

77 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE
NEWPORT,
RHODE ISLAND

*Backing
Bully
Mitchell!*

October 16, 1924.

My dear Wile:

The whole family enjoyed THE CHILDREN'S HOUR editorial from the New York World. It hits off the gentleman to the Queen's taste. His forte is that of superintendent of a Sunday school. It certainly is not politics. I wonder if he will remain long after the election.

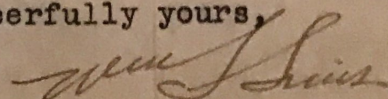
I have read Bywater's article with much interest. It is the same old stuff. There is no vision in it, and a lot of unsound statements, the basic one being "The only vessel capable of fighting the battleship on equal terms is another battleship". This is true in the sense of equality, but a single combat between an airplane carrier and a battleship would be mighty unequal. The battleship would have practically no show. The carrier, having much the greater speed, would keep beyond the range of the battleship's guns, and the contest would be between the carrier's bombing planes and the battleship's anti-airplane guns, and the latter are of negligible value even in daylight. The carrier would let the poor old battleship alone until the sun went down, drop a few flares to light him up, then, being invisible from below, drop bombs with increased accuracy from a low altitude, and with practically no danger to the planes.

The same conditions would pertain if there were a number of carriers and an equal number of battleships engaged, and also if each side had the same number of auxiliaries. In the latter case, however, the carrier side would have an additional advantage due to greater speed -- a superior ability in avoiding torpedo and submarine attack. And that's all there is to it.

Airplane carriers can go anywhere that battleships can. If the weather is very bad, they have the speed to decline action until it moderates. Planes of moderate size are launched from the decks of carriers and brought back on board. The handling of relatively heavy bombing planes from carriers is a matter of mechanical detail of strength and efficiency of arresting gear. Manifestly, it is dangerous to base a nation's naval policy on the assumption that this cannot be done.

However, if you have read MILITARY CONSERVATISM, you will readily understand that the decision of the Principle Dignataries will be on the conservative side -- the side of "The many who followed the beaten track, "who have confidence only in "the things that were known before".

Still cheerfully yours,



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