-boats would be of great service. This is an additional reason then for send-

ing as many craft of this kind as possible to Vladivostok.

*The conversion of Vladivostok into a fortified naval port and the preparation of a movable base for our fleet are of the first importance.**

The fortification of Vladivostok and the preparation of a movable naval base are not for us questions of merely secondary but, on the contrary, of the greatest importance.

It is essential, then, that this port should be at once supplied with all the *matériel* necessary for its fortification, and it is quite impossible to wait until the Trans-Siberian Railway has no more troops to carry. There should be a certain period during which the railway line should be exclusively used for the carriage of stores, etc., urgently needed at the front. In other words, we must do for Vladivostok what we have done up to the

* This was brought home after the fall of Port Arthur, although it should have been evident from the very beginning. If Port Arthur capitulated, it did so because it had not been placed in a condition to resist a prolonged siege, and it had not a sufficient supply of provisions, ammunition and medical stores, to say nothing of the unfinished fortifications, the very insufficient number of mines at its disposal, the absence of submarines, etc. Is it to be tolerated that we should commit the same mistake at Vladivostok?

present for each of our army corps, which for several weeks have monopolised the railway, and that, without interruption, until everything had gone through. With such an end in view we must at once get ready with great care the *matériel* most urgently required, and have it sent on to Vladivostok with the least possible delay. As to stores of lesser importance, they can be sent on gradually at a later period.

We should at once set about organising our movable base, so that it may be quite finished on the arrival of Admiral Rodjestvensky. If Port Arthur should still hold out, it is there that our movable base should first carry succour, and there is no doubt as to the importance of such help to the fortress, and especially as we shall have acted in a leisurely rather than eager fashion, as we have been wont to do up to the present. In December we shall be able to judge approximately whether Port Arthur is capable of holding out until the spring, and if at this date we have reason to hope that such will be the case, we should at once set about the preparation of a second movable base, the site for which should be a port

in Corea selected by Admiral Rodjestvensky. The first movable base must be exclusively reserved for Port Arthur.

Admiral Rodjestvensky should further have a movable base with him.

As I remarked in the earlier pages of this book, we must endeavour to succour Port Arthur in yet another way. We ought immediately to fit out one or two rapid transports capable of carrying troops, which could be landed with their ammunition and provisions. These transports should set sail as soon as possible, so as to follow at a few days' interval our second Pacific fleet, and during a naval engagement they should seize a favourable opportunity of slipping off to Port Arthur at full steam. It is more than probable that this favourable opportunity will be of such short duration that there will not even be time to give instructions to the military transports at Vladivostok to start for Port Arthur. How bitterly should we reproach ourselves if we allowed the opportunity of rescuing the brave garrison to escape us! The defenders of Port Arthur have deserved everything at the hands of

Russia, and we ought not only to do all that is possible, but should not even hesitate to make superhuman efforts for their relief.

Should Port Arthur fall before the arrival of our fleet, our work would not be fruitless, for these transports, sent to save the fortress, might be of great use to Admiral Rodjestvensky in enabling him to effectively occupy any particular island off the Corean coast which he should choose as his base. Who can tell but that in so dangerous a venture—of a character in fact that no one has hitherto had to face—the Admiral will at some time require to have troops at his disposal.

Again, I assert that we must be ready for everything, and to that end we must provide against all possible sources of danger, perfecting our organisation as far as this may be possible, and making use of every possible expedient.

CHAPTER IX.*

My position enables me to specify the means required to ensure thoroughly satisfactory results.

I MUST, first of all, ask myself these questions: Do people accept my statements? Do they consider it is both possible and necessary that that should be done for which I have pleaded? And if it so happened that the works which I have specified were not carried out, would it be a subject of regret to us? Would the mistake, which I have pointed out, be admitted, and would there be a strenuous effort made to set about the work in real earnest. In other words, have I in this hour of Russia's peril adduced

* As these articles have given rise to several objections, I am compelled to revert to certain points with a view to treating them in greater detail, so as to make my real meaning more intelligible. The necessary additional explanations will be found in this chapter.

sufficient proofs in support of my allegations? God forbid that I should seek to raise false issues calculated possibly to provoke only ill-feeling in Russia.

I must admit that I suffer—and intensely too—when driven to acknowledge that my arguments are inconclusive, and my heart is racked when I find that I hold in my hands such crushing proofs, such unquestionable documents, which I refrain from producing. And for what reason, you ask?

At such a crisis we must carefully weigh every word we utter. We must leave our foes as far as possible in the dark. However, if I were in a position to disclose matters relating to the war which have to remain secret, the statements to which I have confined myself hitherto would be shown to be altogether indisputable. This is why I ask you to accept that which admits of no doubt, and not to ask me to disclose State secrets.

However, I think it is only right that I should offer some account of my career in the Navy entitling me to public confidence. It is solely with the object of justifying that claim that I now wish to

pass quickly in view those epochs in my professional life which entitle me to discuss what the plans of our campaign should be if we are to worst the Japanese.

I have lately returned from the Far East, where I spent two years as chief assistant of the Admiral in command of our Pacific squadron; then I have had the honour to be for a period of nine years Professor of History, of Naval Tactics and Strategy at the Nicholas Naval Academy. In addition to this, I have made several cruises, and have taken part in all our principal naval manœuvres, whether in the Baltic or in the Black Sea. I have, indeed, also spent an entire summer with a detachment of artillery, acting as chief instructor for a course of practical tactics, which was attended by officers intended to specialise later on in the artillery. At another time I had for six months the command of one of the ships of the Black Sea squadron; and, finally, I was five months on board a French cruiser, the *Latouche-Tréville*, which formed part of the squadron under the command of Admiral Fournier, who was then directing courses of tactics and strategy. During this period I

attended all the lectures at this school, and I finally took part in three weeks' manoeuvres which Admiral Gervais, so well known in Russia, conducted in the Mediterranean.

To explain how it is that I claim the right to discuss the operations of land armies and matters relating to naval defence, I shall confine myself to mentioning the fact that during the last few years I was responsible for a special advanced course of lectures at the Nicholas Academy (attached to the War Office); and that with the assistance of M. Bébouinitzky, the engineer, I had the superintendence of the experiments at the practical school, at which the officers who are subsequently sent to garrison naval forts are trained.

In order to give a real practical value to this course I had to explain the principles of military science side by side with those of naval science, and I was thus obliged to study the works of the leading writers on the subject. I have been obliged likewise to consult authentic documents, so that I might examine every possible sphere of operations, of which a knowledge in time of war might be of advantage to us. I have

had to make careful comparisons between our forces and those of our supposed enemies, and to draw up for the instruction of the officers plans of campaign which might be of use to them in the execution of their real duties. I have been a member of a whole series of commissions appointed to study various questions relating to the organisation of the fleet and to its readiness at any time for action, and I have on more than one occasion been singled out by the Admiralty to draw up reports on some of these questions.

Some months after the declaration of war I was appointed head of the strategical department on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific fleet, and I have thus had in my hands official information on the subject of our forces and those of the enemy, and also reports from the actual seat of war. When the second squadron was ready to sail, Admiral Rodjestvensky begged Admiral Skrydløf to send him somebody in whom he could place complete trust, as he wished to know the views of the Commander-in-Chief before deciding upon his own plan of campaign. So it came about

that I returned from Vladivostok and joined, on September 15th, the second squadron, which I subsequently left on October 16th, at Vigo, for reasons with which you are familiar.

The naval forces at our command and the views held by our principal naval officers are therefore more or less known to me. No doubt, what I have just said materially affects my position ; still, I gladly accept all responsibility, and I declare in the most unequivocal terms that so far from retracting anything I have written, I adhere to every word which I have published in this book.

All our naval authorities insist that the dispatch of a third squadron is absolutely indispensable.

Indeed, these are not my ideas alone, nor am I responsible for all these questions having been raised, for they must have been discussed in all naval circles since the war broke out.

At the beginning of April Admiral Skrydlof, appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific fleet on the death of Admiral Makharoff on board the *Petropavlovsk*, drew

up a report on the condition of our naval forces, which no longer has the character of a confidential document, and which I may therefore quote.

Extracts from Admiral Skrydlof's report.

“ Our success at sea must principally
“ depend on the squadron leaving the
“ Baltic, which consequently ought to be
“ stronger than that portion of the Japanese
“ fleet with which it would be faced. It is,
“ therefore, essential that due regard should
“ be had to the character of this squadron at
“ the time of its departure, as well as that of
“ its arrival at the seat of war. That arrival
“ will have very different results according as
“ to whether it takes place before or after the
“ fall of Port Arthur.”*

“ When as the result of a general action
“ we shall have obtained the upper hand—
“ that is to say, secured the command of the
“ sea, the real object of our naval campaign
“ —we must see that we derive all possible
“ advantage from it. This would result from

* I wish to draw the reader's attention to the fact that in this note, which bears the date of the early part of April, the fall of Port Arthur was already foreseen, that is to say, two weeks before the first landing of the Japanese troops on the peninsula of Liao Tung.

“co-operation with the land forces, to which,
“having regard to the bad condition of the
“roads in Manchuria, the fleet would be of
“the greatest assistance, and, indeed, enable
“them to crush our foes.

“The squadron from the Baltic will be
“used to reinforce our remaining ships in
“the Far East, so as to allow the latter to
“recover the command of the sea.”

“The division of our naval forces, which
“will have to be split up into three groups,
“namely, the Port Arthur Squadron, the
“Vladivostok Squadron and the Baltic
“Squadron, will give a distinct advantage
“to the enemy’s fleet brought together at
“one point, for it will thus be in a position
“to attack our separate squadrons, before
“they will be able to effect a junction.
“The Port Arthur Squadron and the Vladi-
“vostok division are much weaker than the
“Japanese fleet, and for this reason would
“probably not be able to pursue the Japanese
“if the latter sailed south to meet the Baltic
“fleet. This latter should for this reason be
“of sufficient strength to be able to inflict,
“single-handed, a severe blow upon the
“main Japanese fleet.

“ As a necessary consequence, then, our fleet
“ should include all the various types of ships
“ required for a naval engagement, and also
“ fast-sailing ships for scouting purposes. The
“ present scarcity of torpedo-boats might place
“ our squadron in a position of marked and
“ dangerous inferiority in view of the large
“ flotilla of torpedo-boats of the enemy who
“ will in all probability advance to meet our
“ squadron.

“ Having regard to the exceptional diffi-
“ culties which the reinforcing squadron will
“ have to surmount in the course of its voyage,
“ and the severity of the laws of neutrality
“ which will prevent coaling at the usual ports
“ of call, it should be self-dependent and be
“ able to do without external help. It must,
“ therefore, be accompanied by colliers capable
“ of carrying a quarter of the total amount
“ of coal required for the voyage from Revel
“ to Port Arthur over and above the fuel
“ which they themselves would use.

“ Furthermore, this squadron should be in
“ a position to repair any damages which any
“ of its ships might sustain, and it would be
“ wiser to distribute the *matériel* for such
“ repairs over several transports specially

“fitted for the purpose, rather than to load it
“on a single one.*

“The torpedo flotilla should be escorted by
“repairing and hospital ships specially de-
“tailed for the purpose.† These flotillas may
“at any moment have to separate from the
“rest of the squadron, and then they will be
“obliged to have their own auxiliaries with
“them.

“The transports must go as far as Port
“Arthur. During the voyage they will act
“as scouts, and when the squadron is at
“anchor they will keep careful guard for
“it so as to avoid surprises. Then, too,
“after the fight, they will take the wounded
“on board if the hospital ships should prove
“insufficient, and they will also have to tow
“the damaged ships, etc. We shall also
“require them for the transport of troops,
“provisions, and ammunition, for, after
“having secured the command of the sea
“we shall have to provide for a series of
“landings in the rear of the Japanese, and

* Unfortunately Admiral Rodjestvensky has only one repairing vessel, the *Kamstchatka*, and one trembles at the thought of an accident happening to this ship.

† It is to be regretted that there is not a single transport of this kind with the second squadron.

“even perhaps in Japan. It is to this end
“—that is to say, to invade Japan, that we
“have determined on a task beset with in-
“numerable difficulties and of enormous
“cost. In short, it will be necessary to
“provide the colliers with all the latest
“machinery which is indispensable for the
“trans-shipment of coal in the open sea.”

“*Composition of the squadron.*

“Battleships :—*Prince Souvorof, Emperor Alexander III., Borodino, Orel, Sissoi-Veliky, and Navarin.*

“Cruisers :—*Nakimof, Vladimir-Monomakh,* Dimitri-Donskoi, Aurora, Tweltana, Oleg, Jemtchong, Izoumround, and Almaz.*

“Twenty torpedo-boat destroyers.† Work ships : *Kamtschatka* and **Ocean.**

“Condensing ships, colliers and transports
“for the provisions, together with the trans-
“ports specially allotted to the destroyers
“and the hospital ships.”‡

“To this strong squadron we must also

* The vessels of which names are printed in italics are those which already form part of the second squadron, while those in black type are those which I have suggested for the third squadron.

† There are only twelve with the second squadron.

‡ With the second squadron there is but one, namely, the *Orel*.

“ add a complementary division comprising
“ the following :

“ The battleships **Slava** and **Emperor
Nicolas I.**

“ The armour-plated guard-ships : **Admiral
Seniavine, Admiral Ouchakoff and General-
Admiral Apraxine.**

“ The cruiser **Admiral Thorniloff.**

“ The torpedo gunboats : **Possadnik,
Abreck and Voievoda.**

“ It will be wise to supply the squadron
“ with military balloons ; to fit the ships
“ up with wireless telegraphy apparatus, and
“ to ship submarines.*

“ When our reinforcing squadron has left
“ Russia, the ice-breaker *Ermak* will no longer
“ be of any use in the Baltic, while on the
“ contrary its presence in the Far East would
“ be of great value, especially at Vladivostok,
“ during the winter. And so this ship ought
“ to accompany the transports which are to
“ sail with Admiral Rodjestvensky.†

“ In the event of our being obliged, later
“ on, to increase our Far Eastern fleet, we

* The second squadron possesses nothing of this kind.

† The ice-breaker, *Ermak*, did not sail with the second squadron.

“must send a part of the Black Sea Squadron.”*

Admirals Doubassoff and Birileff presented analogous reports insisting on the necessity of reinforcements for the Second squadron.

This report was not the only one, for at the beginning of September, Admiral Doubassoff presented one to the same effect, and another was drawn up at the end of October by Admiral Birileff. These are the names of our foremost Admirals.

Of course, I can only mention here the reports made by those whom I know, but I feel certain that many other senior officers have held the same opinions.

Admiral Rodjestvensky cannot be held responsible for the weakness of the Second Squadron.

I have also heard of another objection. Certain people make out that Admiral Rodjestvensky was free to form the squadron as

* Do not let us forget that, when Admiral Skrydløf penned these notes, the communications with Port Arthur had not been severed, and that it was impossible to foresee the retreat to that port of Prince Quichomsky. Therefore the necessity to bring the Black Sea fleet through the Dardanelles can no longer be a matter of doubt.

he liked, and to actually choose the ships for it. "Why, then, I am asked, did he not take those which you say should have sailed with him? Obviously this was because he found it impossible, for one reason or another, to take them so great a distance." That is a very difficult question, but I will do my best to find the true answer to it.

Surely we remember the many tales which were told continually as to that which Admiral Rodjestvensky did during the formation of the Second Squadron at Libau; and also the correspondents of foreign newspapers, who overwhelmed him with interviews, and whose articles were published in the great daily papers! Try to picture to yourselves the state of mind of Admiral Rodjestvensky knowing all this and writhing in this net of falsehoods, trickery and sophistries; try to realise what the position of this man was—in the moment of peril, so firm, so ready and so brave, and who was nevertheless so steadfast and brave in danger!

When the question of strengthening his squadron with some additional ship was under discussion, and all sorts of difficulties

were raised about it with a view of showing that the idea was utterly impracticable, was it easy for him—the commander of this squadron, the admiral who had to lead the squadron to battle—to show that it was too weak for the task sought to be imposed on it? Just think what would have been the effect of such a statement on his part upon the journalists who never gave him a moment's peace, and upon his bitter opponents!

Further, too, if, after he had sailed, he had received a telegram inquiring if he wanted further reinforcements, I am convinced that in such a message he would have felt that sting of the serpent, which more than once during the formation of his squadron had caused him such acute pain, and that, bracing himself up he would stoically have declared that he did not.

Well and good, we accept your arguments, some of my adversaries will say, but the admiral should have taken no notice of the rumours and falsehoods; he ought to have restrained himself and have sacrificed himself to the interests of his country.

Of those who are so unfair as to raise

this objection, I will merely ask if they have tried to imagine what the real position of Admiral Rodjestvensky then was. All eyes were turned to him ; he then seemed to be, as I clearly see, the representative of our naval power, the avenger of reverses and of our dishonour. And let us bear in mind that his official title was that of Commander of the Second Pacific Ocean Squadron, just as Jessen and Wirenius had command of the divisions, or rather what remained, of the first squadron, and the admiral, who will be appointed to it, will command the third squadron.

Over all these commanders of squadrons, there is the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean fleet, who is in no way dependent upon either the head of the Admiralty, or upon the High Admiral, but only upon the Commander-in-Chief of the Land and Sea Forces. These are the high officers of whom we should ask questions as to the necessity for the dispatch of the third squadron, and who could and ought to freely express their opinions on the subject. Indeed, they have done so, and I have just given extracts from a report drawn up by

the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet and presented five months before the sailing of the second squadron.

The opinions of the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet and the Commander-in-Chief of the Land and Sea Forces in August, 1904, on the expediency of sending out a third squadron.

When I left Vladivostok in August last to return to Libau, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet and the Commander-in-Chief of the Land and Sea Forces* instructed me to insist, in their names, on the expediency of immediately reinforcing the second squadron ; of converting Vladivostok into an important naval port, and of sending there all the torpedo-boats of the Black Sea and the Baltic, which were in a condition to face the voyage.

In any case, Admiral Rodjestvensky cannot be held responsible for the composition of the second squadron ; he was merely its commander, and officially did not hold any other rank.

* Admiral Alexieff then held office.

If the third squadron has not been dispatched, it is because we still fail to understand the importance of this war, and of the part which our fleet is called upon to play in it.

Of course, another question arises here, viz.: Why was no attention paid to the opinions so clearly expressed by the high naval and military officers just mentioned? We cannot attribute this to anything but the state of ignorance in which we have remained as to the dire consequences which this war can have for us, and, above all, to the obstinacy with which we have refused to understand the part which our fleet was called upon to play in it.

Russia must become a first-class naval power, and it is absolutely indispensable for us to recognise this fact fully. It would be inopportune at the present time to enter upon a lengthy discussion on this subject, but later on I will endeavour to show (and I hope I may succeed in doing so) that, even in the event of a war with Germany, the command of the sea would play a most important and almost preponderating part. And the Germans have already recognised

this, for it was no empty and thoughtless saying on the part of the Emperor William when, in one of his recent speeches, he exclaimed : “ Germany’s future is on the sea.”

It is because we have not recognised the importance of a fleet that we put off building new ships.

Even to-day we scarcely commence to realise the great importance of a powerful fleet to Russia, and we still have much difficulty in persuading ourselves of the fact ! Look, for instance, at the activity with which we are pushing on with the construction of the vessels now in the building yards, and which we shall be unable to use in this war. Such are the battle-ships, *Andrew-Perrozvanny*, *Emperor Paul I.*, *Pamiat-Evstaphya* and *Joann-Zlatoouste*. The work upon them is alternately stopped and re-commenced, so that, in fact, they are being completed just as slowly as possible. We imagine that after the war with Japan we shall have time enough to hold innumerable commissions, and to discuss for years the question of the types of vessels we ought to build, to elaborate all kinds of programmes as we have done

up to the present, and to go on constantly putting off the building of the ships.

Should we not rather busy ourselves about the losses sustained by our fleet during this war, and take to heart the necessity for the immediate construction of new ships to replace those which we ought to have long ago struck off the effective list of our Navy ?

Perhaps this war may end in a defeat for us.

And now, listen attentively to what I am going to say : Owing to the weakness of our fleet and, above all, to our ignorance in naval matters, we are exposed to the risk of being finally defeated in this war, and forced to accept a humiliating peace. . . .

Doubtless, I shall be the first to suffer by this and to feel ashamed of it, but I am obliged to do that which my honour demands and to listen to the voice of my conscience. I am obliged to warn you of this peril, for it is impossible for me to hide from you the possibility of defeat ; and I have not the right to do it.

*Feverish preparations must be made at once
for a new war.*

We should at once prepare feverishly for a second war with Japan, which, like the first, will depend entirely on the command of the sea ; moreover, I repeat, that this will be the case in all the wars into which we may be drawn. Our enemies will, of course, not give us time to finish our preparations but will attack us as soon as they are ready. Consequently we must have a powerful—nay, an invincible fleet. What is the use of again being behindhand ?

We ought to be ready before the Japanese.

To win, then, we must be the first to be ready. Hence all the shipbuilding-yards in Europe actually available (except perhaps those in England) ought to be from to-day engaged in constructing ships for the Russian fleet, not to speak of our own which ought to be at work night and day.

*All the shipbuilding-yards in Europe ought to
be busy building vessels for our fleet.*

I shall, of course, be told that it would

be better to wait a little, for this war is not over yet ; and that, as it is a great naval war, it would be preferable, before setting to work, to await its results and profit by the lessons to be drawn from it.

It has, indeed, always been urged, whenever the construction of large ironclads was talked about, that it would be better to await results before beginning to build.

I understand this style of argument. Once more I can see in advance innumerable commissions meeting for absolutely idle discussions, at which essential matters will be ignored, and projects and plans will be complacently elaborated in the total absence of any guiding principles. There will be endless talk and argument, ending up with the usual procrastination. And once more everybody will be considered to be responsible, which will mean, of course, that nobody will have any real responsibility. It will be said that it were better now to await results of this war ; but why should the exceptional character of our position be ignored ? *Le mieux est souvent l'ennemi du bien* (the attempt to better may only mean to destroy).

Above all, let us remember that if we go on putting off, it will end in our being too late—hopelessly too late.

The lessons of this war have only confirmed generally accepted views and it is thus idle to further put off the formation of a new fleet.

I must be allowed to observe that these ten months of war have thoroughly confirmed the opinions previously held as to the different types of ships. It is thus absolutely impossible to understand your delay in the building of new battleships; all your objections are evidence only of a cautiousness which is unreasonable, if not, indeed, criminal.

Long before the war the paramount importance of armoured cruisers was recognised everywhere except in Russia.

Do you want further cases in point? They are not difficult to cite. Many years before this war it was generally recognised that in the present day the ironclad must play the principal part in naval warfare; that the best types of warships are the

squadron battleship and the armoured cruiser provided with thick armour-plating, to which we should add powerful flotillas of torpedo-destroyers. All the European States, the United States and Japan, long ago commenced building armoured cruisers of large size ; but we, on the contrary, confined ourselves to building "protected" cruisers of medium size. We have built recently only one armoured cruiser, the *Bayan*, but at the same time a considerable number of protected cruisers : *Diana*, *Pallada*, *Aurora*, *Bogatyr*, *Oleg*, *Otchakof*, *Kagul*, *Askold*, *Varyag*, *Bojarin*, *Almaz*, *Yemtchoug*, *Isoumrroud* and *Novik*.

One is compelled, with bitterness, to confess that the whole superiority of the Japanese fleet at the beginning of the war over the Port Arthur squadron, as also at present over that of Rodjestvensky, consists in a homogeneous division of six large armoured cruisers to which two others with similar armour-plating, bought in Italy shortly before the war, have been added. These two last named might have belonged to us if we had only taken the trouble to buy them. If Admiral Togo had not had this

powerful squadron, or even if it, instead of being composed of armoured cruisers, had included only protected cruisers similar to those of which half our Port Arthur fleet was made up, we should have gained the victory at sea, and the success of the campaign would have been definitely secured by us. Indeed, all our reverses must be attributed solely to our want of technical knowledge on this point.

And even now we refuse to be convinced by the co-efficients under our eyes ; we persist in obstinately ignoring the lessons which recent events should have taught us ; we continue to turn a deaf ear to the teaching of tactics and strategy, to turn away from everything which has the appearance of a science !

Ah ! I know them only too well, these commissions ; I have often been a member of one, and I know the value of their labours. I have heard them discussing the merest trifles, and maintaining theories absolutely erroneous. Whilst, powerless to do anything, I was obliged to curb my fierce indignation. I have seen them incapable of realising the new developments in naval war-

fare and the paramount importance of battle-ships. They persisted in regarding as impracticable that which has been admitted for twenty years, and I am convinced that, even now, in spite of the lessons of this war, if new commissions were to be appointed, we should have the same ridiculous proceedings.

And, again, some years before the war, there was a general tendency shown by all the other Powers to increase the strength of their guns: the calibre was raised from 6 to 7, $7\frac{1}{2}$ and 8 inches, and the length increased to 50 calibres.

Here, then, again, we are behind the times; but only in a lesser degree, as for the battle-ships now being built for us, such as the *Andre Pervozvanny* and the *Emperor Paul I.*, are to be armed with 8-inch guns, 50 calibres in length.

The war with Japan has confirmed in every particular the wisdom of the alterations which I have pointed out as having been made in the fleets of other nations. It has shown the power of the large armour-plated battle-ships, the necessity of increasing the calibre of medium guns, and the part—a

secondary one only—to be played by torpedo-boats. What more do we want ?

Why do we seek reasons for putting off till to-morrow that which the interests of our country forbid us to defer for an hour ?

I will not seek to carry my arguments any further ; doubtless, by waiting we might fully study at our leisure questions of secondary importance and make great improvements in many matters of detail ; but we must remember that we have not time to spare for dilatory proceedings ; we must at once draw the chief lesson from this war and not linger over useless details.

We refuse to note the principal lesson to be drawn from this war.

Why has our fleet been annihilated ? Was it because our vessels were weaker than those of the Japanese, because they were of older construction and, on that ground, inferior ?

No, a thousand times no !

Our fleet was destroyed firstly, because it was numerically weaker and also, further, because its ships, instead of being concentrated, were scattered about in different

directions ; and, finally, because it was in no way ready for war, had made none of the necessary arrangements, and had not over it admirals worthy of commanding it !

What we have to do.

You will not yield to the force of evidence and thus are ready to fall into the same errors in the future as in the past !

How is it possible not to feel profoundly despondent on seeing your attitude ?

Trifles and futilities must be put aside ; every effort must be made to become, as soon as possible, stronger than the enemy, to maintain our squadron in perfect order, and not to amuse ourselves with ceaseless attempts to perfect apparatus of quite secondary importance to our ships.

Let us rather endeavour to instil into the minds of our officials and our crews that virile energy, that fierce zeal for work, that full and clear appreciation of the importance of the hours—never to return—which alone might some day ensure us the victory ! Here I re-echo heartily the words of Admiral Birileff : “ A day lost is a mistake, and a week a crime.”

The Japanese do not waste their time.

How do the Japanese act ? They do not waste a single moment. The construction of the warships ordered by them abroad is pushed forward with the utmost rapidity. We must build too ; and more, many more ships than they do, seeing that our losses have been so much greater !

The Commander-in-Chief of the Land and Sea Forces does not possess a naval staff.

Here is a further instance of our ignorance of naval affairs and their importance in this war. Consider, for a moment, the position of the Commander-in-Chief of the Land and Sea Forces. To direct naval operations he has a naval campaign board, with Captain Roussine at its head—a distinguished officer, beyond all doubt, possessed of a thorough knowledge of the Japanese fleet, which he obtained in the course of a prolonged stay as naval attaché in Japan. I recently read some of his reports dating from the beginning of December, in which he did not limit himself to a declaration that war was inevitable, but went so far as to name the

beginning of February as the date of the outbreak of hostilities, and in this, as it has proved, he made no sort of mistake.

But, notwithstanding his great attainments, Roussine is only a captain of frigate—a rank corresponding to that of lieutenant-colonel in the army.

It is therefore easy to see how little influence he can have over the decisions of the Commander-in-Chief of the Land and Sea Forces, who, as we must bear in mind, is himself not a sailor by profession.

I do not mean to lay it down that the Commander-in-Chief ought to be a sailor. No ; in my opinion, the essential point is that supreme power should be vested in him, and that he alone should possess absolute authority over the whole of the land and sea forces, and should be a man of real genius. As to whether a soldier or a sailor is the better fitted for the post, that seems to me a matter of quite secondary importance.

The Commander-in-Chief must have two heads of his staff ; one for that of the Navy and another for that of the Army.

It is at any rate self-evident that the Com-

mander-in-Chief cannot be both a general and an admiral ; therefore he clearly should have about him those really capable of giving him help and advice. It was thus only reasonable that when Admiral Alexieff was the Commander-in-Chief, the chief of the staff should have been a lieutenant-general, who had the assistance of a large number of army officers, and that Rear-Admiral Withoeft should have been at the head of his naval staff. Unfortunately the latter was soon called upon to fill up the gap caused by the death of Admiral Makharoff at Port Arthur, and the naval staff was then placed under the direction of Captain Eberhardt.

When General Kuropatkin was appointed Commander-in-Chief, the naval staff, instead of assuming a position of greater importance than before, sank down and down until it disappeared altogether, or rather was reduced to a mere committee, with only a captain of frigate at its head.

I am perfectly aware I shall be met with the reply that there was the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet. But had not each of our three armies its own commander-in-

chief—a fact which did not in any way render a numerous and highly-organised staff unnecessary. Besides, Admiral Alexieff's staff was anything but inconsiderable, although there was then but one army, with General Kuropatkin in command.

Lastly, it should be borne in mind that the commander of the fleet at Vladivostok is placed at an enormous distance from the commander-in-chief at Mukden; and hence it is impossible for him to communicate freely with the latter and to submit to him elaborate plans by telegram.

In my opinion, the commander of the fleet ought never to have remained at Vladivostok, for his presence at Mukden, on the contrary, would have been of the greatest advantage. He ought to have gone there in his capacity of chief of the naval staff of the Commander-in-Chief. This position would in no way have impaired his dignity, for the heads of the Commander-in-Chief's staff rank with the generals in command of an army, and the admirals in command of fleets.

But has General Kuropatkin with him men sufficiently competent to enable him

to direct from the present time from his headquarters the operations of the second squadron under Admiral Rodjestvensky, and also those of the Vladivostok cruisers and of the third squadron now about to sail from Russia ?

What is to be the position of our fleet ? It will be divided up into three squadrons, each under its own commander. Will it receive orders from St. Petersburg during the first part of its voyage and subsequently from the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet, who will have to ask for them by telegraph from the General in supreme command ? A paramount authority of so complicated a character is absolutely condemned by history, and yet we do not in any way trouble ourselves about it ! I am deeply grieved to see the continuation of a system so utterly hopeless.

I maintain what I have said : the Commander-in-Chief should have two staffs, both of equal importance, each having over it a head of the same relative rank. I hope we shall end by having this ; but when ? After a fresh defeat ? As long as there is divided authority over our fleet we cannot

expect to gain any successes at sea. Our uninterrupted reverses since the beginning of the war ought to have fully taught us this lesson.

As to the general staff of the Admiralty at St. Petersburg, it is in no condition to direct naval operations. Two years ago the special section charged with the elaboration of the plans of campaign, which we might be called upon to put into actual practice, had not even been formed; vigorous efforts and desperate struggles against current opinions were necessary to get as far as this. Many asserted that no tactics, strategy, and, generally speaking, no science of any kind, could be of any use in directing naval operations at war. Only two years ago—that is, a year before the outbreak of this war—was a new section—that of Naval Operations—organised by the General Staff of the Navy!

Unfortunately the members of this section took a war in the Baltic as their first subject of study. I have not the slightest intention of making fun of them; up to a certain point even, I understand the choice which they made. They were so few in

number and so inexperienced, that the study of a naval war in the Far East seemed to them beyond their powers. They contented themselves with a simpler question, and a narrower stage which offered them the double advantage of being easy to study on account of its proximity and unlikely to give rise to complicated problems, as our forces in the Baltic Sea are, relatively speaking, so insignificant.

Besides, they could not even carry this work out before the declaration of war with Japan. At present the interest of the subject, to which in prudence they had to confine themselves, has been greatly increased on account of the formation and departure of the Second Pacific Squadron, and of the declarations made by the distinguished officers of our navy, as to the expediency of dispatching a third squadron as well as *matériel* and torpedoes to Vladivostok, etc.

However, this was undoubtedly not an opinion generally entertained, for the work of that section has been suspended, and during the month of August, when its chief, Captain Broussiloff, was appointed to the command of the armoured cruiser *Gromoboi*, of the

Vladivostok division, it was even not thought necessary to appoint anybody in his stead, and up to the present his post is still vacant.

All important affairs relating to the plans of campaign which might be of use to us in the course of this war should go before this section, to which they are in fact not readily communicated, while it is left to the care of our bureaucracy to place them in the hands of Government officials, to whom they seem to be only some horrible nightmare !

Could not some other officer have been appointed to the command of the cruiser *Gromoboi* instead of Captain Broussiloff, and would it not have been better to have left this distinguished officer on the General Naval Staff to continue his duties as chief of the Naval Operations Commission, of which the importance had been doubled by the war ? This is yet another instance of the interest felt by us in all that which takes place at sea !

But I have strayed too far from my subject ; let us return to the third squadron.

We have sailors enough for the crews of the third squadron.

Among the objections raised on this point, I will select the following one which appears to me the most weighty: "How," I have been asked, "will you complete the staff of the third squadron? Where will you find a sufficient number of officers and sailors?" To this I reply, firstly, that the vessels intended for its formation were part of our fleet and therefore must have crews. It is quite unreasonable to suppose that we should have built vessels when it was impossible for us to man them properly. As there would be in the number of the ships, which will form the third squadron, some not belonging to the active fleet, and which in consequence would not go to sea in times of peace, it is possible that these latter may not be fully manned, and that a part of their crews belongs to our naval reserve. But as soon as war was declared we surely must have called up all these reservists.

If we had really bought, as the rumour ran for a considerable period, those imaginary vessels, we should evidently not

have been able to man them. But these rumours were absolutely without foundation. Any mail-steamers transformed into auxiliary cruisers could not have required any large number of reservists.

Finally, I have been asked about the transport-ships accompanying the squadron which would need officers : the necessary measures must, I imagine, have been taken to provide them with officers, for it can never be that anybody could have been so childish as to think of sending off a squadron without transport-ships.

Let us admit, however, that our reserve force is insufficient—a state of affairs which would indeed disclose sad blundering on the part of our Admiralty—would it even then have been impossible to have completed the manning of the third squadron ? Not at all. At the end of August, when the second squadron made its trial trip, Admiral Birileff, it will be remembered, accompanied it with a reserve squadron which, if not thoroughly organised, was at least sufficiently so to be seaworthy.

Finally, if we should send out only a part of the Black Sea fleet, there would

still remain a great number of ships whose officers and crews could be borrowed ; and, if men were still wanting, we should have the final resource of calling out the registered sailors and officers from the various coast-guard stations and even from the different naval schools. In any case it will be seen that we should always be able to find the means of manning our ships. But I shall be told that our sailors would be inexperienced ; possibly so, but then the third squadron simply must sail for the Far East.

If, in ten months, the ships of the third squadron have not been made thoroughly seaworthy, they must go as they are.

I have only one reply to make to those who declare that, on such and such a ship, such and such machinery is not yet in thoroughly good working order—viz., that we have had ten months in which to prepare for war from the day when the Japanese attacked Port Arthur, so that all our vessels ought to be ready for active service. If they should not be ready it would evidently be deeply to be regretted, but they would have to start all the same, for we have no longer

time to undertake fresh repairs or even entirely complete those already taken in hand. If the boilers and engines of a ship be in working order, and if most of her guns can be used, that vessel is capable of taking its place in a fighting squadron and should sail at once for the seat of war.

A man-of-war, we must not forget, is not built for the purpose of taking part in one battle only and then running into some port for repairs. On the contrary, though more or less seriously damaged in one battle, she may have to take part in another action, which she can always do, so long as her rudder continues to act, so long as no shells have struck her below her water-line and her guns have not suffered injuries of too serious a character.

Now let us suppose the vessels of our third squadron coming out more or less damaged from a successful engagement with a terrible foe—that is, a fight with our bureaucracy which, with its dilatoriness and delays is a more dangerous enemy to us than even the Japanese themselves; let us attribute all the defects from which our vessels may be suffering to the ill-will of our officials and

let us send them forth to a fresh battle against an enemy possibly less bitter and less obstinate ; let us send them against the Japanese !

Even if stores and ammunition have not been got together, the third squadron must get under way all the same without postponing its departure in any way.

It is of the utmost importance that no more time should be lost, and if by some chance we have not provided the stores and ammunition required for the third squadron, it must sail without them so as not to have further to delay its departure.

Whilst the squadron is still in European waters we shall be able to send by special trains to Odessa stores and ammunition to be forwarded immediately to Port Said and Suez.

As to repairs of secondary importance, it would be best for every vessel to take on board a certain number of workmen with their tools and the necessary materials ; the work could then be done during the voyage.

The ships which leave after the month of February cannot arrive at the seat of war before the year 1906.

As I have before said the most important thing of all is not to lose time ; the squadron of Rodjestvensky must be reinforced at the earliest possible moment, for ships leaving after the month of February cannot arrive at the seat of war before 1906 ! The reason for this is very simple : the Indian Ocean is calm at present, but very shortly the monsoon will break, and from that date storms will be incessant. Merchant ships find it very difficult to battle with it ; the men-of-war might, no doubt, get through it, but torpedo-boats could not possibly do so. This, however, is not the chief obstacle. Our ships, which cannot load their coal in any port—and particularly in any English port—will be compelled to effect a passage of 4,000 miles without a break. The second squadron is, indeed, actually now sailing under these conditions, but it is winter time when the Indian Ocean is quite calm ; this allows the battleships to take their supplies

from the colliers at sea, and, even if necessary, to be taken in tow by them.

On the other hand, when the monsoon is blowing, the sea is very rough, and transshipments at sea are out of the question, and still less the towing of any vessel whatever. It is thus impossible for a squadron to cross this Ocean at that season of the year.

It therefore seems to us of vital importance that our third squadron should prepare to sail immediately without trying to complete unfinished repairs.

One person only must be charged with the formation of the third squadron and full powers must be given to him.

Above all, don't waste time in drawing up a formidable Blue Book, to which a white label will be affixed with the inscription: "Formation and preparation of the Third Squadron. Begun November 20th, 1904. Finished" Or, if you really want to do this, then draw up the book, but let it consist of a single sheet, stating that the formation of the third squadron has been entrusted to such and such a person, remarkable for his zeal and experience, and

that he has been invested with full powers and authorised to pay no attention to any instructions coming to him from any Government Office.

Under these circumstances the matter will be simple and speedily completed, and the squadron will not be long before it sails.

Until November a third squadron was not thought of.

At least, your Blue Books will undeniably prove that in November, 1904, the necessity of sending a third squadron had not yet been thought of! For, if this were not the case, how is it possible to explain that in that month a contract was signed with a firm for the re-making of the guns of the armoured coastguard ships of the *Admiral Seniavine* type, and *two years* were given for the necessary work and two dates fixed for its completion, viz.: April 16th, 1905, and April 15th, 1906? *

Now these are just the battleships which

* The official report informing the commander of the port of Cronstadt of this remarkable contract is dated November 12th, and its inscription number is above that of 40,000. From this fact we may form some idea of the number of reports drawn up by our bureaucracy in a year.

should form the main strength of the third squadron !

If circumstances had justified the lengthy period stipulated for these repairs there would be nothing to be said ; but this was precisely not the case.

When our Press had shown the absolute necessity for sending a third squadron, it was ordered to be in readiness to start by the month of May, 1905. It is inexplicable to me that the authorities could have forgotten that in the month of May no vessel could sail on account of the monsoon, which would then be blowing in the Indian Ocean, and so the squadron would be obliged to defer its departure until the following autumn—that is to say, it could only arrive at the seat of war in 1906 !

It may perhaps be of interest to point out further that the ukase ordering the formation and preparation of the third squadron was signed at St. Petersburg on the 20th of November, but only arrived at Cronstadt three days afterwards, just as if we possessed neither telephone nor telegraph !

Our Press then recommenced the struggle, demanding the immediate departure of the

three armoured coastguard ships of the *Séniavine* type, of the squadron battleship *Emperor Nicholas I.*, and the armoured cruiser *Vladimir-Monomakh*, which were then at Libau. The Admiralty was implored to send reinforcements immediately to Rodjestvensky ; but a fortnight more was allowed to elapse, and it was only at the beginning of December that Admiral Birileff received orders to start for Libau so as to push on the preparations vigorously, and to insist upon incessant work in order to get the ships in question ready.

The three coastguards of the Séniavine type, the Emperor Nicholas I. and the cruiser Vladimir-Monomakh could have sailed with the second squadron.

It was then clearly proved that these battleships might have been got ready about the 15th of January ; or, in other words, that the work, which at first was to take two years, could be completed in two months, or even in one, as we have just seen ! It follows that, if it had been desired, these vessels could have started with Rodjestvensky. And it must not be alleged in

excuse that our workshops were overwhelmed with pressing work at that time, for the first squadron was out at sea making its trial trips from the 1st of August, and from that date the workmen had breathing time.

Even admitting that the equipment of these battleships had been neglected, they might at least have been added to the supplementary division which set out from Libau, under Captain Dobrotworsky's orders, a month later to join Rodjestvensky ; and then to think that now there has been a delay of two months and a half with this supplementary division !

Is not this a striking example of what we might have done if only we had been alive to a sense of our duty, and had had the necessary zeal to have fulfilled it ?

CHAPTER X.

AND now, that is all ; I have nothing more to add, and only hope that my feeble arguments may gain a hearing. This is my final wish, for I am firmly convinced that I have proposed nothing impossible.

“ Well ! comrades, all that our Czar wishes we will do. Hurrah ! ”*

From the far-distant shores of South Africa these warlike cries find their echo in my inmost heart. What supreme resolution ! What dauntless energy ! Our valiant comrades will indeed accomplish the task entrusted to them, and their shouts of hope and victory will gradually die away in the distance till they resound in the face of the enemy in the distant waters of the Far East !

* Extract from a standing order published by Admiral Rodjestvensky at Vigo on October 15th, 1904, in reply to a telegram addressed to him by the Emperor.

And yet these cries must not cease to reach our ears ; they must not die away in the ever-increasing distance, but they must remind us every hour, every moment, day and night, of the squadron sailing towards the Chinese waters ; and, to enable our sailors one day to stifle the Japanese “ *banzai*,” we must not cease to demand fresh reinforcements for Admiral Rodjestvensky.

Is it possible that he will not be reinforced ?

No, that were madness ; and the more one thinks of it the more impossible it is to leave a powerful squadron ready to attack the enemy lying paralysed in the Black Sea, to let battleships be frozen up in the icy Baltic, and torpedo-boats rust in our harbours !

No, this is impossible ; we cannot believe that the departure of the second squadron marks the end of our task ; the suspension of work and the inaction of these ships, whilst our brothers are fighting and dying to pay for our mistakes, would weigh down upon us with crushing, irresistible force.

Away with these gloomy thoughts ! Let us remember only that we are Russians and call

to our comrades on their way to the Far East, on their way to the Unknown : “ Yes, “ do whatever your Czar commands, for he “ will not leave you without help. Fight “ dauntlessly, and rest assured that when you “ are exhausted by the pitiless struggle, fresh “ squadrons will be there to aid you and to “ take your places ! ” Citizens of the Russian nation ! Must we not so speak to them, for in truth this is what we must do for them ! Hurrah !

Night and day I seem to hear the sound of thousands of hammers striking the anvils at the shipbuilding yards on the Neva, at Cronstadt, and Libau. Here are battleships preparing for departure, and I already see them leaving our harbours, putting out to sea, and steaming away at full speed to the Mediterranean, where the powerful Black Sea fleet is to join them ; the latter has just passed through the Dardanelles, led to combat and victory by its chief himself,* a man of iron will, untiring energy, and vast experience !

Along the rails of the Trans-Siberian Rail-

* Admiral Echouknine, commander-in-chief of the Black Sea squadron.

way glide long lines of trucks and movable platforms, on which I catch a glimpse of torpedo-boats entire, or taken to pieces, engines and submarines ; then come numberless waggons laden with provisions and ammunition rolling on towards Vladivostok, as well as countless trains ceaselessly transporting workmen and engineers. . . .

No, it is not possible. You, who are Russians, must know it is impossible that this can be only a dream.

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