

which affords an additional facility for getting rid of the contents of the lighters, as the mud from the dredgers could be discharged at sea without danger of its return.

All competent persons who have examined the present harbour are unanimous in the opinion that "a very moderate outlay would secure a first-class port, which would, as an impregnable coaling-depôt and arsenal, complete the links of the chain of fortresses which are the guardians of the Mediterranean. In a war with any maritime Power the first necessity is an uninterrupted line of fortified coaling-stations, at intervals not exceeding five days' steaming at ten knots. A naval war will depend entirely upon the supply of coal, which will in all probability be declared "contraband of war." In the absence of a dependable chain of stations *throughout the world*, the action of the most powerful cruisers will be extremely limited, as they will be rendered helpless when their supply is reduced to the minimum sufficient to carry them to a friendly port.

Where oceans must be traversed, the difficulty will be increased, as the coal-capacity of the vessel will only command a given mileage; she will therefore be in her weakest condition after a long voyage, and as her fighting power must depend upon her steam, precisely as the strength of man depends upon his food, she must be absolutely certain of obtaining a supply of coal in every sea where her presence is required.

Should the most powerful vessel afloat, after a long cruise during which she has encountered headwinds and weather that had caused delay and a great consumption of fuel, be reduced to only a few hours'