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DEFENCE OF NORTH CANTERBURY

(By A. JOYCE.)

It appears probable that the British Empire will, in the course of a short time, perhaps a few years, but possibly within a much shorter period, have to encounter the rivalry of Germany. Should this be the case, we may expect to find the Germans, with their splendid ability for organisation and thoroughness, no mean enemy, and it behoves us all to consider carefully what preparation can be made against the coming struggle. When the offer of a Dreadnought from the dominion reached England, the London "Times" stated that, in its opinion, the best use to which any contributions to the Imperial Navy could be applied would be to strengthen the defences of each portion of the Empire in its own part of the world

At the commencement of a war the principal danger to which this dominion will be exposed will be from raiding cruisers attacking the ports, not with a view to occupation, or of levying contributions; but with the object of destroying shipping, damaging wharves and docks and crippling England's commerce. Our first duty to ourselves and to the Empire is to protect our ports and coaling stations for the use of our mercantile shipping and of the Navy. I am not going to take up time by detailing the present defences of Lyttelton. Suffice it to say that a vessel with modern weapons could silence what guns we have without com-