

THE TITANIC AND THE LITERARY COMMENTATOR

BY E. B. FRENCH

Mr. G. K. Chesterton's comments on the disaster have already been quoted in part in this magazine. **Mr. Chesterton's Views** Like Mr. Shaw he was chiefly concerned with its effect on public opinion as evidenced in the newspapers. He had little sympathy with the horror professed by many British writers at the unseemly haste of American Senators and newspaper men in prying into the affair. It is all very well, he said, to blame American journalism as "vulgar and vindictive" and for setting "the pack in full cry upon a particular man." The British critic might accuse Americans of wishing to hound Mr. Ismay, "as if he were the only man that was saved," just as they hounded poor Gorki "as if he were the only man not living with his wife." But might not the American critic retort that the British were in danger from precisely opposite vices? The British tendency is to hush things up, to "damp everything down." Americans might reasonably suspect that the British Mersey commission would shirk the facts—"ignore plain questions and suppress existing telegrams to save the face of some rich man." That was what happened when under the same Lord Mersey inquiry was made into the Jameson Raid. The Americans might say—

We are not so careful of millionaires. We are hounding on the pack, and we think a pack of dogs, even if it is a pack of mongrels, is not so bad a thing in dealing with wolves—or foxes.

As the Mersey commission went on he waxed bitterly sarcastic over some of its rulings and published a little skit holding it up to ridicule as carefully excluding from its investigation the essential things it was appointed to investigate.