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EDITORIAL.

"GUARD THEM WELL!"

Are we nurses sufficiently grateful for the sacrifice of life of the men "who go down to the sea in ships"? Sometimes we doubt it when, after listening to the news that another vessel has been sunk by the enemy with loss of life, we hear quite a cheerful chirping around.

A recent Editorial in the *Evening Standard* might be read and taken to heart. To quote:—

On a Spring day in 1912 Mr. Winston Churchill stood on a yacht off Portland harbour. He was surrounded by the great ships which constituted the British Navy.

"Consider these ships," he said, "so vast in themselves, yet so small, so easily lost to sight on the surface of the waters. Sufficient at the moment, we trusted, for their task, but yet only a score or so. They were all we had . . . Open the seacocks and let them sink beneath the surface . . . and in a few minutes—half an hour at the most—the whole outlook of the world would be changed. The British Empire would dissolve like a dream; each isolated community struggling forward by itself; the central power of union broken; mighty provinces, whole Empires in themselves, drifting hopelessly out of control and falling a prey to strangers; and Europe after one sudden convulsion passing into the iron grip and rule of the Teuton and of all that the Teutonic system meant. There would only be left far off across the Atlantic unarmed, unready, and as yet uninstructed America to maintain, single-handed, law and freedom among men."

In 1912 that was an imaginative vision. To-day it is a political reality which must be entered in the reckoning of all statesmen the world over.

This is the fact which nothing can alter. Command of the seas and the future of freedom in all continents are bound together in final community. Let us draw comfort and invigoration from the knowledge of such a mighty union. Mr. Churchill as he surveyed those ships gave this instruction: "Guard them well, admirals and captains, hardy tars and tall marines; guard them well and guide them true." We know they will not fail. The task of the rest of their countrymen is through all hazards to hold a fortress base from which those ships may sail, carrying as their cargo the happiness of all mankind.

In a recent broadcast to the British Empire the Premier reaffirmed his confidence in the determination of this country to resist invasion. He declared:—

"Be the ordeal sharp or long, or both, we shall seek no terms, we shall tolerate no parley. We may show mercy, but we shall ask none.

"One thing is certain—the peoples of Europe will not be ruled for long by the Nazi Gestapo, nor will the world yield itself to Hitler's gospel of hatred."

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM.

"We shall not stop fighting till Freedom is secure."

In a broadcast speech Lord Halifax, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, declared "we shall not stop fighting till freedom is secure," and he defined the freedom for which we are waging war, and denounced the challenge of anti-Christ, urging that there is one thing we can all do . . . this is to pray.

"The peoples of the British Commonwealth, along with all those who love truth and justice and freedom, will never accept this new world of Hitler's. Free men, not slaves; free nations, not German vassals; a community of nations, freely co-operating for the good of all—these are the pillars of the new and better order that the British people wish to see. And I hope that our country, which leads the fight to-day to prevent the immeasurable human tragedy which Hitler's victory would mean, will be the one to point the way for all peoples to a better life.

"We can be of good heart when we survey the prospect. Hitler may plant the swastika where he will, but unless he can sap the strength of Britain the foundations of his Empire are built on sand. In their hearts the peoples that he has beaten down curse him and pray that his attacks may be broken on the defences of our island fortress. They long for the day when we shall sally forth and return blow for blow. We shall assuredly not disappoint them.

"Then will come the day of final reckoning when Hitler's mad plans for Europe will be shattered by the unconquerable passion of man for freedom.

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"Where will God lead us? Not, we may be sure, through easy or pleasant paths. That is not His way. He will not help us to avoid our difficulties. What He will do is to give to those who humbly ask the spirit that no dangers can disturb. The Christian message to the world brings peace in war; peace where we most need it; peace of soul. It is that same Christian message which makes its Giver, who is God, the best Friend with whom a man can share life or death. And there is one thing we can all do, soldiers, sailors, air-men, and civilians, men, women and children all together, which may be much more powerful than we know. And this is to pray.

"But prayer is not only asking God for what we want, but rather the way to learn to trust Him, to ask that we may know His will, and do it with all our strength. If we can really do our work, whatever it is, as well as we can in God's sight, it will become His work, and we can safely leave the issue in His hands.

"This then is the spirit in which we must march together in this crusade for Christianity. We and our great Dominions oversea stand, and shall continue to stand, foursquare against the forces of evil."

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